

## **Shared problems, shared interests: reframing Australia-Indonesia security relations**

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Against a background of recurring crises in Australia's most sensitive security relationship, one new approach to the security aspects of relations between Australia and Indonesia could be based on the possibilities of new communities of shared interests emerging to deal with the challenges of global problems faced by both societies. On the basis of careful examination of the potential and limitations of existing policy currents and, with a mapping of existing networks of social relationships between the two countries, it may be possible to provide an empirical and theoretical foundation to a new set of policy approaches to Australia-Indonesia security relationships. The key hypothesis is that global problems manifest in the fabric of the two societies, and whose causes lie beyond their national systems, will not only generate deep security challenges but also new possibilities of cross-border communities of shared interest. The secondary hypothesis is that this process will enhance the capacity to manage the difficult bilateral problems already evident by placing them in a context of larger security collaborations, albeit largely of a on-traditional kind, and relying more than in the past on leadership from non-state-actors.

The main argument here is that there is a need to re-think the analysis of relations between Indonesia and Australia, and equally, the kinds of politics that are conducted – and could be conducted – between the two states and social formations. It is concerned with the analytical underpinnings of the practical political processes of restructuring the boundaries of communities of shared interest and shared values. It is also derived from persisting limitations of much Australian and Indonesian media and academic commentary on the subject.

The very phrase 'the Australia-Indonesia relationship' has come to connote something discrete and reified, calling to mind a small furry animal-like object that can be prodded and poked on the consulting table, and have its temperature taken, and be pronounced – by a politically approved commentariat in both countries - as sick, damaged, critical, recovering, or in fine fettle. It is not that the political situations to which these labels were applied were not real – they often referred to situations with serious and all too often deadly consequences. But the phrasing and conceptualisation of 'the relationship' had the effect of carefully excluding both consideration of particular enduring problems and the voices of inappropriate would-be entrants into the discourse. But the question of how we in Australia think about Indonesia politically - not just analytically – is now very firmly on the agenda.

Let us begin with five concerns with the character of contemporary Australian relations with Indonesia. These are

- the ongoing volatility and fragility of the state-state relationship;
- persisting analytical deficiencies deriving from an unreflective commitment to methodological nationalism;
- the emergence of new types of problems affecting both countries: namely global problems such as climate change;
- declining resources in Australian society to understand Indonesian society;
- the uneven and limited success of democratic reform in Indonesia, and, despite economic growth, the enduring likelihood of serious social and political conflict and regime instability; and
- an Australian strategic culture marked by persistent and endemic ambivalence towards Indonesia, fundamental feelings of geographically defined vulnerability, and a commitment to the use of armed force in international affairs.

Many of these political and analytical difficulties flow from the structures of the relationship between the two countries – their states and their societies – and from their historical and contemporary locations in the wider world system.

## **The characteristics of the Australia-Indonesia relationship**

If Australia's relationship with the United States is the most important in Australian defence and foreign policy, then the almost equally important security relationship with Indonesia is the most sensitive and volatile. Crises are recurring and, because of their media treatment, are well known in Australia in iconic terms – East Timor, the Bali and Jakarta bombings, the drug possession and trafficking convictions of Schapelle Corby, Michelle Leslie and the 'Bali Nine', the Aceh tsunami, Papua, refugees, illegal fishing, people smugglers, ADF training of Indonesian forces and Kopassus in particular, Islamist terrorism, and most recently cruelty to beef cattle exported from Australia in Indonesian slaughterhouses. The raw material of these crises in the relationship is in large part generated from two sources. The first, as the live cattle trade, refugee, and drug-related incidents demonstrate, is a set of socially and politically mediated "cultural differences", mixed with a good measure of Australian domestic political concerns, selective attention and double standards. Most of the rest, setting the tone for the overall relationship, are driven by the character of the Indonesian political system, its inherent contest between centrifugal and centripetal forces, and the lack of restraint on militarised solutions to what are otherwise quite common and normal political problems. Both of these sets of drivers will continue to generate conflict. To take the highly salient example of Papua, with its multiple linkages to border control, relations with PNG, Australian perceptions of Islam and ethnicity (Aspinall, 2006), and concerns about human rights, the characteristics of the post-Suharto Indonesian political system operating on Papua will ensure continual potential for crisis (Chauvel, 2006).

Yet the structure and character of the relationship between the two states also influences the structure of conflict. In conventional wisdom, the defining characteristics of the relationship between the states derive from geography and history. In the mid-1990s, Gareth Evans made the point colourfully:

Australia and Indonesia are most unusual neighbours. More than any other two countries in the world living alongside each other we are

different – in languages, cultures, religions, history, ethnicity, population size, and in political, legal and social systems. We might as well be half a world apart (Evans, 1994).

The Secretary of the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs and former Ambassador to Australia, Imron Cotan, echoed these thoughts, seeing the two countries as,

absolutely different from one another, notably in terms of history, culture and political orientation’ (Cotan, 2005).

This conventional wisdom has important elements of truth that should not be forgotten, but there are also elements of exaggeration or misperception. Moreover, these are not the only significant elements in the structure of the state-state relationship and may not be the most important sources of conflict. A number of themes are immediately salient.

### *1. Ambiguous asymmetry*

In 2010 Australia, as a small rich country with a population of 22.6 million people had a Gross Domestic Product of US\$1,219 billion (13<sup>th</sup> in IMF rankings), and a GDP per capita of US\$54,869. In the same year Indonesia, as a large developing country with a population of 237.6 million people had a Gross Domestic Product of US\$695 billion (18<sup>th</sup> in IMF rankings), and a GDP per capita of US\$2,963 (International Monetary Fund 2010). While Australia likes to cultivate amnesia concerning the genocidal character of its settler colonial origins, both countries are largely the result of European colonialism coercing pre-existing societies to form complex social formations retaining structural and cultural qualities of both the pre-colonial and colonial periods.

The relationship between Indonesia and Australia is an asymmetrical one. The fundamental fact is that Indonesia is far more important to Australia’s security concerns than is Australia to Indonesia’s. However wounding the recognition may be to Australian narcissism, Australia is also much the less important in world affairs and world history in almost every respect, except through the size of its economy at this

point in history. The past two and a half centuries of history have weakened the Indonesian social formation to the point where a country one-tenth its population size can see itself as its equal in world politics. However, this is unlikely to persist for a comparable time in the future.

As Nancy Viviani reminded Australians some years ago, the bedrock asymmetry in the relationship derives from size and geo-politics:

Population size and military strength also matter in international relations. This means that, generally speaking, Indonesia carries more weight among Asian countries, including China and Japan, and with the U.S. and Europe, than Australia does (Viviani, 2000).

At root, geography and size mean that Indonesia matters a great deal more to Australia than Australia matters to Indonesia. One consequence of this asymmetry, as Viviani went on to say, is that

in any dispute with Indonesia, Australia stands to bear disproportionate costs to the bilateral relationship.

One mark of this recognition is the difference in academic, research and policy attention: the number of Indonesia specialists in Australian universities considerably outweighs the number of Australian specialist in Indonesian universities – in absolute terms, let alone proportionally to population. Moreover, in the Australian defence, intelligence and foreign affairs communities, deep knowledge and competence on Indonesian affairs is highly valued, ranking alongside or even above Chinese or Japanese competence.

For both countries, the United States is the key friendly country, though in both cases there are ambivalences and doubts. However, the ANZUS treaty notwithstanding, Indonesia is of much greater strategic importance to the United States than is Australia to the U.S, as demonstrated clearly during the 1959-1962 West New Guinea crisis, and recognized at the time by the Australian Minister for External affairs, Garfield Barwick. Viviani again noted that

Some Australians are confused by this because of the importance they attach to their alliance with the U.S., always expecting the U.S. to support Australia, regardless of its own interests (Viviani, 2000).

This is not to say that Australia is not very much closer to the United States on almost every contemporary issue of international security. Australia willingly and indeed enthusiastically provided substantial combat support for the United States-led wars in the Persian Gulf and Iraq, and after almost ten years of fighting, continues to do so in Afghanistan. Indonesia supported none in comparable fashion. Australia is host to a range of United States military and intelligence facilities under the rubric of 'joint facilities'. Several, especially in electronic and increasingly in space intelligence, are of great importance to the United States. The ANZUS alliance is of such importance in Australian strategic and popular culture that it is extraordinarily difficult, six decades after its establishment and even two decades after the end of the Cold War to conduct a meaningful debate in Australia on strategic options absent the US alliance.

On the contrary, successive Indonesian governments have pursued differing versions of a *bebas dan aktif* [free and active] foreign policy that has its roots in the formulation in 1948 by the country's first vice-president (and prime minister at the time), Mohammad Hatta: *mendayung di antara dua karang* – rowing between two reefs (Wuryandari 2008:42-43). Leaning sometimes to left until 1965, sometimes to right during the Cold War, post-New Order Indonesian governments have moved closer to the United States as a result of the demands of the US-led Global War on Terror – and the prospect of an end to Congressional bans on certain forms of military cooperation. In 2008 President Yudhoyono proposed forming 'a comprehensive partnership' with the United States, and evoked a positive response from the United States (United States, 2010).

## 2. *Asymmetry of threat perceptions*

Yet, this is a long way from a formal Indonesia-United States alliance, or from the depth of the Australian attachment to the United States. Indeed while Indonesia has drawn closer to the United States in the past five years or so, there is also an ambivalence about that shift amongst the Indonesian foreign policy and security elite.

Novotny's study of threat perceptions of the Indonesian foreign policy elite based mostly on interviews conducted in late 2004-early 2005, showed elite opinion divided and oscillating between 'love' and 'hate' – towards the United States, especially over the War on Terror. Novotny found that most of his interviewees

still consider the U.S. anti-terrorism campaign not as a direct threat to Indonesian national security but rather as an offence to the sensitivities and pride of the Indonesian people' (Novotny, 2010:139).

Novotny's interviewees showed an updated sense of traditional Indonesian nationalist concerns when they identified three non-traditional sources of contemporary American threat to Indonesia: U.S. power stemming from its prominent norm-building position; U.S. power over information and manipulation of international media; NGOs operating around Indonesia functioning as Washington's agents serving U.S. interests (Novotny, 2010:146).

Leaving aside the accuracy of these perceptions of threat, it is this type of threat cluster which, together with more conventional and traditional nationalist concerns, and the wider principle of a *bebas dan aktif* foreign policy, with its residues of non-alignment, which distinguishes Indonesian and Australian policy elites attitudes to the United States. Indonesia will always remain more important to the United States than Australia will be, and consequently, not least for that reason, Australia clings closer to its American ally, eschewing the doubts Indonesia believes it can afford to have.

For Australian strategic culture and consequently for its defence planners, Indonesia is the primary source of threat. Two former senior defence recently summarised the place of Indonesia in past Australian defence thinking, referring to then recently declassified *Strategic Basis* papers (Frühling, 2009a):

The simple facts of geography dictate that Indonesia is a country of abiding strategic importance to Australia. ... Australia has a permanent interest in Indonesia's friendship and stability. An Indonesia that became hostile could pose a serious threat to Australia's security. Australia's classified defence planning has long acknowledged that the most likely direct military threats would come 'from or through' the archipelago to our north (Dibb and Brabin-Smith, 2007: 67).

Looking forward, their former Defence Department colleague, Hugh White, in a sketch exploring possibilities of war for Australia over the next two decades scrutinised two possibilities, both of which he considered highly unlikely – war with Indonesia and war with China (White, 2002:259). But for this discussion of asymmetry between Australia and Indonesia what added significance was White’s emphasis on the ‘very distinctively Australian’ characteristics of Australian strategic culture. These include

a strong predilection to alliances; an almost equally strong disposition towards self-reliance; a highly possessive approach to the islands in our immediate neighbourhood, often manifested as a kind of Monroe Doctrine; an acute sense of vulnerability in relation to our sparsely populated north and west, including a persistent anxiety about invasion; an endemic ambivalence towards Indonesia, and an instinct for what at one time was called forward defence. These elements in turn are based on a deeply held sense of separateness from our regional environment, an undiminished adherence to the idea of the state as the key actor in the security arena, a belief in the enduring significance of armed force in the international system, and a strong apprehension of potential threats’ (White, 2002: 257).

Australians are often loathe to see their security policy as a substantially militarised one – in contrast, many of them would think, to Indonesia, or the United States. But White’s bravura insider’s sketch of Australian security culture leads to that conclusion, as well as to an understanding of the multiple drivers in that strategic culture that lead to an asymmetry in threat perceptions with Indonesian strategic culture.

There is however, one symmetrical aspect of threat perceptions. Australian and Indonesian public opinion polls in recent years show that roughly half of the public in each country does not have a good feeling about the other country. The Lowy Institute has conducted public opinion polls in Australia every year from 2006 asking respondents to rate their feelings about other countries on a scale from zero (cold and unfavourable) to 100. In no year did Indonesia rate above 50 for Australian respondents. In 2009



54% of Australians trusted Indonesia 'not at all' or 'not very much' to act responsibly in the world, with almost one-quarter (23%) of Australians trusting it 'not at all'.

In 2006, the only year in which Indonesians were asked about their feelings about trusting Australia, respondents scored an average of 51 (Hanson, 2010:6-7). Both countries are at best lukewarm and mistrustful towards the other.

Returning to elite perceptions, in the aftermath of the Australian role in the independence of East Timor, including the Howard government's 2004 declaration of a pre-emptive strike policy and of a 1,000 nautical mile Maritime Identification Zone which necessarily included Indonesian territorial waters, Australia's position in Indonesian elite security perceptions changed substantially. As one well-placed Indonesian friend put it in early 2007

For your information Indonesia's view of Australia has somewhat changed, from a harmless, though at times annoying, neighbour to a threat.

Conducted several years earlier, Novotny's interviews with his sample of the Indonesian foreign policy elite showed exactly this view, with Australia ranked as either the second or third most important threatening country – after the United States, and comparable with China. According to Novotny, three negative images of Australia 'overwhelmingly shared' by the Indonesian foreign policy elite gave rise to the sense of significant threat from Australia: the Australian role in the independence of Timor Leste; Australian embrace of the role of US Deputy Sheriff for Southeast Asia, and Australian perceived designs on West Papua – and beyond that, a challenge to the Indonesian *negara integralistik*.

Novotny provided no information as to whether the passing of time and subsequent events such as changes of government in Australia and the signing of the Lombok Treaty have assuaged the breadth and depth of these concerns. It is likely that the passing of time, the retirement of older political and bureaucratic players who built their careers in the New Order, reasonably successful cooperation over counter-terrorism, and increased aid after the Australian governmental and

community response to the 2004 tsunami in Aceh, may have had some effect. But it is unlikely that the bedrock of mistrust has been eroded much.

Watching Australia assessing the costs of ongoing support for the independent state of Timor Leste has given rise to a degree of Indonesian *schadenfreude*, seeing that commitment as a restraint on further Australian ambitions (Novotny 2010:262). The signing of the 2006 Lombok Accord, with its declaration of mutual respect for existing territorial definitions indicated the intention and commitment of the Australian state to override the concerns of Australian civil society groups about the justice and validity of the historical process by which the territory of the former Dutch colony of West New Guinea was incorporated into Indonesia.

### *3. State-state relations dominant, business links weak, and transnational civil society absent*

It is a commonplace that relations between the governments of Indonesia and Australia greatly outweigh all other components of the Australia-Indonesia relationship. The extent and intensity of government-government relations have greatly increased in recent years.

Trade and investment have increased in recent years, but remain lower than would be expected from comparable contiguous countries. Two-way merchandise trade amounted to \$8.6 billion in 2009, roughly evenly balanced, making Indonesia Australia's 13<sup>th</sup> ranked trading partner, and Australia Indonesia's 8<sup>th</sup> most important export partner. (DFAT, 2010:83) Australian investment in Indonesia, which amounted \$4.9 billion in 2009, is still low on the rankings of Australian investment abroad, while Indonesian investment in Australia was less than one-tenth the size at \$339 million (ABS, 2011).

Movements of people between the two countries show comparable disparities. While 16,000 Indonesian students were studying in Australia in 2008, less than 80 Australian undergraduates were studying in Indonesia for at least one semester in that year – and less than 60 the following year (Hanson, 2010: 7-8). Australian tourists still flock to Bali, but only a trickle comes the other way.

The substantial and illuminating report of the 2004 parliamentary inquiry into Australian relations with Indonesia, titled *Near Neighbours – Good Neighbours*, maintains that the picture of the connections between the two countries is ‘a richly textured and complex tapestry’, yielding ‘a multifaceted, multilevel, bilateral relationship. It is certainly true that the relationship operates at different levels and has a number of facets, but as the report concedes, it is an uneven affair (Foreign Affairs Sub Committee, 2004: paras. 1.27-1.29). Moreover, there is little support for the case that the relationship is ‘a richly textured and complex tapestry’. Indeed it is more like an poorly woven, ill-fitting and moth-eaten hand-me-down that needs serious repair if not replacing. The report began its chapter on ‘People’ by remarking

At the heart of Australia’s relationship with Indonesia is the relationship between the people of Indonesia and the people of Australia. One of the strongest themes that appeared in the evidence received during the course of this inquiry was the importance of the people-to-people links in building Australia’s relationship with Indonesia (Foreign Affairs Sub Committee, 2004: para 6.1).

Yet the report had remarkably little to say about the exact nature of those ‘people-to-people links’, other than to assert, without evidence, that ‘the relationship at this level is reasonably strong’ (Foreign Affairs Sub Committee, 2004: para 6.3). The remainder of the chapter is devoted to demonstrating the contrary case by documenting the collapse of teaching of Indonesian language and Indonesian studies in Australian high schools and universities, preceded by a heroically optimistic account of the work of the government’s Australia-Indonesia Institute.

There is little hard or systematic evidence to either support or contradict the Sub-Committee’s optimistic statement, but anecdotal evidence received informally from a range of Australians closely involved with Indonesia, in business, the community sector, academia and government confirms the impression that apart from tourism and government, Australians have very little to do with Indonesia – certainly nothing that would compare with what could be expected from equivalent situations – e.g. the United States and Mexico (TBI, 2011) or the interactions between western Europe, and north Africa (Anheier and Katz, 2004).

What is most striking, in comparison with data from the North American and European relations with less developed neighbouring countries, is an apparent almost complete absence of substantive transnational civil society relations between Indonesia and Australia – even on a hierarchical basis (c.f. Anheier and Katz, 2004). Examples of such relations immediately come to mind to suggest the contrary case, but it seems very likely that hard evidence would confirm their relative absence in the Australia-Indonesia case. Put simply, the impression is that apart from government and tourist connections, the two societies sit beside each other, do not know each other, do not like each other very much, and have relatively little to do with each other.

The scale of problem for Australians becomes clear if we ask our colleagues who are not professionally concerned with Indonesia: what prominent contemporary Indonesians, leaving aside presidents, can they name? In my anecdotal experience, for people concerned professionally with international relations and politics, but not themselves Indonesian specialists, the list tends to be very short – perhaps the advisor to former President Habibie, Dewi Fortuna Anwar; perhaps the ubiquitous conference attendee and former Opsus associate Jusuf Wanandi; perhaps the late Pramoedya Ananta Toer – but I suspect not many more. Such a short list would be shorter still if the question was put to colleagues in other disciplines, or outside academia.

The proximate source of the problem, but hardly the real explanation, becomes clear when you ask yourself when was the last time you read an Indonesian opinion piece in an Australian newspaper? On Papua, on refugees, on problems of border control, on relations with Timor, on bird flu, on the status of the Aceh peace agreement, on the ongoing conflict in the Maluku, on the regulation of the Malacca Straits, on taxation or investment climates, or just plain Indonesian daily political developments, to say nothing of the systemic problems that Indonesia faces? In fact there are no Indonesian voices to be heard – all are filtered through Australian commentary and “expertise”.

It is hardly surprising that the relationship becomes reified so readily, since it is so thin, so friable and fragile, so identified with government-government relations, and marked by the absence of deep transnational and inter-penetrating civil society and institutional relationships.

#### 4. *Dominance of leader-to-leader relations*

Another consequence of the weakness of broad and deep business and civil society linkages between the two countries, when combined with the inherent capacity of the Indonesian political system to give rise to challenges to international norms of civil rights and human security, is a fragility in Australian-Indonesian relationships and over reliance on relations between necessarily transient leaders. In the absence of multiple and diverse institutional and community linkages and pressures, whispers in the ears of strong-minded leaders hope to carry the day. The dominance of the relationship by state-state relations, in the almost complete absence of substantive transnational civil society relations and the remarkably thin market relationship, in combination with the inherent capacity of the Indonesian political system to give rise to challenges to international norms of civil rights and human security, means inevitable fragility and reliance on the somewhat fanciful or labile characteristics of the putative relations between leaders.

Leaders are always important to some degree in such relationships, but they have been particularly so on the Australian side. The consequences of the personal relationships between Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and President Suharto between 1973 and 1975, or between Prime Minister Paul Keating and President Suharto two decades later immediately come to mind.

But there is a wider set of leadership connections, which can be identified following the model of David Lampton's analysis of the development of the China-United States relationship in the last decade of the twentieth century in his *Same Bed, Different Dreams* (2001). Lampton suggests that at least four sets of leaders are important in a bilateral relationship, each of which have capacity for personal influence on decision-making and policy execution. In all levels, there is much to be explored beyond what is possible here, and the examples below are highly selective, for illustrative and once again preliminary purposes.

The first and most obvious layer is that of the constitutionally empowered leaders: the presidents and prime ministers, and the members of their cabinets. In the present case, on the Australian side, in most crises the character, attitudes and frame

of thinking of the leadership has been important. Amongst prime ministers, the most striking, and tragic, example must be Whitlam's forceful personal role in the formulation of policy towards the decolonisation of Portuguese Timor in 1974-75, with disastrous consequences for East Timor, and to a very considerable extent, for both Indonesia and Australia.

This pattern was repeated two decades later with Keating and Suharto in their six meetings, with his affection for Suharto, his intentional setting aside of the New Order's foundations of terror, and determination to personally establish a firm foundation for future relations. The results included the Australia-Indonesia Ministerial Forum, the secretly negotiated 1995 Australia-Indonesia Security Agreement, and a failure to foresee the end of the New Order and the shift of fortunes for East Timor, despite the best of intelligence resources.

The second layer, those Lampton describes as the controllers of the 'strategic passes' of policy-making, have had an equally large role on the Australian side of the relationship. Two generations before Keating, Garfield Barwick played a key role as Minister for External Affairs in deflecting Prime Minister Menzies' Anglo-centric racism concerning Indonesia towards a more pro-American position focussing on preventing a communist takeover in Indonesia rather than simply preserving the imperial construct of Malaysia. In this Barwick was allied to a remarkable group of public servants in the Department of External Affairs, and to some extent in defence, exemplified by K.C.O. 'Mick' Shann, Thomas Critchley, Gordon Jockel and Robert Furlonger, whose role in the period of Confrontation is told in Woodard's account of 'best practice in Australia's foreign policy' (1998). In earlier years John Burton's role in External Affairs, and in later years Arthur Tange's in Defence, and Richard Woolcott's in Foreign Affairs exemplify, for better or worse, Lampton's controllers of the 'strategic passes' of Australian policy-making.

A third layer of leaders are informal power holders who maintain influence and access to decision-makers irrespective of their formal position at any given time, including 'wise elders'. In the Australian case concerning relations with Indonesia, these are not easy to spot. Woolcott has already been mentioned – and was, for example, tapped in retirement by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to direct Rudd's ill-fated and inept campaign for a new Asia-Pacific community organization. Allan Taylor,

another former ambassador to Indonesia, and former head of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS), was consulted by both sides of politics on matters Indonesian. But this is a category that requires closer scrutiny. Two other business figures and private sector advisers on Indonesian affairs to successive Australian governments were the first head of the ASIS Jakarta station, the late Murray Clapham, and the former foreign policy advisor to Gough Whitlam over East Timor, the late Geoff Forrester.

The fourth layer Lampton suggests are informal power-holders. These are citizens who use their power to shape the broader context in which management of the relationship occurs, as well as those who have a capacity to intervene on specific issues. They may be in business, labour circles, NGOs, religious organizations, or thinktanks. One key Australian personal linkage to Indonesian politics for a time was the formateur of the Democratic Labor Party, B.A.Santamaria, through his connections with Father Joop Beek, a Jesuit priest and anti-communist activist. Beek often visited Australia in the 1960s, and had a strong relationship with Santamaria. Beek was very close involved with Ali Moertopo's Opsus, particularly through the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and his two most prominent proteges, Harry Tjan and Jusuf Wanandi [Liem Bian Kie] (Tanter, 1992: 319-321). Another example, not unrelated, is the connection between Bob Hawke and Ali Moertopo. The latter told an entirely believable story of a drunken night getting to know 'my mate, Bob Hawke', then head of the Australian trade union movement, and subsequently Prime Minister (Tanter, 1992: 448).

### **Australian security policy currents towards Indonesia**

One useful framework for understanding the impact of elite politics on policy formulation is Franz Schurmann's concept of *policy currents* within and transecting the state (Schurmann, 1974). These streams of policy advocacy may have tangible linkages to the wider society, but especially in the area of foreign and defence policy, are generally a matter of largely autonomous elite debate and division on matters of specific policy direction. These sit within a wider, socially- and politically-structured consensus that sets the parameters of what is politically acceptable – beyond which

alternatives are almost literally, unspeakable. In the United States during the Cold War, the prevailing anti-communist orthodoxy, rooted in defence of the capitalist world system and specific interests of American capital, made support for revolutionary movements unspeakable in respectable policy circles. However, within those constraints, the choices of alternative policy frameworks between roll-back, containment and détente with the communist world were the subject of deep conflict within the United States foreign policy and security community elites. These distinct policy currents within the state gave rise to elite politics based on bureaucratic and budgetary power, articulated not only through policy positions on specific matters but also, over time, rather abstract outlooks and even ideological statements.

Australian policy towards Indonesia has covered a wide range of positions since 1945, ranging from the brief period of UN-centred support during the revolution through two periods of almost overt military conflict (Borneo and Timor) to the current close institutional intertwining. Very occasionally Australian policy reflected - or at least responded to - articulated public pressure. There were several substantial drivers behind Prime Minister John Howard's decision in early September 1999 to press President Clinton to at least not block moves in the United Nations Security Council to authorise the formation of a UN-mandated multinational intervention. Not least were his own concern for a resolution in East Timor, and his ambition for a larger regional role for Australia (Fernandes, 2004; Pietsch, 2009; Connery 2010).

Yet a crucial element often neglected was the fact that the former Labor Party shadow Foreign affairs spokesman Laurie Brereton had, to the ire of his colleagues such Kim Beazley and Gareth Evans, articulated an alternative Labor Party position in support of East Timorese self-determination, and in favour of external intervention to realise that possibility. This shift broke more than two decades of bilateral conservative and Labor agreement to support Indonesia over East Timor, and allowed Howard the political space to undertake his initiative to Habibie (Dorling, 2010).

But the combination of massive media coverage of the Indonesian military-orchestrated violence over the preceding months, a quarter century of campaigning by Timor support groups, and the clarity of the result in the UN-sponsored vote for self-determination all aligned together with Howard's own tentative dispositions. The result was a shift in policy towards both East Timor and in the wider region towards



what became known as the Howard doctrine best characterised as regional stewardship. But this was a rare exception.

Normally mass public opinion almost never has direct effects on foreign policy. Within systems of electoral democracy, the foreign policy and security policy are the policy arenas most insulated from popular influence. This is not to say, however, that public opinion is irrelevant to the success or failure of policy currents within the state. On the contrary, one requirement for some types of policy initiative is that they resonate with the goals of a significant public constituency, as perceived by and literally mediated by, the mass media.

**Table 1: Australian security policy currents towards Indonesia**

	<b>Key concerns and themes</b>	<b>Carrier groups</b>	<b>Key individuals</b>	<b>Limitations</b>
<b>Strategic realist</b>	<p>Power located in states, based on economic and military strength</p> <p>Nationalist, within imperial/alliance parameters</p> <p>Sceptical of multilateral institutions other than military alliances</p> <p>Compatible with both Forward Defence and Defence of Australia doctrines</p>	<p>Liberal Party</p> <p>Defence Department</p> <p>ADF</p> <p>Defence intellectuals</p>	<p>Frederick Scherger</p> <p>Arthur Tange</p> <p>Paul Dibb</p>	<p>How to assess threat claims and estimates?</p> <p>How to avoid action-reaction cycles of regional and bilateral weapons acquisitions?</p>
<b>Liberal-institutionalist</b>	<p>Maintain communication</p> <p>Avoid provocation</p> <p>Build bilateral and multilateral institutions</p> <p>Respect national sensitivities</p> <p>Compatible with Defence of Australia doctrines</p>	<p>DFAT</p> <p>Australian Labor Party</p> <p>AFP</p>	<p>T.K. Critchley</p> <p>K.C.O. Shann</p> <p>Richard Woolcott</p> <p>Gough Whitlam</p> <p>Paul Keating</p> <p>Mick Kealty</p>	<p>Inadequate realism.</p> <p>Inability to judge the point where regime maintenance undermines both justice and security</p> <p>Willingness to ignore foundations of New Order state in terror</p> <p>Risks being undermined by US alliance forward deployment requirements</p> <p>Gulled by “Asian values” debate</p>

<p><b>Human security/ human development</b></p>	<p>Maintains that Indonesian social conditions are a key security driver Critique of human rights abuses Moral cosmopolitan disposition</p>	<p>Aid community  Australian Greens  NGOs</p>		<p>Selective outrage  Possible unreflexive self-righteousness that can itself generate unnecessary conflict  Deficient realist understanding of actual degree of Australian influence  Blindness to role of military security as a requirement of human security</p>
<p><b>Regional stewardship</b></p>	<p>Deal with failing states and abuses of human rights  Accept alliance responsibilities for regional management  Realise application of 'Australian values'</p>	<p>Liberal Party (2000 +)  Strands of DFAT and Defence</p>	<p>John Howard</p>	<p>Heightens association with imperial hegemon  Legitimizes regional bullying  Counter-productive when applied to large country with strong nationalist tradition  Encourages perception of Australia as a threat</p>

Existing Australian policy currents on Australia-Indonesia security issues broadly fall into four main groupings: the dominant *strategic realist* and *liberal institutionalist* approaches, the *human security* approach, and the aspiration to *Australian regional stewardship*. Each of these has a substantial history, a dominant implicit theoretical or analytical framework, and a set of virtues and vices which set the limits to their effectiveness.

### *Strategic realism*

*Strategic realism* has dominated military policy towards Indonesia for the entire post-war period. For most of the post-war period, the fundamentals of Australian defence policy were set out and explained periodically in a series of classified documents presented to Cabinet generally known as the Strategic Basis papers. The purpose of the papers was

to prioritise possible and actual threats to Australia's vital interests, and to develop the outlines of 'a plan for continuing advantage'—or avoiding disadvantage—from which principles could be derived to guide the development and use of Australia's armed forces (Frühling, 2009b: 6).

In these respects, Australian strategic realism was and is no different, apart from the consequences of the country's perceived strategic situation, resources and goals, from that of other countries. What is distinctive is the surprisingly militarised and alliance-dependent strategic culture in which it is embedded, as already has been discussed above, and its oscillation over time between two poles, generally known as 'forward defence' and 'the defence of Australia'. Both are phrases over-statements, since there were always substantial common ground, and there have been variants of each.

However, Indonesia has always been a primary concern of all Australian military planning, whether that concern was derived from perceived contemporary potential threats, as during the crises over West New Guinea and Confrontation, or in more distant and contingent terms as in the 1980s and 1990s. The heart of all Australian postwar military planning has been and remains the defence of the sea/air gap surrounding Australian continental territory. That in turn has always largely concerned assessment of potential threat from or through the Indonesian archipelago. Amongst security professionals, this is not a matter of the 'invasion from

the north' phobia otherwise deeply embedded in Australian political culture derived from the country's origins in conquest by settler colonialism, so much as a calculation of what an antagonistic Indonesia could do by way of low-level military action to raise the costs to Australia of any given political or diplomatic position. In recent decades, Australian planners have identified 'the knowledge edge' (vis-à-vis Indonesia in particular) as the 'highest capability development priority' for the defence forces, especially to ensure military control of the approaches to Australia in the vent of conflict (cited by Ball, 2001: 243).

The fundamental difficulties with the strategic realist approach to military policy have been twofold, and both have been salient to Indonesia. The first is a general one: in a properly democratic society, how is the government's stated assessment of threat itself to be assessed? Given the normal insulation of foreign and defence policy from public influence, how can civil society assess the claims of government security professionals of a need for very large public expenditure to guard against highly unlikely or remote threats? The requirement for 'the knowledge edge' leads directly to the need to maintain the alliance with the United States, since the alliance is the only basis on which the United States is prepared to give Australia preferential regional access to the requisite technologies (Ball, 2001). The question then arises as to whether claimed potential, arguably remote, military threats from a future Indonesia warrant the political and budgetary price to be paid for 'the knowledge edge'.

The second problem with the strategic realist approach to military policy regarding Indonesia is that there is an inherent danger that military preparations for Australian defence will be perceived – presumably incorrectly – as preparations for military offense, and will in turn generate a responding round of Indonesian military preparations – the beginnings of a vicious action-reaction cycle. More specifically, particular Australian military preparations have been regarded by Indonesia as unfriendly acts in themselves: in recent years, these include the declaration of a 1,000 mile Maritime Identification Zone, and the planned acquisition of long-range ship-based cruise missiles. There can be little doubt that Australian military preparations, starting always from a technological base well in advance of the cash-strapped

Indonesian forces, induce Indonesian military planners to consider, within the limits of their resources, matching technology and force structure.

### *Liberal institutionalism*

Liberal institutionalist approaches have dominated Australian diplomatic policy towards Indonesia since its formulation in the context of Confrontation by Critchley, Shann and Barwick. The original Shann-Critchley stress on maintaining communication with the Indonesian leadership despite the external and internal pressures did have a realist basis in recognition of the difficulties that could be caused to Australian interests by a hostile Indonesia. Yet overall the emphasis was on informal and formal communication and institution building and the avoidance of conflict. The policy was devised and carried out by a highly skilled and creative set of External Affairs officers to deal with the White Australia policy attitudes of Menzies, and, after Barwick's departure for the High Court in April 1964, the rigid reflexive anti-communism of his successor as Minister for External Affairs, Paul Hasluck.

Over time, the liberal institutionalist emphasis on communication and compromise, especially with the military-dominated Suharto presidency and the occupation of East Timor in particular, lost its realist footing, and in the eyes of its critics, was dubbed "the Jakarta lobby". Four decades after its inception it is possible to see both the virtues of liberal institutionalism in Indonesia policy – its prudence and avoidance of provocation – and its increasingly severe limitation in a failure to deliver the strong security outcome that is the promise of a realist approach.

Richard Woolcott, the Australian ambassador to Indonesia in 1975, is infamous for his cable of 17 August 1975 advising the Australian government to accept the imminent Indonesian invasion.

Policies should be based on disengaging ourselves as far as possible from the Timor situation. We should leave events to take their course; and if and when Indonesia does intervene, act in a way which would be designed to minimize the public impact in Australia and show privately understanding to Indonesia of their problems. ... I know I am recommending a pragmatic rather than a principled stand, but that is what national interest and foreign policy is all about (Woolcott, 1975).

This is usually taken to demonstrate, as Woolcott's final sentence would have it, a clear expression of realism in international relations in the national interest. In fact, Woolcott's recommendations produced a policy outcome that was neither realistic nor effective. In place of genuine realism there was a rhetoric of masculine toughness and brutality masking poor political judgement based on prejudice and poor intelligence.

This is doubly tragic, for not only was there a huge price to be paid over the next quarter century for this flawed and *faux* realism, but Woolcott misrepresented himself as a *realpolitik* pragmatist. For the bulk of his career in relation to Indonesia, he was a faint echo of the earlier generation of Indonesianist liberal institutionalists. While he lacked their well-grounded realism and political judgement, Woolcott was in fact a genuine liberal institutionalist, and strongly supported closer bilateral institutional ties, as well as expanding the educational base for Indonesian language and Indonesian studies in Australia. (Woolcott, 2006).

The liberal institutionalist approach, dressed in power politics realist cloth, was best articulated by Paul Keating. In 1994, Keating famously said

“No country is more important to Australia than Indonesia. If we fail to get this relationship right, and nurture and develop it, the whole web of our foreign relations is incomplete [and] ... the emergence of the New Order government of President Suharto, and the stability and prosperity which [it] has brought to [Indonesia] was the single most beneficial strategic development to have affected Australia and its region in the past thirty years”. (Brereton, 1998: 35)

Combined with his often mentioned personal respect for Soeharto, this attitude drove Keating to thicken the governmental relationship with the New Order, suppress concerns about Indonesian atrocities in East Timor and Papua, and to whitewash the manner in which the New Order was established. Ultimately intensely *realpolitik* in his willingness to set aside his knowledge of the bodies and terror on which the New Order was built, Keating forged a series of institutional and cultural links with Indonesia as part of a reconstitution of what it meant to be Australian. The results were mixed, in part precisely because of the weak realist understanding of

New Order Indonesia. A brief spasm of Asian language learning in schools passed quickly, aided by the early years of the Howard government. The security agreement with Indonesia collapsed in the aftermath of the decolonisation of East Timor. But in many respects, Keating's institution-building agenda was echoed in the later years of the Howard prime ministership – through the post-9.11 years of cooperation on terrorism, and the 2006 Lombok security agreement.

### *Human security and transnational moral communities*

The human security approach has its political roots in the antagonists to the liberal institutionalist – the critique of human rights abuses by the Indonesian state in Indonesia and East Timor. Analytically its roots lie in a blend of cosmopolitanism and a claim of the inseparability of internal state-society relations from foreign policy considerations. Its various proponents stress not only the degree of moral obligation brought by shared humanity, but that a realism informed by an understanding of social and economic pressures on the Indonesian state leads to an understanding that Australian national interest requires attention to the state of Indonesian society and human rights. The virtues of the human security approach to Indonesia policy are its recognition of transnational moral community and its realist conception of the social context of state action. Its vices, include 'selective outrage' (Aspinall, 2006), a sometimes unreflexive self-righteousness that itself generates further conflict, and most importantly, as in the case of contemporary concern about Papua, a deficient realist understanding of the degree of influence to be expected.

The case of contemporary Papua illustrates the need for the human security approach, but also its limitations. As long as the Indonesian military and police are permitted to dominate policy towards Papua, to continue predatory economic activities in Papua, and to carry out violent abuses of human rights with impunity, there will be a need for a human security-centred approach from both within Indonesia and neighbouring countries. The problem in the case of Papua is not so much that human rights politics are exhausted – far from it – but that they have far fewer institutional handholds than in the case of East Timor. This dramatically lowers the likelihood that Australian-based human security approaches will have comparable influence in the Papuan case – even short of self-determination.



Three relevant differences with between the Timor and Papua cases stand out. Firstly, despite the best efforts of the Indonesian and Australian governments, the question of East Timor as former Portuguese colonial territory remained on the agenda of the United Nations Decolonization Committee from 1975 until the independence of Timor Leste. This ensured that the matter of East Timor could always be brought before the Security Council, and was never erased from the global institutional public agenda. Secondly, military, political and cultural resistance endured throughout the Indonesia colonial period at a level that, however much it ebbed militarily, always exacted a considerable price from Indonesia. Despite continued resistance to Indonesian occupation in Papua over many years, this has not to date attained the coherence, endurance and effectiveness of the Timorese resistance. Lastly, Australian church-based human rights campaigning over undoubtedly gross and continuing abuses of Papuan human rights are hampered by the appearance of what Aspinall termed 'selective outrage' and borderline – if not in some cases, outright – racism in the depiction of 'Javanization' (Aspinall, 2006). For all these reasons, current human security approaches to the Papuan question in Australia-Indonesia relations need serious reconsideration, at the same time as being absolutely necessary.

#### *Regional stewardship*

The fourth approach has emerged most clearly in the years since the East Timor intervention of 1999, and subsequent regional peace keeping operations in the Pacific and East Timor. Justified in terms of concerns about failing states and abuses of human rights, the new approach is, with respect to the states of the southwest Pacific and East Timor, *an aspiration for Australian regional stewardship*. A realist approach to regional threats and the use of Australian interventionary power – military and civil – has been legitimated in terms of Australian values, local responsibilities within the wider context of the US alliance the war on terror, and a fusion of national interest and moral responsibility. (Brenchley, 1999; Leaver, 2001; Pietsch, 2009: 295-300) A week after ADF forces landed in Dili in September 1999, John Howard announced the Howard Doctrine in an interview with *The Bulletin's* Fred Brenchley:

The Howard Doctrine - the PM himself embraces the term - sees Australia acting in a sort of 'deputy' peacekeeping capacity in our region to the global policeman role of the US. East Timor shows Australia as a medium sized, economically strong, regional power leading a peacekeeping force with other regional nations, and the US acting as 'lender of last resort'. Australia, says Howard, has a responsibility within its region to do things 'above and beyond', bringing into play its unique characteristics as a western country in Asia but with strong links to North America. East Timor peacekeeping shows Australia playing an 'influential, constructive and decisive role in the affairs of the region' (Brenchley, 1999).

Howard went on to press the emotional and value-based core he was to emphasize in the coming months of radio talkbacks and sound bites:

“Gee, we were ourselves in Asia in the last few weeks. We were defending the values we hold as Australians. We were willing to be in dispute with our closest neighbour, to defend those values. And we were able to build up our associations with nations outside Asia in the course of that”.

East Timor in 1999 and 2006 demonstrate both the attractions and limitations of this aspiration of a delegated regional steward (who is, however, not a regional hegemon): military overstretch, confusion about goals, host country antagonism towards perceived colonial rhetoric if not intention. Indonesia does not lie within the region to be stewarded by Australia, but against a background of Indonesian nationalism, emerging expressions of Australia as a threat, however unfounded, are unsurprising and have the potential for a downward spiral.

### **The way out: shared problems, shared interests**

Thickening the relationship, giving it “heft” via market and civil society, are clearly important. Equally clearly, much current government policy is unhelpful in this regard – especially the catastrophic consequences of long-term de-funding of language teaching which the Asian Studies Association of Australia has so ably documented. But where then is this thickening going to come from? Very likely the market is going to fail us here: the potential generative factor, Australian investment in Indonesia, is

limited by exactly those aspects of Indonesia that give rise to crisis: poverty, corruption, state incapacity, and militarisation. The Indonesian direct foreign investment figures are, as Indonesian government officials have pointed out, are dismal, and unlikely to improve quickly in the Australian case. So the most important element is civil society.

The way out of the present somewhat dangerous dead-end is to widen the argument, and to transform the entire character of the relationship, its framing, and its dynamics by arguing that the problems of Indonesia and its society and of Australia and its, in fact intersect much more than we have been admitting to date.

Paradoxically I want to suggest to both Indonesians and Australians that because we are in even deeper trouble than we think there is more of a chance to find – at least in part - common cause to resolve some of the most violent aspects of the present mess.

The four existing Australian policy currents now face serious limitations, and need to be supplemented with a more broadly-founded theoretical and policy approach. The recognition in the human security approach of at least the beginnings of a transnational moral community will find a sounder footing to the extent it is supplemented by discovery of transnational communities of interest. This may lie in an approach through the concept of ‘global problems’. The well-known challenges to Australian security concerns from Indonesia indeed do have both an internal and bilateral dynamic as argued above, but they are also part of a wider pattern of global problems whose substantive causes largely lie at least as much outside the society in which they are manifest as within it. Islamist terror in Indonesia and the antipathy of its proponents towards the Australian government and Australian people is a manifestation of a much wider, global problem. The Bali bombings and the Corby conviction symbolize a strong Australian sense of religious and cultural difference with Indonesia, which has a long history, but which is periodically mobilized anew under novel structures of sentiments and prevailing global and regional political patterns (Tanter, 2000; Walker, 1999). Indonesian cultures – plural – are deeply inflected by their location in a framework of communicative and cultural and social and economic globalisation that empowers, diminishes, destroys and creates. The terrorist politics of some Salafi groups are inexplicable outside a framework of globalisation – as is the entire discourse of ‘the politics of terrorism’. What is less often noted is the fact that

similar global pressures are manifest in Australia: the Cronulla riots and the long-festering conflict between young men of Anglo and Lebanese backgrounds in Sydney also have a pattern of both local and global causes. The Cronulla riots and the Bali bombings are both regressive cultural responses to the intersection of globalisation with local contexts: they are both manifestations of the same global problem.

Global problems are not just important problems, or problems that affect many people. Rather they are those problems that affect the whole of the planet, and potentially all of the people who live on it. Climate change is one clear example that springs to mind quickly. This is because the consequences of humanly-generated changes in the atmosphere will, albeit in different ways according to region, affect everyone on the planet. In other words, the consequences are universal. Moreover, unless we profoundly change our collective behaviour, climate change may well result in irreversible changes in the climatic conditions of life - a measure of the deep vulnerability of human society in the face of this issue. And it is easy to see that there will be no easy solution to the problem: the causes of the present situation are clearly related to our economic system, our attitudes to nature, our political organisation, our technological capacities and preferences, and our uses of resources. Solutions will involve not just all communities and every country, but solutions will necessarily involve cooperation between all, rather than individual approaches. In other words, the example of climate change suggests that global problems are complex, intractable, and make human society as a whole very vulnerable.

Other examples of global problems of this scale and with these characteristics would include weapons of mass destruction; the violation of the human security of several billions of the world's poor, and the consequences of the conditions of their lives for the rest of the world; failures and deficits of global governance, especially when set beside the largely unregulated pressures of economic and cultural globalisation; resource depletion, especially that of energy resources, on a scale and in a manner that both unsustainable and profoundly inequitable; the degradation of natural environments as a result of economic activities, including the oceans, forests and soils; the physical, social and psycho-cultural consequences of unprecedented and still accelerating development of megacities; and cultural collisions within and across

national borders generated by globalisation and claims to the primacy or universal superiority of one version of reason and ethics (Hayes, 2007; Tanter and Hayes, 2008).

There are at least three major inter-related global problems that face both Indonesia and Australia with undoubted security implications: pandemics, climate change, and energy insecurity. The salient key characteristics are inherently transnational in both their causes and their consequences; that they are set to interact in ways we may well not anticipate – such as climate change and infectious disease; and that they are already giving rise to perceptible new forms of threat to both societies.

As an illustration, Australian concern over climate change is one justification for the establishment of components of the nuclear fuel cycle in Australia – uranium enrichment, fuel fabrication, high-level radioactive waste storage, and possibly nuclear power generation. A parallel debate in Indonesia, mainly fostered by concerns over declining position in hydrocarbon reserves and longstanding economic nationalist policy currents, is promoting nuclear power generation. Irrespective of the economic and political realities in each case, security elites in both countries have registered developments in the other with degrees of alarm, especially since both countries have records of secret nuclear weapons development, which even then were in part responses to fears of each other (Walsh, 1997; Cornejo, 2000).

Climate change, energy insecurity, and pandemics will certainly interact with existing conflict patterns. To take but one plausible example, global warming will influence already massively degraded fishing stocks in the seas of eastern Indonesia which provide the basic protein requirements for most of the population of that large region. The implications for migration into Papua and further pressure on the fishing grounds of off northwest Australia are easy to imagine – as are the political consequences.

All three global problems foreshadow deep threats to the fabric of Australian and Indonesian life, and all require, for their even their partial amelioration, cooperation between the two countries – and between the two societies. This in fact offers both a challenge and a chance to restructure the pattern of conflict into which we are increasingly locked by the dialectic of Indonesian militarisation and Australian community-based concern about human rights.

Reframing Australia-Indonesia security involves an approach to Australian-Indonesian security dilemmas which refocuses on the common threats *to both countries* rather than traditional concern with possible threats *to each other*. Inherently the approach involves a challenge to methodological nationalism to develop policy prescription in empirical and theoretical examination of national, regional and global systems beyond conventional state-based security analysis.

The key hypothesis is that global problems manifest in the fabric of the two societies, and whose causes lie beyond their national systems, not only will generate deep security challenges but also new possibilities of cross-border communities of shared interest. The secondary hypothesis is that this process will enhance the capacity to manage the difficult bilateral problems already evident by placing them in a context of larger security collaborations.

The fundamental hope is that there is a potential Australian-Indonesian bilateral component of global civil society that can form around shared interests in the resolution of questions of climate change, energy insecurity, and pandemics. This approach seeks to explore a realist or interests-based foundation to the intra- and inter-national generation of norms and normative communities. This civil society emphasis also takes the conceptualization of the policy consequences of these global problems beyond the 'securitisation' of 'human security' issues and the utilization of global public goods (Caballero-Anthony, 2004), both of which remain largely state-focused, and with an ambiguous attitude to interest-based political formations across borders.

The work has six long-range goals:

- to map the existing social relations between Indonesian and Australian society
- to document the manifestations and interrelated impacts on the two societies of global problems such as climate change, new infectious diseases, energy insecurity
- to map the articulation of these shared global problems on the security relations between the two countries, both in terms of 'hard' military security and human security
- to develop policy responses by both government and civil society

- to map the existing social and ecological relations between Indonesian and Australian socio-ecological systems as a pre-requisite to understanding the impacts of climate change on security issues
- to develop a model of bilateral policy responses to shared global problems potentially applicable to other cases

#### *Mapping the set of relations between social formations*

Mapping the existing relations – in ideal type, the set of total social relations between the two social formations – is a logical requirement for any assessment of the effect of climate change or any other variable: unless the base line is known, it is difficult to determine the presence and causation of change. Yet remarkably, there is no documentation of the full range of interactions (even in their thin-ness) between the two societies. Mostly we are content with trade and investment data, gross data on tourism and migration, and not much more. Some sense of the full depth and complexity of the relationship could be gained by the following approaches:

- individual-level formal and informal cross-border interactions, measuring frequency, volume, extensity and intensity of connection
- geo-spatial network analysis of relationships between formal and informal social entities and organisations in Australia and Indonesia, including relations of state, market and civil society
- geo-spatial mapping of relations between the two countries – by region and city
- mapping of Australian and Indonesian diasporas in the other countries and mediation via third country presences
- documentation of value-based cross-border relations and expressions of identity and joint moral purpose – for example, religion, environmental protection.

#### *Layered frames of analysis*

Before looking at the security impacts of climate change, it needs to be understood that there are series of layered frames for thinking about the relationship between 'Indonesia' and 'Australia'.

The first, though by no means obvious, focuses on *the bio-physical and social-ecological systems* under consideration. There may appear to be some contradiction or impediment involved in excising a bilateral unit of analysis ('Australia-Indonesia') based on political-territorial conceptions from a set of

much larger complex systems. But clear and viable modeling is possible: not all parts of 'Australia' and 'Indonesia' are equally closely related bio-physically and socio-ecologically Tasmania-Aceh linkages are less important than Northern Territory–Nusa Tenggara linkages. But what is important is to establish ways of understanding the bio-physical and socio-ecological bases. Most modeling to date is either global or national in character. What is now needed is an overlapping set of regional, bilateral, national, and sub-national models.

The second layer is *the historically formed relationship* between the two societies and states: this is much closer to the conventional sociological and historical understanding, but still requiring mapping of complex interactions of the socio-technical systems of the two societies, including energy and materials transfers, as well as human interaction.

The third layer involves *intentional collective efforts* to address actual and expected climate change through mitigation of greenhouse gas generation and release, and adaptation to specific patterns of climate change. It is already clear that 'mal-adaptation' is a possible and indeed likely outcome of climate change adaptation policy. Nuclear power is likely to be one such example – either when it is an inappropriate answer to a country's energy needs compared to other alternatives; or when the risks of the particular nuclear power plant are inadequately assessed; or when the follow-on security consequences – real or erroneous but still anticipated - take the form of nuclear weapons proliferation.

#### *Climate change and common security*

One strong conclusion to date of collaborative work with Indonesian and Australian specialists on complexity and climate change impacts on Indonesia and Australia was that climate change impacts are a shared problem (Nautilus Institute 2008). This may appear unremarkable, except that there is a noticeable and regrettable tendency in bilateral relations between Indonesia and Australia to assume that one side has the problems and the other side has the answers. In the case of climate change it is evident that both societies are in deep trouble, and both will be unable to solve all the problems to which climate change is already beginning to give rise on a national basis: cross-border collaboration, cooperation and policy coordination will simply be essential.



One product of this collaboration may give a sense of the intellectual and policy outcomes that can be expected from the approach of this project. Allan Behm, former Assistant Secretary of Defence, addressed the question of the security consequences of climate change for both countries. Behm argued that

the geophysical and ecological forces that are currently (re)shaping the physical environment add another layer of complexity to the political and economic forces that have hitherto determined the longer-term strategic prospects of Indonesia and Australia. How competently – and proactively – Indonesia and Australia deal with this complexity, inter alia, will largely determine the vitality of the bilateral strategic relationship over the next four decades or so.

Behm continued:

if climate change is inherently non-linear, changes in the strategic environment are inherently discontinuous.

After setting out integrated policy recommendations at national, bilateral, regional and global levels, Behm concludes by stressing the need for

a diplomatic and scientific strategy that deals with the issue proactively. To address the consequences of climate change in a piecemeal and reactive manner would almost certainly create the pre-conditions for misunderstanding and consequent miscalculation.

Responding to climate change has already come to be an immensely difficult task for national governments. It clearly cannot be resolved by national governments alone, and there is good reason to think governments per se in their present mode of thought and action cannot resolve them at all without immense inputs from civil society. But certainly, neither the Indonesian nor the Australian governments are applying themselves adequately to any of those problems, and in several cases – the energy-nuclear proliferation nexus for example – are actively making matters worse.

Climate change and other global problems offer deep threats to the fabric of Australian and Indonesian life, and all require, for their even their partial amelioration, cooperation between the two countries – and between the two societies.

This in fact offers both a challenge and a chance to restructure the apparently endlessly repeating pattern of crises disrupting a fragile and volatile relationship. The key task – on a scale vastly greater than anything attempted in the past by Australian community groups and social movements, is to find common cause with Indonesian community groups and social movements on specific aspects and angles of these shared, globally-rooted problems. On issues of environment, climate change, food resources, energy, nuclear proliferation, cultural fears, rights, obligations, migration and labour, resources, food stocks, biodiversity, Australian and Indonesian organisations and voices need to find their partners, build relationships and work out new forms of cross-national collaboration, mutual support and political tactics.

As in any normal of politics alliances and antagonisms will be built on mixtures of interest and value. Some will be temporary and some enduring. Some may be partial and some may be wide-ranging. Some fragile and some robust. They will be built on identifications which are thin, and on those which are thick. They will cross-cut, fluctuate, collapse, expand, and contradict.

These ties will come, but they will not be built without the will to do so. We need to think politically as well as analytically. There is good analytical reason to think that such ties, such expansion of our moral and political community, are both necessary and feasible, but not without great effort and commitment. This is a political project unlike any other that Australians have attempted – across borders, across boundaries of culture, language, and more than most Australians are willing to admit they care about across ethnicity and religion.

11,993 words.

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