

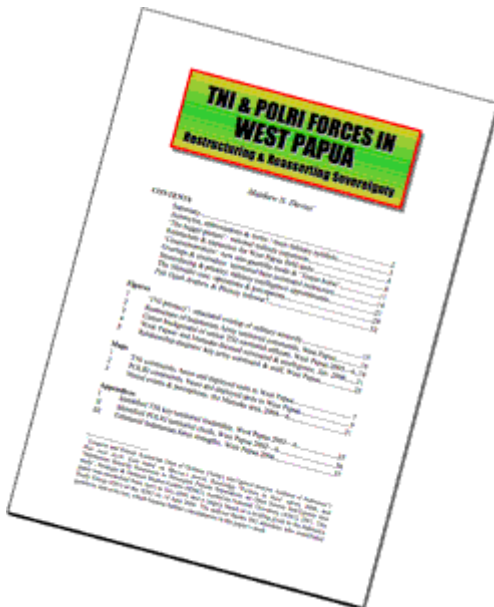
TNI and POLRI Forces in West Papua: Restructuring & Reasserting Sovereignty

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Summary



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Since the Aceh peace agreement of mid-2005, Indonesian military planning and operations in and around West Papua² revealed that area's priority and emphasis in defence and internal security. Upon the voyage of 43 asylum seekers to Australia in January 2006, West Papua's situation also took renewed prominence in bilateral diplomacy with Indonesia's southern neighbour.

The confrontational Indonesia-Australia diplomatic posturing from early 2006 occurred amid a nationwide Indonesian plan for military expansion. Publicly available detail confirmed much of the

general planning, and major parts of its achievement, where changes appeared in locally based and deployed force composition, territorial structure and senior command and staff appointments. New local infantry formations reduced the dependency on centrally deployed units, while new special operations forces paralleled concurrent developments in other sites of Indonesian countersurgency. The issue of counterterrorism facilitated much of the political and bureaucratic means crucial for renewed TNI dominance of Indonesia's polity.

Recent events surrounding the voyage by 43 asylum seekers to Australia indicated sophisticated TNI-run psychological operations combining strategic-level concerns with past methods of infiltration and manipulation into West Papuan resistance groups and their sympathizers. Arrangements in command and control, alongside key officers' operational expertise and record, further indicated a TNI campaign to penetrate the Australian Government's leadership elite's 'decision cycle', or its basic, driving psychological processes around informal migration to its shores. Beneath the Indonesian military's planned ambitious and expensive, ongoing build-up and renewal, that most recent episode in Indonesian-Australian diplomacy indicated the Jakarta leadership elite's strategic-level success in West Papua operations. Such success would likely see West Papua become the table on which Indonesian leaders could bargain for the most beneficial results of a restored bilateral security treaty with Australia.

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