

## THE INDONESIAN DEFENSE UNIVERSITY: TRANSFORMING THE INDONESIAN MILITARY AND CREATING A BETTER PUBLIC AWARENESS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE SECTORS

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**T**oday, the Indonesian Military is still undergoing a transformational process towards a more modern and professional fighting force, a military that has the capacity and credibility to serve as our Nation's best in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Over a decade ago we were trapped in a situation whereby the military was excessively utilized to consolidate a regime's political power. Only after the 1997 economic and political crises, that

the Indonesian Military recognized the importance of reforming and repositioning itself in a newly, true democratic system. Paradigm has shifted over time. Our focus then has been more on changing our past military culture, which was heavily involved in domestic socio-political affairs, into a professional institution that cares only in national defense and security. Yet, one that will remain is our identity and the value of being the People's Army.



We come from the people, and therefore all efforts should be made for the betterness of our people. In this context, the togetherness and the unity between soldiers and citizens are not only desirable but also critical. We now fully understand that a soldier is a mere citizen in uniform, and when talking about security and defense, military is only a component, which needs to collaborate with other national components, including various governmental institutions as well as elements of civil society. The complexity and the

multidimensional challenges of the 21st century have required all nations, including Indonesia, to adapt in order to survive and keep up with history. Globalization is unavoidable. Therefore, rather than being entrapped in uncertainties, we should continue seeking greater opportunities that the globalization itself may offer in order to advance our society and civilization. If we turn on our televisions, we will be bombarded with a myriad of news about political and security unrests in Egypt, Libya and other Arab states, the prolonged financial

crises in several European countries, as well as problems occurring in regions, which were recently stricken by large-scale natural disasters. It is obvious that the world we live in is becoming older, more crowded and more complicated, and it seems that everything now has security implications. The ever-increasing non-traditional threats, which include terrorism, piracy, human and narco-trafficking, arms-smuggling, illegal fishing as well as many forms of intra-state conflicts, do not necessarily replace the traditional one, the inter-state conflict over territory that will involve military engagements. Although it has been predicted by many analysts that armed conflicts in this millennium will be much more limited in nature, and wars will continue to be waged by proxy, all nation-states cannot afford to discount any possible worst case scenarios. The recent tension in the Korean Peninsula has demonstrated that the old conflicts remain perilous and has the potential to breakout at any

given time. Even though today we no longer experience the so-called arms race, which was one of the features of the Cold War, in a multi-polar world, as countries become stronger economically they tend to modernize their military. Spending on hard power will not be considered as complementary to that on soft power; it is likely to be regarded as the primary effort for a country to possess a greater influence and bargaining power vis-à-vis other countries. Therefore, in this century, the Revolution in Military Affairs will be inevitable.

All these facts and trends strongly demand us to better understand the global strategic environment; to comprehend the fluid geopolitical situation in the region, including its current security architecture; and to appreciate the complexity of our own domestic challenges. And key to such a full-spectrum understanding is by having sufficient number of knowledgeable and capable human resources, which

can be produced through high-quality education. This is the primary reason of the establishment of the Indonesian Defense University (IDU) back in 2009. We acknowledge that IDU is a long overdue project. In the past, our military officers were only deemed to master the technical and tactical aspects of fighting a battle.



For so many years the necessity of understanding the broader picture as well as the higher level and the multiple layers of strategic calculus has been regarded as secondary. Prior to 2009 we did not possess any defense academic institution

that educate and train officers to acquire the relevant science and arts in managing defense and military operations at strategic level, both for war and other than war. The initiative to establish IDU came directly from President Yudhoyono who is a former General in the Indonesian Army. His directive was crystal clear, "IDU is projected to be one of the world-class universities, a Center of Excellence in Defense, Security, and Strategic Affairs." This is not only a milestone in our military educational system, but also in our national educational system. For the first time ever, we have a university, which academically confers a wide-range of defense and security related subjects, and more importantly prepares our future defense leaders and experts coming from military and civilian backgrounds. It can be said that IDU will serve as a melting point of all stakeholders in national defense and security. There should be no barriers between our men or women in uniforms and their counterparts coming from different organizations and academic

backgrounds. This proves that our military is no longer a “superman” who can do anything by himself. Collaboration is not only essential in the learning process, but also in the decision-making, policy-formulating and executing processes. Once again the initiative to establish IDU indicates that we are very serious in investing our human capital in taking up the current and future challenges.

So far two cohorts have graduated, with most of them went back to their respective military units and earned promotions as flag officers; while the civilian graduates successfully managed to get better jobs and positions at various institutions, both in government and non-government sectors. With their new defense academic expertise, they have been exposed to wider networks and opportunities, both at home and abroad. Some are currently working at top universities as full-time lecturers in international relations and strategic studies;

some are now contributing in the national's top newspaper companies as senior journalists and editors; some are now hired as professional engineers in Indonesia's defense industries; and some are receiving scholarships to pursue doctorates in Europe. These are just some of the examples of how our graduate students are appreciated by the society at large. They proved to be able to contribute more in their respective fields of work. The most important part is that our graduates have been able to develop better public awareness on the significance of having a strong defense posture, which inherently requires a larger amount of defense budget. This is because they now have the capacity to academically and objectively present the strategic reasoning of how the security and stability should exist in order to allow our national economy to grow, and hence why we need to allocate the adequate resources for modernizing our military and all related defense establishment, which are by no

means inexpensive. From a military perspective, such efforts proved to be very effective in getting our civil society appreciate what the Indonesian military is really doing at the moment, which is getting itself equipped with modern weapons system and advanced technology. In our definition of modern military,



which is reflected in the conception of Minimum Essential Forces (MEF), the Indonesian Military should encompass sufficient number of forces required to deter any potential threats that may endanger our sovereignty and territorial integrity. All services, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, are projected to procure the relevant weapons system and technology to meet that MEF posture. The

MEF posture does not mean that Indonesia will exercise a more aggressive posture towards its neighboring countries. Rather, our modernization agenda is intended to fill in the existing gap between what we currently have and what we should have with regard to the geographical and demographical size of our country, and Indonesia's threat perceptions, both actual and potential. We wish to see more fighter jets and transport aircrafts flying above our sky, we wish to see more battleships cruising our maritime territory, and we wish to see more tanks, APCs and artilleries providing speed, mobility and firepower for our Infantrymen. It should be highlighted that the Indonesian Military is and will always be taking side with our foreign policy “A Million Friends, Zero Enemies” as well as our National Leadership's directive to employ diplomatic and other all non-military resources in managing crises and resolving conflicts. However, should there be any worst-case scenario



by which all non-military resources are exhausted, then with our MEF posture the Indonesian Military is expected to be able to respond effectively.

We fully acknowledge that building a MEF posture is only one element of modernizing our fighting forces. There is no point of possessing hi-tech weapons system without having credible human resources. We should have such world-class soldiers to man world-class weapons system. We also need to have intelligent defense planners as well as knowledgeable and experienced policy makers. These requirements clearly indicate that our military calls for a high quality educational system, providing a continuous learning and training experience from the very basic technical and tactical levels to those

at operational, strategic and policy. IDU is expected to provide the latter. Normally, Captains like me, will only be required to master how to be a good Company Commander, or how to successfully counter insurgencies and defeat terrorist cells in technical and tactical terms. But now through IDU, junior officers will have the opportunity to explore their potentials to grasp the full meaning of defense and security; to understand how strategies and policies are crafted; and to appreciate why so many variables and aspects will intertwine in the process of resolving a particular conflict or war. At the end of the day, IDU will be so invaluable in terms of transforming mindset of our officers to view defense and security issues in a much broader context. Intangible value such as this will complete our modernization process in the long run.

The presence and values of IDU should not only be appreciated by the Indonesian Military internally, but also by the society in general.

Defense is not to be viewed as exclusive to the military alone. It is a business of every responsible citizen. The military will be the primary forces, yet the rest will take part as the reserve and supporting components. Therefore, it is imperative to prepare all citizens to have the required awareness and capacity to think and act accordingly when activated and mobilized during national emergency, including at times of large-scale natural disaster. Through IDU we expect to produce civilian defense cadres who have leadership qualities to influence their community in understanding various defense matters, which include the most likely and the most dangerous traditional and non-traditional security threats that can be perpetrated by both state and non-state actors.

The IDU also offers its students with a number of international exposures. Our students will have the opportunity to take part in

numerous overseas study visits and research fellowships, like the one in United States, China, France, Germany, and Australia as well as Singapore. We have established a number of strategic partnerships with several academic institutions from those countries. Such programs are aimed to provide the students with first-hand experience in attending classes in different academic environment abroad. This will allow them to have the capacity in communicating with both regional and global environment. As we all know that in the era of globalization, everything is interconnected. A problem in one part of the world will definitely impact on other parts of the globe. Such phenomenon is also valid for defense and security context. A conflict in a state will bring implications in its neighboring countries or other countries extended in the same region. Therefore, collaborative efforts in tackling common defense and security problems are essentially

required. In performing these efforts, a broad and good connection with myriads of international counterparts is significant for our students, particularly as nation's future defense leaders. That is the practice of "people to people contact" which builds and supports good and mutual inter-state relationship.

In Indonesia's higher educational system we recognize the Three Deeds of University, which include the education, the research and the societal contribution. For IDU, there are still plenty of rooms for improvement in all those three areas. As a newly established institution, capacity building is critically required to improve and to progress. We need to continue producing high-quality in-house faculty members who can deliver and share their expertise. The better the lecturers, the better will the outcome of the programs be. We also need to maintain good cooperation with our partner institutions, at home and abroad. In order to achieve a world-class university we need to ensure that

students of IDU will continue to be regionally and internationally exposed. Additionally, continuous efforts should be made to promote IDU to military officers and general public, such as practitioners, analysts and observers in defense and security issues, and journalists. Through an effective public relations strategy, it is expected that IDU will gain more recognition and hence more people will be interested to join the university.

Indonesian Defense University is by any standard unique compared to its counterparts. Domestically, only IDU can provide our citizens with defense and security expertise at the strategic level. Therefore, IDU should be able to take the lead in educating people and providing the wider opportunity for all stakeholders to actively participate in the process of creating better solutions for the many facets of defense and security challenges that we currently encounter.

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