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Indonesia as a growing maritime power: possible implications for Australia

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Indonesia as a growing maritime power: possible implications for Australia

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There are two reasons why Australia should be interested in the new but now much-discussed maritime aspirations of Indonesia and the trials and tribulations Indonesia faces in turning those aspirations into reality. The first and most obvious is that the maritime performance of its nearest and potentially most powerful neighbour are bound to play an important role in shaping the context in which Australia itself defines its own maritime interests and acts to defend them. The emergence of a new and significant maritime power in Australia's immediate strategic vicinity is bound to be a matter of major interest.

The second reason is perhaps a little less obvious, and is the focus of this paper. Indonesia and Australia are alike in being Indo-Pacific countries that are growing their maritime and naval forces. All around the region - from China to Brunei - naval modernisation is proceeding apace, such that for the first time in 400 years, Asian naval spending exceeds that of Western Europe.¹ In sharp distinction to their European counterparts, Asian navies are making use of expanding budgets to develop new operational aspirations, to go further afield and to perform increasingly ambitious tasks. Because some of these tasks imply competition rather than cooperation between navies, there are even probably exaggerated fears of a naval arms race developing in the region with unforeseeable but portentous implications for regional stability.²

Given the current level of dispute in the South and East China seas, it is perhaps unsurprising that the focus of most current discussion should be on the causes, prospects and possible consequences of growing maritime power and naval expansion in the region, rather than on the problems that countries face in turning such plans into reality. But in fact there are a great many hurdles and challenges to be overcome before this can be done. Although every country is unique in its geo-strategic setting, cultural expectation, economic requirements and resources, they all face similar challenges. Accordingly, Indonesia's experience in growing its maritime power will not be of interest to Australia solely in terms of the possible product, but also as a particular illustration of the *process* of becoming a maritime power. An exercise in contrast and comparison between different countries in how they set about a common task like building a bigger navy may well provide a better understanding of the problems that each faces in doing so.

But, first, a short excursion into definitions seems necessary. This paper draws a sharp distinction between 'being maritime' and 'being a maritime power'. Being maritime - or not - is often a matter of circumstance, something over which a country has little or no control. It means simply having maritime interests that derive from the international context in which countries find themselves, whether they like it or not. These maritime interests may derive from simple geography and the economic imperatives it sets. They may be determined by experience, habits of thought, culture and practice that are the consequence of long years of responding to these maritime circumstances. Some of these interests bear a distinct similarity to Mahan's famous conditions for sea power.³ But the point is that they are interests only. They do not imply the capability to defend or develop them.

Being a maritime power, on the other hand, means having just such a capability to some extent or other. Most, perhaps all, countries will naturally want to become maritime powers in this sense, because it means being able to turn having maritime interests into an advantage and to greater control over one's destiny. It requires an enhanced willingness and capacity to respond actively to one's circumstances. But Indonesia's recent and current experience shows that growing maritime power in this way is not easy. That experience has lessons to teach.

Setting the Maritime Agenda

Indonesia's long-term geo-strategic circumstances, most obviously its geographic position and conformation, produces the country's maritime interests. Firstly, it is an archipelago of 18,000 islands and five million km² of water. Even for Indonesia to *be* a country requires the capacity to

control events in the waters that divide its very scattered bits of real estate. Those islands are very diverse too. Because of their physical nature, and their varying soil fertility, some of the islands depend on the resources of the sea, but others do not. Distance from the main manufacturing centres makes a huge difference too. A bag of cement costs ten times in Papua what it does in Java; this has considerable consequences for economic development. For all these reasons, Indonesia's leaders have long developed an 'archipelagic outlook' [*Wawasan Nusantara*], which often means an acute sensitivity to the presence of foreign ships in 'Indonesian waters', however defined.⁴ Simply by being there, they may threaten Indonesia's nationhood. For all the Indonesian navy's aspirations to build on its experience off the Lebanon and to travel afar, necessarily, its sea focus is necessarily very local - at least for the time being.

There is, however, little reason to suppose that things will necessarily stay that way. Now, senior figures are talking of Indonesia building a 'world class navy'. Instead, there are many reasons to think that a successful Indonesian navy will aspire to transition through brown, green and blue waters, to shift from the near seas to the far seas just as the Chinese navy appears to be doing.⁵ It is as though this were an iron law of naval development, other things being equal.

This can be reinforced by the appeal to history, especially harking back to the old Srivijaya and Majapahit empires five and six hundred years ago, when local rulers developed powerful fleets to conquer others all the way up southern Thailand and the Philippines and to control local seas. Sceptics though argue that these were just transient regional empires; in no real sense were they 'Indonesian'. Indeed most Indonesians have probably never heard of them.

Indonesia is also the link between two oceans: the Indian and the Pacific. A third of the world's shipping and 2500 liquefied natural gas carriers pass through its waters every year. Indonesia is, whether it likes or not, a global maritime axis or fulcrum. Two points arise. First, the country's current leaders complain that passing traffic does just that - it passes through, without providing much in the way of benefit to Indonesia. Only if this traffic provides added value to the Indonesian economy, they say, will the country develop its potential and improve life for its inhabitants. Second, the fact that this is a sea route of global significance means that outsiders are hugely interested in it.

The current expression of that external interest is how should Indonesia respond to China's controversial concept of the '21st Century Maritime Silk Road' - which aims to link China to the outer world through the Indian Ocean? Should it be welcomed as a source of financial investment in Indonesia's decrepit port infrastructure or feared as a potential source of strategic domination? Given the wariness of India, the United States and other countries to China's maritime vision, how should Indonesia react?

The matter is complicated by the third of Indonesia's maritime interests - its jurisdictional holdings in local seas and not least in the South China Sea. Jurisdiction over these areas, and of the oil, gas and fish they contain, remains contentious. Indonesia is in dispute with several of its neighbours. This includes China whose infamous '9-dash line' overlaps the Indonesian exclusive economic zone in the Natuna island area where some of its most critical gas resources are to be found. Indonesia has long considered itself *not* to be a claimant to the South China Sea and hence not directly involved in the increasingly rancorous dispute in the area. But Indonesians are beginning to accept that in fact it is, as China increasingly asserts its interests in the region.⁶ So, how is this to be managed alongside the challenge of the Maritime Silk Road?

For Jakarta this issue has to be set alongside much broader strategic currents in the Asia-Pacific region such as the developing relationship between China and the United States and between north and southeast Asia - and indeed the slow development of an ASEAN political and economic community. As a function of the sheer size of its population and its enormous economic potential, Indonesia has long thought of itself a leading member of the non-aligned world and a pacesetter for ASEAN. Given the fact that in such a maritime area as the Asia-Pacific region all of these developments have significant maritime consequences; they too help set Indonesia's agenda.

The Vision

The recent result of all this has been a publicly articulated maritime vision for Indonesia that has commanded a great deal of interest within Indonesia and the wider Asia-Pacific region. It was most clearly enunciated in a number of key speeches abroad and at home by one of the candidates and his advisors in last year's presidential election, and rather unexpectedly put into dramatic effect immediately after President Joko Widodo's (popularly known as Jokowi) presidential victory. Broadly the Jokowi maritime vision, draws attention to the importance of the sea to Indonesia, makes investment in the country's maritime and port infrastructure, its coastguard and navy a major priority, plans to overhaul the maritime administration and to assert control over Indonesian waters and foreign vessels which misuse them. It is a holistic, all-round and ambitious project. It directly confronts the issue of how, exactly, one 'grows' maritime power. But how to implement the vision? What are the problems, the prospects and the likely consequences - and what are the lessons for the rest of us?

Implementing the Vision

Looking at the problem theoretically, the task of becoming 'a maritime power' would appear to be fairly straightforward. It would seem to be largely a matter of reconciling ends, ways and means at a series of cascading decision-making levels ranging from the grand strategic at the top of the hierarchy to the tactical at the bottom. The devil, though, is in the practical details. It is these that make the task so difficult. For each country, the practical details are different, in consequence of their geography, political and strategic culture, economic state and general circumstances. But while their experience may be very different, there do appear to be a number of common factors that determine the relative success or failure of a country's maritime development.

In responding to these challenges, four broad tiers of decision-making are particularly important:

- policy making at the level of grand strategy
- grand strategy making
- military policy and strategy making
- naval policy and strategy making.

Of course the distinctions between these four tiers are fuzzy, but their hierarchy represents a process of identifying national objectives at the top and implementing the naval means of securing them at the bottom. At every stage though, the relevant decision-makers have to reconcile ends (objectives), ways (methods) and means (tools and procedures). Major problems at any level can cascade down causing further difficulties lower in the hierarchy; inevitably, a feedback system can work its way up the hierarchy too. After all, a poor strategist does not take at least some account of his likely means when deciding his operational objectives and course of action.

Tier 1: Deciding National Security Policy

At the very top of the decision-making hierarchy, the task is to identify national objectives and to decide their relative importance and priority; and then to invest these objectives with the authority they need to command the necessary support and resources. This is a matter of policy, not strategy, making. This has to be done before those lower in the hierarchy can address the strategic issues of deciding how those objectives should be met. Moreover, Indonesia's effort to articulate the vision, in order to provide guidance is notably ambitious in that it is maritime rather than merely naval.

Many even inside Indonesia's maritime community question the level of detail in the vision as so far enunciated by the Jokowi administration. For example, considerable investment money was promised for upgrading the country's ports - but they ask, should this precede or follow the economic development of the specific islands? Should it be targeted at domestic inter-island

shipping or at luring in passing international shipping? Many such details remain unclear. Nonetheless, the overall maritime aspiration of the new administration is clear enough.

What is much more questionable is whether the president, even one as popular as Jokowi has the necessary political authority to drive the project through. Political authority in Indonesia is divided vertically between the centre (Jakarta) and the islands and horizontally (between president and the legislature, and between the different agencies of government and between the agencies of government and the political parties and interest groups). In a situation where you can have the *Jakarta Post* reporting that the chief of police has simply refused to obey the president over a corruption-related issue, there are clear limits on the president's capacity to drive his policy through.⁷ This is in strong contrast to the situation in China where an analogous aspiration to become a maritime power is being driven by a president, Xi Jinping, who is clearly the most powerful holder of the post since Mao and hence in a much stronger position to command outcomes. In comparison with China and indeed Australia, the labyrinthine nature of Indonesia's bureaucracy and the sheer complexity of its institutional and constitutional arrangements makes strong leadership difficult. This has been evident in the country's long struggle to establish an effective coastguard system.⁸

The challenges facing decision-makers are clearly comprehensive in that they include all aspects of a country's activity and interests - the political, social, economic, legal and military. For this reason, decision-making in national security policy likewise requires a comprehensive approach in which all aspects of a country's interests are represented, prioritised and effectively integrated. One increasingly common way of doing this is the formation of some sort of national security council system that represents all stakeholders at this level. In his election campaign, Jokowi promised to set such a system up, and has indeed done so, but some have been disappointed by some of the people he appointed to it, and for that matter to his cabinet too.

The military in general and the Army in particular are now much less important in national life and policy making than they used to be. In some ways, this is helpful since the Army's priorities were naturally land-centric, but it reduces the voice of the Navy too. It is clear that now the Indonesian military do not have the direct access to the top enjoyed for example by the Chinese navy. This allows the Chinese navy both to help shape and to reflect leadership perceptions of the maritime requirement in a manner that their Indonesian and indeed Australian equivalents might envy.⁹ This is a time of great change but it is far from clear, moreover, that the necessary integration of the view points of all the relevant stakeholders at this level has as yet been accomplished.

Two problems that affect prospects for maritime development often characterise this level of policy decision-making. The first is the problem of sea-blindness. Sea-blindness is a condition which leads sufferers either vastly to under-rate the relative importance of the maritime domain or which leads them to acknowledge this in theory but to delay or postpone measures to protect maritime interests to some later and unspecified date after more apparently urgent national requirements are met. For this reason, 'maritime interests' are not handed down for further urgent consideration lower in the policy and strategy making hierarchy. Despite its maritime setting, Indonesia has long suffered from this culturally. Many islanders turn their backs on the sea, seeing it more a source of vulnerability than of opportunity. This encourages sea-blindness.

The Jokowi administration is seeking to combat this by constant speeches and exhibitions to articulate the vision and exhibitions and by romantic maritime glories of the Srivijaya and Majahapit empires.¹⁰ In his inaugural speech Jokowi promised,

to do our utmost to regain Indonesia's status as a maritime state. Oceans, seas, straits and peninsulas are the future of our civilisation. We have long been neglecting the sea, ocean, strait and peninsula. Now it is the time for us to regain all so that the motto of our predecessors Jalesveva Jayamahe, that in sea we will be glorious, will echo again.¹¹

The same message is hammered home by dramatic political theatre - such as the very public sinking of foreign fishing boats, which undoubtedly goes down well with many Indonesians, if not their regional neighbours.

Another common problem is that of having to 'see through a glass darkly'. It is uniformly and intrinsically difficult for foreign ministries or treasuries to predict the future and to gauge its requirements. The extent of this problem is such that it may seem naively optimistic to expect much in the way of a guiding national policy in the first place. Wide consultation with non-military sources of expertise may help articulate policy alternatives and faster and more effective responses to unexpected developments. For that to happen, though, there needs to be an informed 'commentariat' (derived essentially from the university sector and national think tanks) and a willingness for policy-makers to engage with them openly. In Indonesia articulation both before and after the election has made the topic of Indonesia as a maritime power for the first time a subject of national discourse.¹² While it is growing and while the military do have their own internal think tanks, Indonesia's informed and independent commentariat remains very small - certainly when compared to Australia's.

Without such internal and external debate, policy statements will tend to be bland enough to cope with the variety of consequences of their being unable to predict what is likely to happen and so advise what their country must do in defence of national interest - and when. Options are maintained rather than prioritised. There is talk of balanced approaches towards the future, which in practical terms offer very little real guidance to decision-makers lower down in the system. In Indonesia, critics of the 2008 defence white paper complained that it provided little real guidance for the Ministry of Defence to define the objectives on which it should base its acquisition planning.¹³ When this happens, those lower in the hierarchy either follow the same line and preserve options rather than determine priorities, or, more insidiously, they decide their own way forward in the light of decisions which they think the policy-makers above them should have made, but did not. Amongst the consequences of this are political, economic, or military decisions made largely for narrow sectional reasons.

Finally, deficiencies in the national maritime defence industrial base limit the country's maritime economic development, restrict governmental revenue, and act on a brake on naval aspirations. But attempting to deal with this problem may itself generate long term economic priorities that conflict with the Navy's short term ones. Here, then, there are clashes of interest between different groups within the broader maritime community. Which should get the priority the civilian or the military domains? The Navy, the coastguard or the civilian port infrastructure - and which ports, where? And who can and should make the decisions?

Tier 2: National Defence and Security Strategy Making

This cabinet-level tier is largely a matter of identifying the ways and means by which policy objectives are to be achieved and of providing the necessary resources. Here general policy directions are translated into practical action across the whole front of government activity. In this, the maritime dimension takes its place alongside all the others in the consequent jostling for resources and budgetary priority. Here the issue is to identify the extent to which the various levers of national power can most effectively contribute to the general policy objectives identified earlier and to ensure that each 'lever' is provided with the resources necessary for the task.

Since government resources anywhere are never the equal of possible commitments, this is likely to be an essentially *competitive* process and the political standing of the advocates of each dimension of policy is likely to be critical to their success. Here, the maritime interest's capacity to get its case 'heard' depends on the attitudes of the political class and their willingness to advance it.

Indonesia benefits here at least in the sense that maritime development has been authorised at the highest level, and the objectives of a substantial government investment in the maritime industries, a greatly increased rate of foreign investment and increasing the defence budget from 0.9 per cent to

1.5 per cent have been clearly articulated. Whether these initiatives will succeed at the cabinet and legislature levels however remains to be seen.¹⁴ There were however, clear moves in the same direction even before Jokowi took over, which included making the ‘empowerment’ of the defence industry one of eight national priorities for the state budget, alongside such high priority areas as infrastructure investment.¹⁵

To try to get the maritime community to work better together, Jokowi has set up a new Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs, but it does just that, it coordinates. As yet it has neither the responsibility nor the budget to run maritime affairs. There would be tremendous bureaucratic resistance to significant moves in that direction. Nonetheless the maritime case is now being better heard and better financed than it was.

Tier 3: Defence Policy Making at the Ministry Level

At this third (Ministry) level, it is a question of implementing broader decisions taken higher up, within the constraints of the resources allocated. Each section of the maritime community, the industrial, the Navy and the coastguard, have to identify their policy ‘ends’ or objectives, deduce their strategy and decide their ‘ways’ and allocate their ‘means’. For the military this will ideally be articulated in some kind of defence white paper that establishes identified ends for those lower in the hierarchy to deliver by various ways and means. As also in Australia, this for Indonesia is an occasional rather than an annual event.¹⁶ From now on, this paper will concentrate on the navy as just one element of the maritime cause.

The Indonesian navy already aspires to be a world-class one, and an implementing program for a ‘minimum essential force’ to be achieved by 2024. This it hopes will allow it when working alongside the coastguard agencies to exercise the necessary jurisdiction over Indonesian waters, and where necessary represent Indonesian interests overseas.¹⁷ But it has had plans before which came to nothing or very little. So what is necessary to get them realised this time?

Defence is beginning to benefit from the presidential intent to raise defence spending to 1.5 per cent of an increasingly impressive gross domestic product that grows 5-7 per cent every year. This is clearly to the good, but in Indonesia, there is as yet little evidence of that real ‘jointery’ in defence policy formulation, command arrangements, materiel acquisition and professional military education that best facilitates a maritime rather than merely naval approach to national defence. The differences between the Navy and the Air Force were exhibited by their differing claims and only partly coordinated response in the recent search for the missing Air Asia plane.

Reforms have been urged and Jokowi has talked of the ‘empowerment of an integrated system of armed forces’ but what that will produce remains to be seen.¹⁸ There are however encouraging moves towards the establishment of three joint commands covering the whole of the archipelago and although the Army remains dominant, progress is being made.

As anywhere else, a chief of navy cannot himself decide to buy a new amphibious ship, for example. Instead, he will have to pass this up through the Ministry of Defence for a decision at cabinet or presidential level. He will do his best to oil the wheels in public statements of need and shape the atmosphere through practical demonstration. The last navy chief publicly said that he could only afford enough fuel for about 50 patrol craft; if he had more, the implication was, he could catch and sink a lot more of the foreign boats stealing Indonesia’s fish. Such statements have an influence, of course.

Tier 4: Naval Policy and Strategy Making

The ways, ends and means approach applies just as much at the fourth level, the Navy department and its industrial and coastguard equivalents, where the maritime capabilities required to sustain the naval contribution towards the conduct of actual or potential military operations in support of national policy are developed. This requires the identification and prioritisation of naval roles and the development of the capabilities to perform them to the required degree. All of the potential

constraints noted above will apply here too, but there are additional complications that especially apply to naval development.

First the maritime scene incorporates and represents industrial, shipping and fishing interests as well as the Navy and the coastguard. It will require the Navy to work alongside the coastguard and other agencies of safety and law enforcement at sea operations. In all probability, this will require close cooperation with other like-minded navies as well. This may well be quite separate from, and to some extent competitive with, its linkages to the other two services

Second, to the extent that the procurement and acquisition of materiel is handled at the navy department level, then a series of non-military industrial considerations are likely to come into play. The acquisition of naval materiel is intrinsically difficult since both the lead times normally required to produce sophisticated naval weapons, sensors and platforms and their probable service life are likely to be very long. As a result, one recent study has called defence acquisition one of the most demanding forms of human activity.¹⁹ It necessarily results in a future-oriented procurement strategy that tends to suffer quite badly from the unpredictability of the future economic, budgetary and strategic environment. Typically, this will result in constant delays, cost increases and iterative tinkering with the original specification - and eventually in the failure or chronic delay of the program in ways which means that the navy tends to acquire new materiel in an piecemeal, opportunistic way rather than as part of an overall strategic plan and in a manner which may undermine its capacity to perform its present roles, let alone its future ones. The Indonesian navy has shown itself to be far from immune to such pressures and constraints.

Nor can the problem of corruption be safely ignored. It means that procurement decisions can be made for entirely the wrong kind of reasons. Corruption penalises Western companies that play by the rules compared to Russian and Chinese ones that do not necessarily. It means that lower grade officers engaged in maritime security operations can be bribed by law-breakers. All this will clearly impede the realisation of Indonesia as a maritime power.

Although the Navy is generally regarded as cleaner than most - and certainly much cleaner than the police, corruption is recognised as such a major problem in all walks of Indonesian life that the Corruption Eradication Commission [*Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*] (KPK), has been set up to deal with it. Curbing corruption is one of the president's main priorities. It is a complex issue, far from straight forward, that reflects cultural practice (the Javanese present-giving culture for example), comparatively low military pay and the requirement to secure agreement from other stakeholders. The KPK currently has no jurisdiction over the police or the military. Corruption is unlikely to be eradicated in the foreseeable future; at most it will be a reality to be better understood and managed.

Additionally, there are problems in the industrial capacity of the country to produce the equipment the Navy needs in terms of time, number and quality. Indonesia's critical defence industries such as PT Pinda and Surabaya-based PT PAL are underfunded, over-taxed and under-equipped. They are actively seeking new markets, both naval and commercial, not least because merely meeting government contracts earns them little if anything in the way of profit.²⁰ Indonesia has the largest maritime defence industrial base in Southeast Asia but still more than 70 per cent of ship components are imported, with little indigenous contribution apart from the provision of labour. The country's development of high-technology capabilities will be a major challenge, but there is nonetheless clear evidence of a government initiative to develop them, in both creation of a naval ship design centre and an offset policy intended to require foreign suppliers to return 85 per cent of the value of particular deals back to Indonesia through countertrade and offsets, of which 35 per cent must be directly in the defence sector.²¹

Here there might well also be a conflict of interest between the Navy in getting what it needs when it needs it, and industry in developing the research, development and production sustainability that is so much easier to provide if demand is predictable and so can be planned for in advance. Finally if government policy is to develop a defence industrial sector not just for strategic reasons, but to

help encourage the kind of industrial and technological skills needed for a modern developed economy, then there might well be conflict between it and the immediate operational needs of the Navy. Almost certainly, for example, indigenously produced platforms will cost more than those bought ‘off-the-shelf’, so the Navy will typically get fewer of them for its money.²²

This is nowhere more evident than in the acquisition of submarines, important for smaller forces because of their sea denial capabilities. In 2012 Indonesia announced its intention to buy three Korean designed and constructed submarines but also its intent to build a force of between 6 and 12 by 2024, along with a much enhanced industrial capability to develop as much production work as possible at home. This latter requirement is likely to cost more, increase developmental risk and impose delay. All of these problems of course find a distinct echo in Australia as in other countries. The balance of risk and of advantage in buying foreign as opposed to developing independent indigenous industrial capacity is one of the trickiest defence policy choices that governments face. This is all too obvious in the case of Australia’s *Collins* submarine class replacement program where buying from a known and tested foreign supplier might well yield significant financial savings and satisfy the navy’s immediate needs, but only at the cost of political support and prospects for developing the country’s long-term industrial economy. Additionally industrial cooperation with a suppliers such as Japan or Korea, or in other technical areas the United States has important strategic connotations as well which may, or may not, be a design requirement.²³

Coping with all these problems as well as delivering the kind of equipment and technical/managerial skill sets needed for the navy to be able to do what it needs to do requires enough ‘smart’ personnel to contribute to the naval policy and decision making system and indeed to influence policy at least at the Ministry level too. This demands heavy investment in professional military education and training, which it is beginning to get. All this may be particularly difficult for smaller navies like the Indonesian, which cannot generate the economies of scale in either platforms or personnel that make such problems more manageable.

However, since 2012, there has been a clear effort to develop a coherent and sufficiently resourced minimum essential force designed first to focus on internal threats and then on external pressures.²⁴ This notion was forward by the new administration, which has repeated the intention to produce an effective ‘green-water’ fleet capable of providing security against piracy and smuggling for the country’s extensive local waters by 2024. Some estimate that the sheer size of these waters would require some 700 platforms - compared to the 150 or so it has now.²⁵ Moreover, there seems to be an intent to support all this with improved infrastructure ashore. The aim of the minimum essential force is to acquire 274 ships divided between a striking force of 110 ships, a patrol force of 66 ships and a supporting force of 98 ships.

As far as the Navy is concerned, this is the target. The extent to which this target is achieved in just under ten years’ time will reflect the overall success of Indonesia in its project to grow its maritime power.

Conclusions and Lessons for Everyone

This brief review of the challenges that Indonesia faces in this project shows that they are unique in many respects, thanks to Indonesia’s particular geographic, domestic and strategic circumstances but many of them analogous to other countries as well. A few very broad conclusions about the process of growing maritime power might be ventured:

- Success will reflect not just what a country does, but the particular geographic and strategic circumstances that it finds itself in. Neighbours likewise developing their maritime power are likely to encourage the process elsewhere.
- It suggests that growing, maintaining or re-invigorating maritime power does not, *pace* Admiral Herbert Richmond, come naturally even for countries where their geographic and economic circumstances look so maritime.

- Although the Indonesian maritime project is now inevitably associated with President Jokowi, it is not in fact new. Building up Indonesia as a maritime power has been a key national preoccupation since the time of President Suharto. In Indonesia as elsewhere this will be a long-term project measured in decades rather than years and, sadly, perhaps of limited interest to politicians solely concerned with very short-term issues. There are no quick fixes.
- Success requires a coherent vision capable of persuasively integrating the interests of the country's major stakeholders, and one that is constantly articulated by word and deed. For all its ambiguities, there is no doubt that in Indonesia there is, for the moment, at least a sense of maritime vision. Australians may wonder what their equivalent of this is. It is one thing, also, to advocate naval expansion, quite another and much more difficult matter to advance maritime growth.
- It needs not just high-level buy-in, but a 'champion' to represent at the highest level the urgency of the maritime interest in an environment always likely to be highly competitive, especially in times of budgetary constraint. While it is true that the diffusion of political authority in Indonesia means that President Jokowi is in a weaker position to advance the maritime cause than say, China's President Xi, the existence of such a high-level champion is undoubtedly of huge advantage when compared to countries where the chief of navy is delegated the task - if only because in the immortal words of Mandy Rice-Davies: 'He would say that, wouldn't he?'
- Success may breed success (and the reverse?). Aspirations may change, and with success, expand. There seems to be a historic predisposition for navies naturally to expand their interests from the near to the far seas. In the long term it would be surprising if a country with the massive resources and potential of Indonesia did not follow this pattern. But this does draw attention not just to their resource base but also to the country's institutional and socio-cultural ability to realise it

In short, the eventual outcome of the Indonesian maritime project, is likely to be of considerable significance to Australia and the rest of the Indo-Pacific region not just for the new ports and platforms it delivers but also for the insights it provides into the complexities of growing maritime power.

¹ Geoffrey Till, *Asian naval expansion: An Arms race in the making?*, IISS, *Adelphi Paper No's 432-433*, Routledge, London, 2012, pp. 31-32.

² Till, *Asian naval expansion: An Arms race in the making?*, pp. 31-32.

³ For further discussion of this see Geoffrey Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the 21st Century*, 3rd ed, Routledge, London, 2013, chapter 4.

⁴ Robert Cribb and Michael Ford, 'Indonesia as an Archipelago: managing islands, managing sea', in Robert Cribb and Michael Ford (eds), *Indonesia Beyond the water's edge: managing an Archipelagic state*, ISEAS Publishing, Singapore, 2009, p. 8.

⁵ Christopher H Sharman, *China Moves Out: Stepping Stones Toward a New Maritime Strategy*, China Strategic Perspectives no 9, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington DC, 2015.

⁶ James Hardy, 'Footprints in the sand', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 18 February 2015.

⁷ Haeril Halim, 'Police disobey Jokowi in KPK crisis', *Jakarta Post*, 2 March 2015.

⁸ Siswanto Rusdi, 'Indonesia's Quest for maritime Power: Vision or fantasy', *Jakarta Post*, 3 December 2014.

⁹ Sharman, *China Moves Out: Stepping Stones Toward a New Maritime Strategy*, p. 7.

¹⁰ Admiral Dr Marsetio, *Indonesian Sea Power*, Indoensian Defence University, Jakarta, 2014, pp. 5-14.

¹¹ 'Jokowi Inauguration Speech,' *KBRI Seoul*, <http://kbriseoul.kr/kbriseoul/index.php/en/2013-01-13-22-22-09/embassy-news/308-jokowi-inauguration-speech>.

¹² Vibhanshu Shekhar and Joseph Chinyong Liow, 'Indonesia as a Maritime Power: Jokowi's Vision, Strategies, and Obstacles Ahead', Brookings Institute, November 2014, www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2014/11/indonesia-maritime-liow-shekhar.

¹³ Jon Grevatt, 'Indonesia Intent', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 15 October 2014.

¹⁴ Shekhar & Liow, 'Indonesia as a Maritime Power: Jokowi's Vision, Strategies, and Obstacles Ahead'.

¹⁵ Jon Grevatt, 'Indonesia increases defence budget by 14%', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 27 August 2014.

¹⁶ Julian Kerr, 'Johnson confirms White paper plans', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 February 2014.

¹⁷ Admiral Dr Marsetio, 'The Indonesian Navy and the World's maritime Axis', presentation to the Sea Lines of Communication Conference, The Habibie Centre, Jakarta, 18 November 2014.

¹⁸ Jon Grevatt, 'Indonesian intent'.

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The Sea Power Centre - Australia was established to undertake activities to promote the study, discussion and awareness of naval strategy, doctrine, history and maritime issues within the Royal Australian Navy, the Department of Defence and the wider community. Its mission is:

- to promote understanding of sea power and its application to the security of Australia's national interests
- to manage the development of RAN doctrine and facilitate its incorporation into ADF doctrine
- to contribute to regional engagement
- to contribute to the development of maritime strategic concepts, and strategic and operational level doctrine, and facilitate informed force structure decisions
- to preserve, develop and promote Australian naval history.

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