

# JGSS

## Journal of Global Strategic Studies

---

Vol. 01 No. 01 June 2021

International War: Decline, Consequences, and “Pax Americana”

*John Mueller*

Explaining Democratic Deconsolidation:  
Evidence from Asian Democracies

*Saiful Mujani & R. William Liddle*

Assessing the United States' Grand Strategy:  
Estimating Patterns of the United States' Foreign Policy on Southeast Asia under  
the Biden Presidency

*Leonard C. Sebastian and Sigit S. Nugroho*

Imagining Sweeter Australia-Indonesia Relations

*John Blaxland*

Nahdlatul Ulama and Its Commitment Towards Moderate Political Norms:  
A Comparison Between the Abdurrahman Wahid and Jokowi Era

*Alexander R. Arifianto*

Indonesia's Foreign Policy in Creating Security  
Stability in Indo-Pacific Region

*Mariane Olivia Delanova & Yanyan Moehamad Yani*

Master's Programs in International Relations  
Faculty of Social and Political Science  
Jenderal Achmad Yani University

# IMAGINING SWEETER AUSTRALIA-INDONESIA RELATIONS

John Blaxland

*The Australian National University, Australia*

## Abstract

Australia's relationship with Indonesia has been a bit like the board game "Snakes and Ladders". Incremental progress in the relationship (up the ladder) is easily undone (down the snake) over a range of misunderstandings including issues like beef, boats, spies, clemency, Timor and Papua. Both countries have considerable overlapping interests. They both have to find a way to deepen and broaden the bilateral relationship to prevent this cycle from continuing to recur. In considering how to do that, understanding how they got here is important. Bilateral and multilateral engagement, on trade, education, and security including through IA-CEPA, links like the Ikaan network, additional New Colombo Plan engagement and a MANIS regional maritime cooperation forum may help make that happen.

---

## Introduction

Geographically, Australia and Indonesia have always been, and always will be, neighbours, at the maritime fulcrum of the Indo-Pacific. Yet that does not automatically guarantee that they will be close friends or that they will understand each other well and support each other. That takes deliberate policy choices. Like siblings, these two nations have learnt to get along. Yet there is so much more potential in the relationship than has been realised so far. There have been some bitter moments and some sweet ones. To understand how we may make progress, to make sweet the bilateral ties, a historical review of where the relationship has been so far may be helpful. This paper, surveys bilateral relations from 1945 to today and considers some of the ups and downs along the way. It then outlines some suggestions for how to deepen ties and bolster regional stability to aid in furthering mutual prosperity.

### Early Days

Australia committed forces for the defence of what is now Indonesia at the height of the Second World War, deploying troops to Ambon, Timor and Java in 1941 and 1942. Later, as the tide of war turned, they led the way in operations in Borneo, including the Battle of Balikpapan in 1945 (Long, 1973). After the war, Australia gave de-facto recognition of Indonesian Independence when it raised the matter of Indonesia's decolonization in the United Nations in July 1947 (DFAT, 1949). In an act of solidarity with Indonesian independence fighters, Australian port workers in Darwin and other port cities launched industrial action against Dutch ships from 1945 to 1949. This came to be known as the "Black Armada" (Dalziel, 2020).

In August 1947, a small Australian contingent deployed as military observers a part of the United Nations' Good Offices Commission, remaining until April 1951 (Australian War Memorial, 1951). Thereafter, recognizing the importance of the future relationship, Australia was amongst the first countries to recognize formally Indonesian independence in 1949 (DFAT, 1949).

As President Sukarno sought to consolidate power in the young democracy, his flirtation with the Communist Party of Indonesia in the early to mid-1960s caused concern, as did his rejection of Malaysian independence and his launch of *Konfrontasi*. Australia sided with Malaysia and Great Britain in defence against Indonesian incursions, but managed to keep diplomatic relations relatively stable regardless. The overthrow of Sukarno, and the establishment of the New Order under President Suharto led to the end of *Konfrontasi* and a new opening up of Indonesia. Reflecting this new approach, Indonesia was instrumental in the establishment of ASEAN in 1967 – an organisation which Australia has consistently supported. Reflecting this commitment, Australia became ASEAN's first Dialogue Partner, a few years later in 1974 (DFAT, 2020). More recently, a Prime Ministerial ASEAN-

Australia Summit sought to demonstrate enduring Australian commitment to the region and its representative body.

Australia, meanwhile maintained its close security ties with Singapore and Malaysia, notably through the Five Power Defence Arrangement established in 1971. The FPDA, including the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore, helped reassure Malaysia and Singapore against the possible return of *Konfrontasi*-like policies from Indonesia. In hindsight, such concerns now seem unnecessary, yet the organisation has provided a unique and broadly welcome platform for collaboration between the five participating nations. No wonder then that fifty years later the FPDA is not loved in Indonesia, although Indonesia now has observer status on FPDA activities.

### **Deepening Ties**

Meanwhile Indonesia had been a participating member of the Colombo Plan since 1953. This intergovernmental program was launched in 1951 to strengthen relationships within Asia and the Pacific and promote partnerships for social and economic development of member nations. The program extended to cover 25 nations including Indonesia and focused on training and education, health, provision of food supplies and supply of equipment and loans. By the early 1980s thousands of Indonesian students had studied in Australia through this program (National Archives of Australia, 2021).

It would not be until early in the next century before a reciprocal program known as the “New Colombo Plan” was established in 2014 to ensure a complementary program enabled more Australians to study in Asia, notably in Indonesia. This program is designed to encourage a two-way flow of students between Australia and its neighbours (DFAT, 2019). While challenging to maintain under pandemic conditions, so far it has helped thousands of young Australians gain a greater appreciation for and understanding of Indonesia.

Then there are institutions like the Australia-Indonesia Youth Association intended to deepen mutual understanding and trust (AIYA, 2021).

### **Papua and East Timor Rub Points**

Meanwhile, as Indonesia sought to consolidate its governance and end Dutch colonial rule, for a while in the early to mid-1960s, Australia and Indonesia disagreed over the way forward with what became Irian Jaya or West Papua. Eventually, however, following the “Act of Free Choice” in 1969, the United Nations recognised Indonesian sovereignty over the western half of the island of Papua and New Guinea. Although the vote has been criticised, ever since then Australia has supported Indonesia’s position, although at times Australia has pressed Indonesia to exercise restraint in the application of violent force as it governs the territory. The concern remains that mistreatment of local Papuans can generate political backlash amongst supporters of West Papuan independence. The Australia Government has repeatedly stressed its recognition of Indonesian sovereignty and its complete disinterest in becoming involved in the security challenges there, which it sees as domestic driven and only to be solved by domestic elements of Indonesian society acting with justice and equity. Part of the reason for some residual concern over Australia’s position relates to the different perspectives over East Timor.

Following Portugal’s internal political revolution and its effective abandonment of its colonies in 1975, a political group considered to have links with Communist China took control of East Timor. Both the Suharto government in Jakarta and the Whitlam Government in Canberra were concerned. In sum, the concern was over a possible enclave emerging between these two countries that would resemble communist-controlled Cuba. Remember, this was shortly after the fall of South Vietnam to Communist North Vietnam. The Domino Theory may have been old by then, but it had not yet lost its political potency (Silverman, 1975).

Following a meeting in Townsville in April 1975 between Suharto and Whitlam, Australia lent support to Indonesia's intentions to take over East Timor – a move that would lead to its incorporation as a province of Indonesia (DFAT, 2000). Little did most people realise the heavy handed manner of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor – a move that saw several Australian journalists evidently deliberately killed. They became known as the “Balibo Five”. Their brutal killings left Australians, notably including influential Australia's journalists, incensed (Shackleton, 2010). This event and the related fallout had a lasting corrosive effect on the bilateral relationship, with many Australians sceptical of Indonesia as a regional partner.

The Indonesian military campaign to control East Timor and remove the threat from separatists linked with the armed group that came to be known as Fretilin lasted for nearly a quarter of a century, from 1975 to 1999. Along the way, former Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas described East Timor as the ‘pebble in the shoe’. This metaphor captured the enduring irritant nature of disagreements over Indonesia's handling of the East Timor question (Alatas, 2016). This was exacerbated by an incident in 1991 at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, which, according to some reports, saw as many as 200 people killed (Human Rights Watch, 1991). While the numbers are disputed, this damaged Indonesia's reputation, particularly in international settings such as the United Nations. Australia maintained its official line of support for Indonesia but privately expressed its deep concern. Unlike West Papua, the territorial incorporation of which had received full UN endorsement, East Timor remained an Indonesian administered territory without UN blessing.

Eager to bolster ties between the two countries despite these concerns, Australia's Prime Minister Paul Keating and Indonesian President Suharto agreed to the signing in December 1995 of the Australian-Indonesian Security Agreement. Arranged in secret, the agreement marked a departure from Indonesia's policy of avoiding formal alliances. From Australia's viewpoint,

however, it seemed to represent the completion of a set of formal ties with neighbours, matching arrangements already in place with Papua New Guinea, Malaysia and Singapore, as well as New Zealand (Brown, 1995). The East Timor “pebble” seemed to be an issue that would remain within a manageable range and not expected to derail the deepening bilateral ties. That was until the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-98 up-ended domestic Indonesian politics.

As the financial crisis struck Southeast Asia, Australia became involved in conducting “Operation Ples Draï”, a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operation to provide drought relief to people suffering extreme conditions in Papua New Guinea and in the neighbouring Indonesian territory then known as West Irian (Papua). Australia deployed 90 military personnel from September 1997 to May 1998 and provided aid to over 90,000 Indonesians in West Irian (Blaxland, 2014). This was accompanied by “Operation AusIndo Jaya” for famine relief across Irian Jaya involving Australian military transport, engineering and health support (Bullard, 2017).

“Ples Draï” and “AusIndo jaya” were not the first time Australian military personnel had deployed to the Indonesian territory of West Irian. From 1976 to 1981, Operation “Cendarawasih” (Bird of Paradise) involved survey and mapping of parts of Indonesia, including what was then known as Irian Jaya. This had involved Australian Army survey teams and Royal Australian Air Force Huey helicopters working with the Indonesian military. This operation, and others like it in other neighbouring countries, provided accurate, up-to-date mapping and an excellent opportunity to demonstrate Australian goodwill (Blaxland, 2014: 43).

### **Howard's and Habibie's Choices on East Timor**

The turmoil in Jakarta following the onset of the Asian Financial Crisis saw Suharto lose office and replaced by his deputy, B.J. Habibie. In mid-November 1998, Australia's Prime Minister, John Howard, wrote to Habibie about the situation in East Timor. Howard wrote mindful of France's experience in outlining a ten-year transition plan towards self-determination for the people of New Caledonia that led to the signing of the so-called Matignon Agreement in June 1988 (Maclellan, 1999: 245). Evidently the comparison with a European colonial power contributed to Habibie's response which was to reject Howard's suggestion of allowing some degree of autonomy for the East Timorese people. Habibie decided instead to propose a plebiscite for the people of East Timor to vote directly for or against integration – with the 'no' vote implying a wish for independence.

The result was a ballot supervised by an unarmed United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET). Indonesia guaranteed security for the UNAMET staff, but the militias that formed went on a rampage after they announced the ballot result in early September. The international reaction was severe and swift. With threats of economic sanctions, Indonesia agreed to an Australian-led international intervention force to replace the Indonesian military and supervise the transition to independence (Blaxland, 2014).

Once the international force started to deploy to East Timor on 20 September 1999, the situation could have been much worse than it turned out to be. Thankfully, the day before, the Australia Army Attaché, Colonel Ken Brownrigg, convinced the Australian force commander, Major General Peter Cosgrove, to meet with the Indonesian martial law commander, Major General Kiki Syahnakri. This was made possible because all parties appreciated the importance of not allowing the situation to spiral further than they already had. Both sides understood that this was a significant downturn in the relationship, but to avoid it getting worse required close cooperation. Syahnakri agreed to

facilitate the entry into Dili of the international force which, in the first few days primarily consisted of Australian troops. Within a short while, contingents from another 21 nations added to the legitimacy of the intervention, including the deputy force commander from Thailand and contingents from several ASEAN nations including the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore.

After the Indonesian military withdrawal from East Timor in early October 1999, there were incidents on the border between Indonesian West Timor and East Timor. Escalation was avoided thanks to the deft handling of some Indonesian-speaking Australians and some cool headed counterparts in the Indonesian military (Blaxland, 2014: 143).

### **Aid, Terrorism and Tsunami**

This low point in the bilateral relationship was followed in 2002 by the Bali bombing – a terrible incident that saw 202 people killed including 38 Indonesians and 88 Australians. Australia reached out a hand of friendship to assist in tracking down the perpetrators. With forensic and intelligence experts providing assistance, the Indonesian authorities were able to apprehend those involved in the bombing. Other incidents happened in Jakarta and again in Bali. In each case, Australian and Indonesian authorities worked closely, realising they had more in common than most realised. Slowly but surely the bilateral relationship returned to balance. Cooperation reached its highest point up to that stage in 2004 with the establishment of the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation or JCLEC in Semarang as a joint venture (Detik News, 2010).

Then, on 26 December 2004, an earthquake in the Indian Ocean generated a tsunami, which struck the coast of Aceh. Prior to this point, it had appeared inconceivable that Australian military forces would ever deploy there. The crisis was on an unimaginable scale and Australia offered to help. Indonesia then accepted the offer of medical, engineering and transport

assistance. Australia launched “Operation Sumatra Assist” (Bullard, 2017: 292). The deployment of Australian naval amphibious ships, carrying engineering and medical stores, as well as helicopters, and other aid delivered by air force Hercules aircraft, helped provide an unseen benefit.

The deployment of military humanitarian aid drew considerable media attention, but Australia had been providing aid and development assistance to Indonesia for decades, working closely with the Indonesian National Development and Planning Agency (BAPPENAS) and civil society organisations and other community groups. This work spans education and scholarships, governance, human security and stability, disaster preparedness and risk reduction, emergency response, climate change and the environment, regional development, rehabilitation, health and infrastructure (ACICIS, 2020).

The infrastructure component has been noticeably linked to the Eastern Indonesia National Roads Improvement Program and the Indonesia Infrastructure Initiative as well as a range of other programs. This tallied nearly one billion Australian dollars in just one year (Australian National Audit Office, 2013). The Australia Indonesia partnership for Recovery and Development was established after the tsunami working to a governance board established by the Australian prime minister and the Indonesian president (Australian National Audit Office, 2013).

### **Reaffirming Ties**

Australia Indonesia relations improved further with the signing in November 2006 of “The Agreement between Australia and the Republic of Indonesia on the Framework for Security Cooperation”, known as the “Lombok Treaty”. This provided a treaty-level framework for addressing traditional and non-traditional security challenges (DFAT, 2010).

In Late 2010 and early 2011 President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and then Chief of Defence Force (now Governor General) General David Hurley,

agreed to set up an Australia-Indonesia military alumni association, known as *Ikahan* (IKAHAN, 2012). This alumni network has helped to strengthen ties between the two nations' armed forces. The network of alumni has grown and contributed to the establishing of exchange instructor postings at the respective military officer training institutions and exchange cadet students.

In August 2014, Australia and Indonesia reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations by signing a Joint Understanding in implementation of the Lombok Treaty (DFAT, 2014). This allowed for the development of supporting mechanisms for formal two-plus-two dialogue meetings between their respective defence and foreign ministers (Parameswaran, 2018).

The 2014 Joint Understanding laid important groundwork for the creation of a sub-regional defence ministers meeting on counter-terrorism held in Perth, Western Australia, in February 2018 that was intended to enhance regional cooperation to counter terrorism (Payne, 2018).

### **Further Disruptions**

Still, significant albeit temporary interruptions have made managing the bilateral relationship sometimes tricky. This includes a temporary ban placed on live cattle trade from Australia to Indonesia in 2011, following a television documentary showing cruelty to animals in an abattoir in Indonesia (Willingham & Allard, 2011).

In 2013, then Prime Minister Tony Abbott insisted on pushing back boats carrying refugees – a move which caused resentment in Indonesia and a disruption to people smuggling networks operating there (Bachelard, 2014). That same year, revelations from Edward Snowden's cache of documents indicated the Indonesian phone networks were being monitored (Dorling & Bachelard, 2014). Indonesia's president responded graciously in public, mindful Australian intelligence had helped address domestic terrorist incidents including

the Bali bombings, but he was understandably upset about this act. The matter was not helped by Abbott's refusal to provide an abject apology (Bachelard, 2013). Indonesia recalled its ambassador in protest, and the gradual build-up of trust was damaged by these events (Davidson & Weaver, 2013).

Sometime later, Abbott appealed for clemency for convicted criminals Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran (ABC News, 2015). Not surprisingly, his appeal was ignored. This followed an early incarceration in 2005 of Australian convicted drug smuggler, Schapelle Corby in Bali. Eventually, on appeal, her sentence was reduced and she was released on parole in 2014 and later allowed to return to Australia in May 2017 (Bachelard, 2014). Australia's blunt diplomacy had a blow-back effect. Hopefully the lesson has been learned that mutual respect is of fundamental importance to constructive bilateral relations.

Then in early 2017, Indonesian military chief, General Gatot Nurmantyo suspended cooperation over apparently offensive material observed on a training exercise by Indonesian soldiers training in Australia (Wood, 2017). His actions reflected a build-up of resentment over cultural insensitivity and a certain apparent Australian high handed, and heavy handed interaction. Australia needs to do better. So does Indonesia. Thankfully, Nurmantyo's successor is less conspiratorial and adversarial in his disposition towards Australia.

These incidents point to some short sighted and unfortunate complications to the bilateral relationship and to the need to work to deepen and strengthen ties if these kinds of problems are to be avoided in future. To avoid a recurrence both sides need to work collaboratively, showing mutual respect. Some innovative thinking and reappraisal is required.

### **Reversing the Decline: Bolstering Security, Trade and Education Ties**

Since the issues of beef, boats, spies and clemency, both countries sensibly have worked to put the past behind them and deepen ties for trusted mutual collaboration. This has manifested in the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA), which came into force in July 2020. IA-CEPA builds on AusAID's decades-long role in various development assistance projects in Indonesia, particularly in the Eastern Indonesia regions. The IA-CEPA also creates a framework for Australia and Indonesia to "unlock the vast potential of the bilateral economic partnership, fostering economic cooperation between businesses, communities and individuals" (DFAT, 2020).

In view of this multi-faceted partnership emerging, IA-CEPA has the potential to add considerable trade and educational links to increase the "ballast" in the relationship to enable the "ship" of bilateral relations to weather future storms that might arise when misunderstandings occur or when interests may not completely coincide. As Indonesia's economy grows, demand for Australian goods likely will increase. Additional educational collaboration should be a priority to enhance mutual understanding – particularly in the realm of culture and language.

In the 1990s, Australia placed emphasis on learning to speak Bahasa Indonesia. But after the Bali bombings and Australia's distractions with the wars in the Middle East, the Australian nation got distracted. Bahasa Indonesia language skills atrophied as Australia emphasized learning languages for its niche contributions to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Blaxland eds, 2020). With Australia's focus on the Middle East declining, and the nation undertaking a "pivot" back to its own neighborhood, the importance of learning Bahasa Indonesia has returned to the fore. Australian government policy now needs to catch up and re-emphasize learning Indonesian.

Beyond language skills, strengthening the bilateral defence relationship won't necessarily be easy (Schreer, 2013). The days where the Indonesian armed

forces were eager recipients of Australian defence aid are past as Indonesia has become more capable and self-sufficient. Indonesia will always be Australia's most important regional strategic relationship, but the reverse has not necessarily always been the case. Yet these two countries have shared interests and concerns that should motivate much closer collaboration. Both face considerable exercise of Chinese sharp power and wolf warrior diplomacy. In Indonesia's case that has revolved around contestation over Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone surrounding the Natuna Islands. In Australia's case it revolves around challenging China's attempts at interfering in Australian politics. Both countries also have important trade ties with China. Australia has a formal alliance with the United States, but both look to the United States to maintain its security presence in Southeast Asia.

In future, defence cooperation should go beyond obvious and simple arrangements such as staff exchanges, military exercises or humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. New creative cooperation is needed in terms enhancing capabilities and interoperability – the ability to work together to manage the maritime space in the top right hand corner of the Indian Ocean – what President Joko Widodo once described as the “maritime fulcrum” (Laksamana, 2019).



Figure 1 : The shared space occupied by Australia and Indonesia

Strengthening single service cooperation between the Australian and Indonesian armed forces also is critical to building trust and to hedge against future crisis. Australia's new amphibious capability, for instance is proving to be a "game changer" and provide significant new opportunities for collaboration (Blaxland, 2020). Indonesian and Australian forces should consider liking arms, getting on board and deploying on exercises and humanitarian assistance activities in and around Australia and Indonesia. This way they can build bridges, literally and metaphorically. Building bridges (with engineers) in the field in remote islands or coastline of Australian and or Indonesia, while building relationships between these two nation's armed forces to enable greater coordination, collaboration, trust and respect. Joint maritime surveillance is another underdeveloped area of cooperation and more needs to be done in this area, as is discussed further below in the context of sweetening regional ties.

### **Sweeter Regional Ties**

There is scope for the Australian-Indonesia security relationship to return to the level of cooperation and trust that led to the Lombok Treaty in the mid-1990s. There is also space for Australia and Indonesia to lead in a sweet arrangement, a MANIS regional maritime cooperation forum, encompassing Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia and Singapore. Other countries like Timor L'este, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines could be invited to participate (adding PPT to MANIS, perhaps). These countries have many common interests and concerns and have few opportunities to work together other than in the sidelines of other forums, notably ASEAN related meetings. Yet they all share the space at the juncture between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, what President Joko Widodo described as the "Maritime fulcrum" of the Indo-Pacific. This concept was introduced in a recent paper but requires further close consideration for the idea to become a reality (Blaxland, 2016).

A MANIS regional maritime cooperation forum could be organised in a number of ways, depending on the consensus of the participating nations. With a view to the sensitivities of Indonesia and others, it would be best to start slowly. Over time, the forum could generate goodwill and political momentum to grow. Ideally the political leadership of participating states would see the utility of gradually building up the forum and associated networks of contacts and issues covered, broadening and deepening the range of issues shared and addressed collaboratively.

Starting with a second track or one-and-a-half track approach would probably be easier, rather than launching into a fully-fledged governmental initiative. One way to do so would be to establish working groups to examine a range of non-traditional security concerns.

Topics on which regional representatives could consult, share experiences and cooperate are the security implications of region-wide challenges including climate change, illegal fisheries, natural resources management, illegal immigration, terrorism, smuggling and transnational crime, including trafficking in drugs, endangered wildlife and weapons. The forum could also focus on improving search and rescue and natural disaster coordination.

That approach would involve collaborative government, university and think tank teams from the various participating countries meeting to form working groups to discuss a range of possibilities including police, immigration, border security, legal, judicial, environmental, intelligence, and financial matters. Such encounters could examine shared issues of concern and other information exchanges, including on operating procedures. They also could consider possible collaborative activities to facilitate closer engagement and cross-pollination of personnel, ideas and sharing of experiences.

Ultimately, this Forum could take regional cooperation beyond the levels achieved through the Bali Process and help to better address the implications of

a new security agenda centered on environmentally vulnerable communities and climate change.

Eventually, if successful and mutually agreed to, military and other security concerns could feature under this framework as well. For instance, maritime security measures could be workshopped and collaborative activities developed. Efforts could be made to help regional coast-watching aerial surveillance patrols to be coordinated, more information exchanged and additional police and other liaison and exchange positions established.

Those arrangements would then enable the participating nations to consider coordinated and shared activities. Such activities could gradually build up, starting with conferences and workshops, to planning meetings, demonstrations and, eventually, actual collaborative exercises and operational activities. In time, and with the goodwill and agreement of the participants, such activities could utilize a range of civil and military resources to plan and conduct a range of related activities together.

Critics may argue there are too many regional forums already. But existing forums have great difficulty reaching consensus. A smaller grouping like MANIS would find it easier. Potentially, it could be empowered to bolster regional stability in and around Indonesia and the areas governed by the affected neighboring states in a way that circumvents the existing consensus-driven constraints. Enhancing cooperation and collaboration this way, with timely and consultative decision-making by participating nations, could significantly bolster stability and prosperity in areas of mutual concern.

A MANIS regional forum wouldn't make redundant the region's other bilateral and multilateral forums and arrangements. Indeed, foreign ministries are already stretched thin with responsibilities relating to ASEAN, let alone other forums. With a maritime focus and additional resources, perhaps the respective ministries of defence or border protection may be better placed to take the lead in engaging with the MANIS forum.

With a growing range of maritime and non-traditional security challenges, there's a compelling argument to be made for the countries of Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia and Singapore to join hands and work together in a new way. This could be something far more than a straightforward multilateral forum. With unprecedented and growing challenges, there is an opportunity for the MANIS countries to work together across a wide range of domains to bolster shared regional stability. The way ahead involves respectful, patient, collegial and determined collaborative engagement to sweeten regional ties.

### **Conclusion**

Despite all the ups and downs along the way, Australia and Indonesia are indeed at the fulcrum of the Indo-Pacific. They need to work together more closely now more than ever for the sake of their mutual economic and security interests.

Australia and Indonesia have many cultural differences but they are not natural adversaries. They have common interests and concerns. Australians need to invest more in learning about Indonesia and both countries should work on addressing the pandemic together and finding a way through to health, safety and economic prosperity on the other side. Some creative engagement is required. MANIS is one idea, IA-CEPA provides other opportunities, as does the New Colombo Plan and the *Ikahan* network. Joint initiatives to counter environmental degradation and in response to climate change would help. Indonesia and Australia have a shared destiny. Both countries need to work hard to make that destiny a peaceful and prosperous one.

### Bibliography

- ABC News. (2015). "Bali Nine: Tony Abbott repeats clemency request as Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran wait for news" at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-02-14/bali-nine-tony-abbott-repeats-chan-sukumaran-clemency-request/6097920>
- AIYA – Australia Indonesia Youth Association. (2021). "Welcome to AIYA", at <https://www.aiya.org.au/> .
- Alatas, Ali. (2016). *the pebble in the shoe: the diplomatic struggle for East Timor*, Jakarta, Aksara Karunia.
- Dalziel, Alex. (2020). "75 Years of the 'Black Armada': Australian dockworkers defend Indonesia's independence in 1945", *The Jakarta Post*, at <https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2020/09/09/75-years-of-black-armada-australian-dockworkers-defend-indonesias-independence-in-1945.html> .
- Australia War Memorial. "United Nations Good Offices Committee Indonesia (UNGOC) 1947-1951", at <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/CN500115>
- Australian Consortium for 'In-Country' Indonesian Studies (ACICIS). "AusAID", at <https://www.acicis.edu.au/programs/practicum/development-studies-professional-practicum-dspp/placements-dspp/ausaid/> .
- Australian National Audit Office. (2013). "AusAID's Management of Infrastructure Aid to Indonesia", at <https://www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/ausaids-management-infrastructure-aid-indonesia>
- Bachelard, Michael. (2014). "Another turned back boats land in Indonesia", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, at <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/another-turned-back-boat-lands-in-indonesia-20140225-33dn7.html>
- . (2014). "Schapelle Corby's release conditions light", *Stuff*, 8 February 2014, at <http://www.stuff.co.nz/ipad-editors-picks/9697261/Schapelle-Corbys-release-conditions-light>
- Bachelard, Michael., Kenny, Mark., and Wroe, David. (2013). "Tony Abbott refuses to apologise for Indonesian spying program", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, at <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/tony-abbott->

refuses-to-apologise-for-indonesian-spying-program-20131119-2xsn4.html

- Blaxland, John (ed). (2015). *East Timor Intervention: A Retrospective on INTERFET*, Melbourne University Press.
- . (2020). “LHDs: Game Changing in Indo-Pacific”, *Australian Naval institute*, 2020, at <https://navalinstitute.com.au/lhds-game-changing-in-indo-pacific/>
- . (2016). *MANIS: Time for a new forum to sweeten regional cooperation*, Centre of Gravity Series Paper No. 26, at [http://sdsc.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/2018-01/cog\\_26-john-blaxland.pdf](http://sdsc.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/2018-01/cog_26-john-blaxland.pdf)
- . (2014). *The Australian Army from Whitlam to Howard*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne: 132-133;
- Blaxland, John., Ffielding, Marcus., and Gellerfy, Thea (eds.). (2020). *Niche Wars: Australia in Afghanistan and Iraq, 2001-2014*, ANU Press, Canberra, at <https://press.anu.edu.au/publications/niche-wars>.
- Brown, Gary., Frost, Frank., and Sherlock, Stephen. (1995). *The Australian – Indonesian Security Agreement – Issues and Implications*, Parliamentary Library Research Paper 25 1995-96 at [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/RP9596/96rp25](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/RP9596/96rp25)
- Bullard, Steven. (2017). *In Their Time of Need: Australia’s overseas emergency relief operations, 1918-2006*, The Official History of Australian Peacekeeping, Humanitarian and Post-Cold War Operations, Australian War Memorial and Cambridge University Press: 251-272.
- Davidson, Helen., and Weaver, Matthew. (2013). “Indonesia recalls ambassador to Australia over spy claims – as it happened”, *the Guardian* (Australian edition), at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/18/australia-indonesia-spying-revelations-live>
- Day, Wendy (ed). (2000). *Documents of Australian Foreign Policy: Australia and the Indonesian incorporation of Portuguese Timor 1974-1976*, DFAT, Melbourne University Press, at <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australia-and-the-indonesian-incorporation-of-portuguese-timor-1974-1976.pdf>

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). “Historical Documents, 1947, Indonesia – Volume 11, 1948, Indonesia – Volume 13, and 1949, Indonesia – Volume 15 at <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/historical-documents> .

Detik News. (2010). “JCLEC, Pusat Pelatihan Investigasi Polri Bertaraf Internasional”, 21 November 2010 at <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-1498605/jclec-pusat-pelatihan-investigasi-polri-bertaraf-internasional> .

DFAT. “Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)”, at <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/regional-architecture/asean> .

----. ‘Joint Understanding on a code of conduct between the Republic of Indonesia and Australia in implementation of the agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and Australia on the Framework for Security Cooperation ("The Lombok Treaty")’ at

----. “About the New Colombo Plan”, at <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/new-colombo-plan/about/Pages/about>

----. “Agreement Between Australia and the republic of Indonesia on the Framework for security Cooperation” at <https://www.info.dfat.gov.au/Info/Treaties/treaties.nsf/AllDocIDs/ADA704593CAE4466CA25723100100881>

----. “Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement” at <https://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/agreements/in-force/iacepa/Pages/indonesia-australia-comprehensive-economic-partnership-agreement>

----. Historical Documents, 1949, Indonesia – Volume 15 at <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-15/1949-indonesia-volume-15>

Dorling, Philip., and Bachelard, Michael. (2014). “Edward Snowden documents reveal Indonesian phone networks penetrated by Australian spies”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/indonesia/Pages/code-of-conduct-indonesia-and-australia-on-the-framework-for-security-cooperation>

Human Rights Watch, *East Timor: the November 12 Massacre and Its Aftermath*, December 12, 1991, Vol 3, No. 26 at <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/pdfs/i/indonesia/indonesi911.pdf>

Ikahan <http://ikahan.com/about/ikahan/history/>

Laksamana, Evan. (2019). 'Indonesia as "Global Maritime Fulcrum": A post-Mortem Analysis', *Asian Maritime Transparency Initiative*, CSIS Washington DC, 8 November 2019, at <https://amti.csis.org/indonesia-as-global-maritime-fulcrum-a-post-mortem-analysis/> .

Long, Gavin. (1973). *The Six Years War: A Concise History of Australia in the 1939-45 War*, Australian War Memorial and the Australian government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Maclellan, Nic. (1999). "The Noumea accord and Decolonisation in New Caledonia", *The Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 34, No. 3: 245—252 at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00223349908572908>

National Archives of Australia, "The Colombo Plan" at <https://www.destinationaustralia.gov.au/stories/work-play/colombo-plan>

Parameswaran, Prashanth. (2018). "What's in the New Australia-Indonesia Military Pact?", *The Diplomat*, at <https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/whats-in-the-new-australia-indonesia-military-pact/>.

Payne, Marise. (2018). "Sub-regional Defence Ministers' meeting on Counter-Terrorism: the Perth Meeting concludes", Department of defence, at <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/media-releases/sub-regional-defence-ministers-meeting-counter-terrorism-perth>

Schreer, Benjamin. (2013). "Why a stronger Indonesian military is good for Australia (but is still a long way off)", *The Strategist*, 12 November 2013 at <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/why-a-stronger-indonesian-military-is-good-for-australia-but-is-still-a-long-way-off/>

Shackleton, Shirley. (2010). *Circle of Silence: A Personal testimony* Testimony Before, During and After Balibo, Murdoch Books.

Silverman, Jerry Mark. (1975). "The Domino Theory: Alternatives to a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 15, No. 11: 915-939 at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2643548?seq=1> .

Willingham, Richard., and Allard, Tom. (2011). "Ban on live cattle trade to Indonesia" in *The Sydney morning Herald*, at <https://www.smh.com.au/national/ban-on-live-cattle-trade-to-indonesia-20110607-1frdg.html>

Wood, Richard. "Insult against Indonesia founding fathers at heart of defence row", *9News*, at <https://www.9news.com.au/national/insult-against-indonesia-values-at-core-of-defence-row/aea29f24-ccb5-4e29-9265-15075e22db63>

**MHi**  
MAGISTER HUMANISIA INTERNASIONAL



<http://ejournal.fisip.unjani.ac.id/>