

Indonesia's Defence White Paper 2015: A Boost for 'Global Maritime Fulcrum'?

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The latest version of [Indonesia's Defence White Paper](#) (DWP) was released in end April 2016. By that time, the Indonesian President Jokowi had completed over a year in office. The DWP says that given Indonesia's geo-strategic location, it must have a proper defence strategy. The need for Indonesia to bolster its maritime security to support the 'Global Maritime Fulcrum' (GMF) vision by 'managing its natural resources, border region and defence capabilities' also finds mention in the DWP.

The White Paper recognises the GMF and the attainment of the [Minimum Essential Forces \(MEF\)](#) target as official government policies. In this context, the essay aims to analyse the DWP and its relevance for the GMF vision.

National Defence Policy

The evolving strategic dynamics of the 'Asia Pacific' region and the presence of traditional as well as non-traditional security threats in this region are the driving factors behind Indonesia's defence strategy drawn up in the DWP. Besides, Indonesia still has some unresolved border disputes. Seeing the complex web of threats that can impact Indonesia's state sovereignty, territorial integrity and safety, the threats has been classified into hybrid threats, military threats and non-military threats.

Indonesia's national defence policy indicates a continuation of past trends. National defence is based on a ['Total Defence System'](#). This means that the citizens will

be equally responsible for national security along with the defence forces. Further, it lays out the country's defence policy combining military and non-military elements. For dealing with military threats, the *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI) will be the main component, supported by a [Reserve Component](#) and [Component Support](#). The non-military threats will be handled by Ministries outside the defence establishment based on the type and nature of the threat, supported by other elements of national power like the TNI and local governments. Finally, the TNI will continue to deal with the hybrid threat, assisted by a Reserve Component and a Support Component along with other non-defence ministries and institutions.

The key to national defence lies in building a strong defence force with deterrent capability. As an archipelagic and maritime country, Indonesia should have a bargaining position in maintaining its sovereignty, territorial integrity and safety. Given the sensitive situation around the Natuna islands, the development of defence forces in these areas is necessary.

Indonesia's national defence policy is also aimed at maintaining its territorial sovereignty, securing its marine resources, upholding its identity as an archipelagic country, and showcasing Indonesia as a maritime power. 'The attainment of the MEF targets through the induction of drones and satellite technology' has been outlined as a means to shape the GMF. Additionally 'defence industrial development' has also been pointed out as a tool for the attainment of the GMF vision. The national defence policy will be implemented based on the [Long Term Development Plan 2005-2025](#) (RPJP Nasional).

Context of the GMF

The GMF is an all-encompassing national vision which includes country's defence upgradation, maritime security, economic development, food security and revival of the maritime identity. Surprisingly, the DWP does not lay down a clear strategy for the realisation of the maritime security component of the GMF. The induction of drones and satellite technology stated in the DWP will not be adequate to give shape to the GMF.

The second phase of the MEF has already commenced, but the DWP does not indicate the plan to progress it further.

According to Indonesian scholars, the English version of 2015 DWP fails to capture the true essence of Jokowi's GMF vision. As pointed out by Ristian Supriyanto, the Indonesian version merely mentions the terms 'Poros Maritim Dunia'(GMF) and 'maritime' more than 17 and 24 times respectively, but draws no connection with Indonesia's strategy for achieving maritime security. The DWP states that Indonesia's defence expenditure will not exceed one per cent of its GDP in the next ten years. It stresses that Indonesia's defence modernisation is unlikely to lead to an arms race, and aims to achieve the goal of establishing Indonesia as a maritime power as outlined in the GMF. However, there is a distinction between being a merely 'maritime nation' and 'maritime power'. The DWP offers little in the way of strategizing as to how this transition is to be made.

The DWP acknowledges that the strategic policies of China, the US and the instability in the South China Sea will increasingly dominate Indonesia's strategic environment. However, it provides only a sketchy description as to how Indonesia's defence policy is crafted in response to that environment. Despite the GMF's central notion of Indonesia as an 'Indo-Pacific' power, the DWP still retains the old 'Asia-Pacific' geographical construct.

The DWP covers very comprehensively the wide spectrum of threats confronting the archipelagic nation. However, the continued reliance on 'Total Defence System' may be appropriate for internal security, but has limited applicability in achieving security in the global commons.

Another very important aspect which has been omitted in the DWP is the role of various maritime agencies in realizing the GMF vision. There has been abundant mention of the role of ministries and institutions in dealing with non-military and hybrid threats. But the DWP does not indicate how the newly modified [Maritime Security Agency \(Bakamla\)](#) fits into the organisational hierarchy. There is an implied

overlap between the functions of TNI-AL, BAKAMLA, and the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, with no clear mechanism for coordination outlined among the three.

Even though some aspects of the GMF like diplomacy and naval development have been addressed, the DWP gives no indication as to how Indonesia will secure its sea borne economic activity. The DWP has very little to offer in the context of the GMF. It is a clear example of the disjunct that exists between the aspirations of the national policy makers and in the strategy laid out by the defence strategists.

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