

DEFENSE COOPERATION INDONESIA-FRANCE IN FULFILLING MINIMUM ESSENTIAL FORCE PHASE II

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ABSTRAK

Perkembangan hubungan bilateral antara Perancis dengan Indonesia tidak luput dari kepentingan masing-masing negara. Dirumuskannya MEF diarahkan untuk memunculkan *Confident Building Measures (CBM)* yaitu sebagai bentuk kepercayaan untuk saling menangkal ancaman. Dengan melalui kerjasama Indonesia dan Prancis meningkatkan banyak industri alutisista yang mampu mendukung pemenuhan kebutuhan TNI AD pada pembangunan MEF Tahap II.

Kata Kunci : Kerjasama, Pertahanan, Indonesia, Prancis, MEF II

ABSTRACT

The development of bilateral relations between France and Indonesia is driven by each country's respective interests. The formulation of the Minimum Essential Force (MEF) is directed at fostering Confidence Building Measures (CBM), which serve as a form of trust to mutually counter threats. Through cooperation, Indonesia and France have enhanced many defense industries that are capable of supporting the Indonesian Army's needs in the development of the MEF Phase II.

Keywords: Cooperation, Defense, Indonesia, France, MEF

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalisation, the order of international relations continues to evolve. The military capabilities of neighboring countries have significantly strengthened, surpassing the defense capabilities of the Republic of Indonesia, which has increasingly placed Indonesia in a vulnerable position in international relations.

In an effort to renew its defense system, particularly in the modernisation of its primary weaponry defense system (and the development of its defense posture, Indonesia has engaged in defense cooperation with many countries, one of which is France. Indonesia and France have essentially established diplomatic relations since 1950, and these relations have continued to develop to this day.

The development of bilateral relations between France and Indonesia is driven by the interests of both nations. For France, Indonesia is a strategic partner in safeguarding security in the Indo-Pacific region, which serves as a global economic traffic zone. France sees Indonesia as one of the founding members of ASEAN, playing a significant role in

Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Meanwhile, for Indonesia, increasing cooperation, particularly in the field of defense with France, presents an opportunity for Indonesia to explore every potential in developing the nation’s defense capabilities in various sectors, considering that France's defense industry has also experienced significant development. Moreover, the shared principles in conducting foreign policy, between Indonesia’s “free and active” foreign policy and France’s “Politique Independence,” create a sense of comfort for both countries in enhancing their cooperation (France Diplomatie, 2018).

The 2015-2024 development policy aims to accommodate the unfulfilled aspects of the 2010-2014 MEF development. Indonesia’s defense cooperation with France is essentially divided into several sectors, including military-technical cooperation in the form of joint training and military personnel development, Mutual Protection of Classified Information involving intelligence, cyber security, and military cooperation, which has been enhanced in the areas of land, sea, and air security, and lastly, cooperation in the procurement of equipment, logistics, and defense industries. The cooperation in the procurement of equipment, logistics, and the defense industry was formalised with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Paris, France, on 11 July 1996. The MoU has been continuously updated through a review process every five years. This MoU has allowed for the development of cooperation between Indonesia and France in the procurement of equipment, logistics, and the defense industry, especially after the formation of the Indonesian-France Defense Dialogue (IFDD) in 2012, as a dialogue forum that reviews each year's cooperation and serves as a platform for both nations to present ideas for enhancing future cooperation (Ministry of Defense, 2015).

Following the results of the Indonesian- France Defense Dialogue (IFDD), on 29 March 2017, French President François Hollande made a state visit to Indonesia, accompanied by several ministers, including French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, during an official meeting at the State Palace. Before both heads of state, Indonesia and France signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) between the Defense Ministers of both countries. The LoI includes agreements on a series of defense collaborations, including naval and air force cooperation, with opportunities for surface vessels, submarines, aircraft, and other operational procurements (Ministry of Defense, 2015).

The Minimum Essential Force (MEF) has four strategies, namely rematerialisation, revitalisation, relocation, and procurement. In terms of procurement, all products are expected to come from domestic industries, and if this is not feasible, the procurement of foreign guns must be accompanied by Transfer of Knowledge (ToK) and Transfer of Technology (ToT), in line with the work plan and cooperation agreements (Ministry of Defense, 2015). The formulation of the MEF does not aim at an arms race or the instigation of conflict or war but is intended as the ideal posture for the country, with the objective being to respond to both current and future threats, build Confidence Building-Measures (CBM), serve as a deterrent against threats, and provide defense management as a guideline for defense posture policies. The priority in realising the MEF is to enhance the mobility of the Indonesian Air Force (TNI AU), Navy (TNI AL), and Army (TNI AD) to carry out the primary duties of the TNI across the entire national territory. The MEF is divided into three stages starting from the Strategic Plan (Renstra) Phase I (2010-2014), followed by Renstra Phase II (2015-2019), and finally Renstra Phase III (2020-2024) (Ministry of Defense, “Performance Accountability Report of the Indonesian Ministry of Defense, 2013”). In the second and third Renstra phases, Indonesia has engaged in defense cooperation to meet weaponry system’s needs, one of which is with a European country, France. For France, Indonesia is a strategic partner in safeguarding security in the Indo-Pacific region, which serves as a global economic traffic zone. For Indonesia, increasing cooperation, particularly in the field of defense with France, presents an opportunity to explore every potential in developing the nation's defense capabilities in various sectors, considering that France's defense industry continues to experience significant development. Therefore, it is necessary to think strategically about “Defense Cooperation Between Indonesia and France.”

Research Question

How is the defense cooperation between Indonesia and France in fulfilling the Minimum Essential Force Phase II?

Literature Review Indonesia-France Defense Industry Cooperation in Meeting the Minimum Essential Force of the Indonesian National Army 2015-2019

An article written by Utaryo Santiko and Maria Davina Agustien titled “Indonesia-France Defense Industry Cooperation in Meeting the Minimum Essential Force of the Indonesian National Army 2015-2019” discusses how the cooperation between Indonesia and France has been carried out to meet the MEF (Santiko U., 2022).

However, in the air defense sector, Indonesia appears to be unable to break away from its historical reliance on Russian and American products, despite both countries being less open to technology transfers. In contrast, for naval defense, the Indonesian government still relies on Dutch products, which have been used for a long time. Additionally, Indonesia's domestic defense industry is not yet strong enough to meet the needs of its naval and air defense.

Analytical Framework Neo-Realism

The approach used in this research is Neo-realism. Neo-realism or structural realism is an approach introduced by Kenneth Waltz in 1979 in his book *Theory of International Politics*. Neo-realism emerged as a revision and improvement of realism, which was deemed less relevant to contemporary international relations (Hermawan, 2008). Neo-realism maintains the realist view that international relations between states are antagonistic and conflictual. However, the difference between realism and neo-realism lies in the actors within the international system.

In simple terms, while realism views the nation-state as the main actor in the international system, neo-realism sees the system itself as the actor, where the system supports state behaviour, allowing those with policies relevant to current issues to survive (Sorensen, 2014). Another notable difference between realism and neo-realism is the concept of cooperation. Whereas realism does not believe in interstate cooperation, viewing states as self-help entities, neo-realism recognises cooperation between states. However, this cooperation is also based on self-interest, used for the survival of the states involved (Sorensen, 2014). In other words, international change occurs when great powers rise and fall, achieving a Balance of Power (BoP), but war always remains a possibility in an anarchic system (Sorensen, 2014). Waltz hypothesised that state leaders

will always conduct foreign policy in line with the directions outlined by national interests (Sorensen, 2014).

Concept of Defense Cooperation

The formation of defense cooperation between states can be viewed through the analysis of several factors: First, Threat Assessment. Every state will anticipate the potential for threats that are vital to its security. Hardly any modern weapons technology today comes entirely from a single country. Acknowledging the interdependence among states, a country will strive to cooperate with others (Simamora, 2013: 50).

Defense cooperation refers to defense cooperation. Formal defense cooperation (formal cooperation) between two or more countries is usually established through treaties or agreements, either binding or non-binding, referred to as defense cooperation agreements. These agreements are formed based on the national interests of the involved countries.

Defense cooperation must have clear objectives because it is highly vital. If cooperation has ambiguous meanings or lacks direction, it can be exploited as an opportunity for undesirable actions by the parties involved.

Concept of Foreign Policy

In studying foreign policy, the basic understanding that must be recognised is that foreign policy is essentially an "action theory," or the strategy of a country aimed at other countries to achieve specific interests. Generally, foreign policy refers to a set of value formulas, attitudes, directions, and goals intended to maintain, secure, and advance national interests in international affairs. It is essentially a commitment and a basic strategy to achieve certain objectives in both domestic and foreign contexts while determining the extent of a country's involvement in international issues or its surrounding environment. Foreign policy is a branch of the study of International Relations. It is a complex subject because it involves both external and internal aspects of a country (Rosenau, 1976).

The conversion process that occurs in the formulation of a country's foreign policy refers to the interpretation of the situation, both external and internal, with consideration of the goals to be achieved and the means and capabilities available (Rosenau, 1976).

Foreign policy is a strategy or action plan made by state decision-makers in dealing with other countries or international political units, and it is designed to achieve specific national goals in terms of national interests (Olton, 1999). To fulfil their national interests, countries or actors from those countries engage in various forms of cooperation, including bilateral, trilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation.

Concept of Military Modernisation

Military modernization is influenced by advancements in defense technology. Several countries in the region have utilised these technologies to modernise their conventional strategic weaponry systems and integrate modern surveillance systems such as Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR), as well as cyber defense systems. Regarding cyberspace, cyber warfare has become a strategy to cause strategic damage to a country.

Concept of Defense Diplomacy

Defense diplomacy is the pursuit of foreign policy objectives through the peaceful use of defense capabilities and resources within bilateral and multilateral relations. Based on this definition, defense diplomacy can be understood as the art of achieving national interests by utilising defense capabilities and resources (Simamora, 2013).

According to Andrew Cottey and Anthony Forster, traditionally, defense diplomacy has been the role of the military or defense forces in protecting the state through deterrence, defense, military intervention, or as an instrument of coercion against others. In other words, it involves the use of military strength, infrastructure, and supporting instruments as tools for security and foreign policy (Forster, 2004). However, there are some key characteristics of a country's defense diplomacy (Syawfi, 2009):

- a. Defense Diplomacy for Confidence Building Measures** – aimed at building good relations with other nations, reducing misperceptions by being transparent about

policies and military capabilities, so that what a country does is not perceived as a threat by others (Widjajanto, 2019).

- b. Defense Diplomacy for Defense Capabilities** – aimed at strengthening a country’s defense capabilities in material terms. Enhancing defense capabilities can be carried out internally and externally, allowing a country to purchase weapons to develop its defense power from other nations (Matthews, 2011).

Concept of National Interest

National interest is the driving force within a state to secure its needs. National interests are based on priorities such as economics, politics, socio- culture, and military aspects. Conceptually, national interests are used to explain how a country's foreign policy is conducted (Sitepu, 2011). Holsti (1983) states that there are three types of national interests for a country to fulfil its needs: core value, middle-range objective, and long-range goal, with the following explanations:

1. **Core Value** is the effort of a country to protect and preserve its existence, something non-negotiable that defines the country's identity. This refers to how Indonesia’s “free and active” foreign policy is a core value that cannot be altered.
2. **Middle Range Objective** involves strengthening a country's position by forming international cooperation to enhance its role and influence in international politics.
3. **Long Range Objective** involves promoting *peace* and global order, exemplified by Indonesia's non- intervention stance and its commitment to preventing the outbreak of new conflicts while fostering respect for national sovereignty.

RESEARCH METHODS

Descriptive research with a qualitative approach is used in this study to describe the results. As the name suggests, this involves the description, explanation, and validation of the phenomena being researched (Ramdhan, 2021). According to Kirk and Miller (1986, p. 9) in Moleong, qualitative research is a particular tradition in social sciences that fundamentally relies on human “observation” in its area or its terms. It identifies relevant aspects of meaning in diverse human actions, beliefs, and interests by focusing on different forms that give rise to different meanings (Halim, 2021).

The data in this research are derived from two sources: primary data and secondary data. Primary data refers to data collected directly by the researcher for a specific research purpose. In this qualitative research, primary data are obtained from interviews and observations. Meanwhile, secondary data refers to data collected by other parties or existing data. The secondary data for this research comes from documents or literature reviews. Both primary and secondary data will be processed, analyzed, and presented in this research to ensure the data is valid, reliable, and credible, ultimately supporting the overall thesis.

In qualitative research, the best data analysis is conducted from the beginning of the study (ongoing). According to Fossey et al. (Yusuf, 2017), qualitative data analysis involves reviewing, examining, synthesising, and interpreting the data collected to describe and explain the social phenomenon or situation being studied. The qualitative data analysis process, according to Moleong, follows a progression from data reduction to data categorisation. This is seen as a unified process in data reduction (Sodik, 2015). During this process, the units and categories of data are compiled. The analysis involves three steps: data reduction, data presentation or display, and conclusion or verification.

According to Miles and Huberman, presenting the data involves organising the collected information in such a way that it allows for conclusions to be drawn. The process of qualitative research is narrative, so simplification is necessary without reducing the content (Sodik, 2015).

Conclusion or verification is the final stage in the data analysis process. Conclusions can be drawn by comparing the correspondence between the research subjects' statements and the concepts found in the research framework. In qualitative research, the quality of analysis and the outcomes are determined by how well the research answers the posed questions. The data analysis technique involves data reduction, data display, and drawing or verifying conclusions. All data will be analysed, then organised by gathering all the information, which will be examined for its content. After that, the researcher will compare and integrate the findings with existing theories and draw conclusions as answers to the research questions, particularly regarding the role of Defense Diplomacy in securing the Indonesia-Malaysia border. Researchers should seek meaning from the key subjects of the research rather than interpreting it solely from the researcher's perspective.

Techniques for Testing Data Validity

To establish data validity, verification techniques are necessary. In verifying the data's validity, the detailed and researched data will be compared with theories from experts. This ensures that the research meets the standards of credibility, transferability, dependability, and certainty and that it is presented objectively and responsibly.

DISCUSSION

Dynamics of Indonesia- France Relations

Bilateral relations between the two countries tend to be harmonious, without major issues affecting them. This is partly due to the alignment of principles in their foreign policies. Indonesia's "free and active" foreign policy is mirrored by France's "Politique Independence." This principle serves as the foundation for strong bilateral relations between the two countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018).

For Indonesia, France is one of the key partners in Western Europe. Likewise, France considers Indonesia important due to its influence in ASEAN and its transformation into one of the most democratic countries in the world. France, therefore, sees the need to enhance its partnership with Indonesia.

The first visit of French President François Mitterrand on 16 September 1986 was warmly welcomed by President Soeharto, and both countries agreed on cooperation in the trade and industrial sectors. The Indonesian-French Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IFCCI) was officially established to develop professional relations between the two nations (Tirto, 2017). During the official visit of Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on 14 December 2009, a joint statement was signed with French President Nicolas Sarkozy to reaffirm the commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation in various fields such as the economy, trade, investment, disarmament, counter-terrorism, organised crime, drug smuggling, money laundering, and climate change, both regionally and internationally (Ambafrance, 2009).

Indonesia's visit to France was well-received, and on 1 July 2011, French Prime Minister François Fillon visited Indonesia for further meetings with President Yudhoyono, launching the Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership between Indonesia

and France to further strengthen bilateral ties, which had already been established during Yudhoyono’s visit to Paris in December 2009. On 29 March 2017.

In the defense sector, bilateral cooperation is based on a 1996 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Indonesian Ministry of Defense and the French Ministry of Defense in areas such as equipment cooperation, logistics, and defense industries.

This cooperation was further enhanced through the Military Bilateral Talks between the Indonesian National Armed Forces Headquarters (TNI) and the French AP French Headquarters, focusing on education, information exchange, and dialogue forums. The MEF aims to enhance Indonesia's defense capabilities in response to evolving strategic environments and both internal and external threats, including traditional and non-traditional (non- military) threats, through military technological advancement (Ministry of Defense, 2015).

Military technology is the main variable in the implementation of military transformation as a manifestation of military reform. In carrying out a military technology revolution, Indonesia must be able to develop its military technology capacity, which in turn can significantly enhance its military components (Widjajanto, 2012).

Indonesia-France Defense Industry Cooperation

Indonesia has engaged in cooperation in the procurement of defense equipment and the defense industry with international partners based on Law No. 16 of 2012 concerning the defense industry, which is further supported by Government Regulation No. 76 of 2014 on the Mechanism of Countertrade in the Procurement of Defense and Security Equipment from Abroad, and the Ministry of Defense Regulation No. 30 of 2015 regarding Countertrade, Local Content, and Offsets in the Procurement of Defense and Security Equipment from Abroad. Law No. 16 of 2012 stipulates that every procurement of defense equipment from international partners must involve a contribution from the domestic defense industry, whether through local content in which some of the domestic products are incorporated or through an Offset arrangement, requiring technology transfer valued at a minimum of 85% of the procurement value.

The implementation of this defense industry cooperation is then used by Indonesia to meet the Minimum Essential Force (MEF) requirements for the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI). The fulfillment of the MEF is divided into three stages:

- The first stage (2010-2014) focused on weaponry systems (primary weaponry system) procurement.
- The second stage (2015-2019) focused on weaponry systems procurement, organisational development, and maintenance.
- The third stage (2020-2024) emphasises progress and independence in the defense industry, professionalism, and welfare for TNI personnel (Ministry of Defense, Indonesian Defense White Paper, 2015).

MEF development is not only directed at procuring guns to achieve an ideal defense posture but also to fulfil other goals, including enhancing the capabilities of the defense industry, human resources, and other aspects. The MEF policy is part of a defense reform aimed at establishing a defense posture within the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJM) for 2010-2014 Presidential Regulation No. 5 of 2010 (Ministry of Defense, 2012). The MEF policy implemented across the three military branches (Army, Navy, and Air Force) is being carried out gradually through four development strategies: rematerialisation, revitalisation, relocation, and procurement.

MEF Fulfilment

This section examines whether defense industry cooperation with France has been effective in meeting the MEF. The effectiveness of this cooperation will be measured based on the concept by Martani and Lubis (1987), which defines effectiveness as a key element of activities aimed at achieving predetermined goals.

As previously discussed regarding the various forms of Indonesia- France defense industry cooperation, many types of weaponry systems have successfully supported the needs of the Indonesian Army (TNI AD) in developing MEF Phase II.

Table 4.1

Weaponry Systems Needs of The Indonesian Army (TNI AD) for MEF Phase II

No.	Jumlah	Jenis
1.	393 Unit	Armatun Darat (Komando, Radar, Perang) Kategori Perang
2.	28 Unit	Helikopter Serang, Helikopter Logistik, Helikopter Transport, Helikopter Perang
3.	202 Unit	Raket
4.	16 Paket	Perawatan & Logistik Lainnya

Sumber : (Kementerian Pertahanan RI 2017)

This table outlines the specific weaponry systems needs of the TNI AD for the development of MEF Phase II. These needs include the procurement of 393 land vehicles, including 91 combat vehicles, 114 Komodo tactical vehicles, 130 infantry armored personnel carriers, and 28 cavalry armored personnel carriers. Additionally, there is a requirement for 16 helicopters, including 8 attack helicopters, 5 medium transport helicopters, and 3 heavy transport helicopters.

Table 4. 2

Fulfilment of Indonesian Army (TNI AD) Weaponry systems

No.	Jenis Armatun	Jumlah Unit Yang Dibutuhkan	Jumlah Unit Yang Terganti	Beterangan
1.	Armatun Darat (Komando, Radar, Perang)	393 Unit	172 Unit	Rakta Komando produk PT Pradik dengan sistem persenjataan lokal (Sistem APIC) Perang dan sistem lokal lainnya (Komando) dan Komunikasi Radar Fala'ika, Komunikasi Perang Radar produk PT Pradik yang menggunakan sistem lokal Helikopter Serang Radar (AR, SAR), AG-200 (AR, SAR) Produk lokal Perang yang diimpor dari luar negeri
2.	Helikopter (Serang, Logistik, Transport, Perang)	28 Unit	12 Unit	Helikopter Serang Radar (AR, SAR), AG-200 (AR, SAR) Produk lokal Perang yang diimpor dari luar negeri
3.	Raket	202 Unit	100 Unit	Raket Defensif (SAR)
4.	Perawatan dan Logistik Lainnya	16 Paket		
5.	Fasilitas dan Perawatan Logistik	16 Paket	16 Unit	

The total number of logistics, equipment, and weaponry systems required by the TNI AD for the development of MEF Phase II is 629 units, consisting of 393 land vehicles, 18 helicopters, 202 missiles, and 16 other equipment packages. The collaboration between France and Indonesia's defense industries has successfully met 272 units of this requirement, including 114 Komodo tactical vehicles with 4 variants. Only a limited number of weaponry systems, equipment, and logistics needs were fulfilled through defense industry cooperation between Indonesia and France. The total fulfilment achieved through this cooperation amounted to approximately 28% of the total procurement. The fulfilled weaponry systems include the upgrade of the FCS SSM Exocet missile system, with 30 units purchased between 2016-2018, 6 MICA VLS

missiles, and 4 Full Combat Mission Helicopters (AKS AS565 MBe Panther) (SIPRI, 2020).

The total number of logistics, equipment, and weaponry systems required by the TNI AD for the development of MEF Phase II is 629 units, consisting of 393 land vehicles, 18 helicopters, 202 missiles, and 16 other equipment packages. The collaboration between France and Indonesia's defense industries has successfully met 272 units of this requirement, including 114 Komodo tactical vehicles with 4 variants, 2 of which were developed in collaboration with MBDA and Nexter of France, and 158 Anoa armored personnel carriers, which use engines from Renault of France.

Furthermore, in terms of the 18 helicopter requirements, the collaboration between France's Airbus Helicopters and PT DI (Dirgantara Indonesia) successfully delivered 12 Fennec helicopters, which are light attack helicopters. Lastly, 50 Mistral missiles from MBDA of France have been delivered (SIPRI, 2020). To assess the contribution of France to Indonesia's naval defense, the following table provides data on the weaponry systems needs of the Indonesian Navy (TNI AL) for MEF Phase II that were met through the collaboration between Indonesian and French defense industries.

Indonesian Air Force (TNI AU)

Defense industry cooperation between Indonesia and France in the aerospace sector has been significant, particularly through PT DI's collaboration with Airbus Helicopters. However, these efforts have not yet fully met the weaponry systems needs of the Indonesian Air Force (TNI AU). The following table presents data on the weaponry systems requirements for the Indonesian Air Force during MEF Phase II, which were fulfilled through Indonesia-France defense industry cooperation:

Table 4. 3 Fulfilment of Indonesian Air Force (TNI AU) Weaponry systems

No.	Jenis Alutsaha	Jumlah yang Dibutuhkan	Jumlah yang Terpenuhi	Sumber
1.	Helikopter	18 unit	12 unit	Helikopter H125M dan H135M diproduksi oleh PT DI
2.	Missile	202 unit	158 unit	Missile Mistral diproduksi oleh Perancis
3.	Tanpa	427 unit	364 unit	
4.	Total	629 unit	534 unit	

Indonesia has set a target to develop its domestic defense industry. The Ministry of Defense signed a cooperation contract to purchase six 4.5- generation Dassault Rafale fighter jets from France. This agreement is the latest step by the Ministry of Defense in

modernising Indonesia’s defense equipment. Collaboration between PT Dirgantara Indonesia (PT DI) and Airbus Helicopters has led to the licensing of the AS550 “Fennec” (Airbus H125M) Light Utility Military Helicopter. The procurement of 12 AS550 Fennec helicopters for modification by PT DI took place between 2012 and 2017 (SIPRI, 2020).

Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA)

Indonesia and France officially signed the Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) on 28 June 2021. The agreement was signed by Indonesia’s Minister of Defense, Prabowo Subianto, and France’s Minister of Defense, Florence Parly, during a meeting at Hôtel de Brienne, the French Ministry of Defense headquarters in Paris. The formation of the DCA was the result of negotiations between the two ministers starting in January 2020. After prolonged discussions, both ministers agreed on the DCA text, which not only strengthens defense cooperation but also reinforces the strategic partnership between the two countries.

The DCA broadens the scope of Indonesia-France defense cooperation, focusing on areas such as military education and training, science and technology in the defense industry, cooperation in peacekeeping operations, counter-terrorism efforts, and joint development and research in the defense industry, including co- production initiatives. Furthermore, the DCA also encompasses cooperation in humanitarian assistance and disaster management, such as responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the meeting, the two ministers exchanged views on various issues of mutual interest, especially efforts to strengthen defense cooperation. Both saw many opportunities for collaboration that could contribute to the region, particularly in support of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and France’s Indo-Pacific strategy.

There has been speculation that the purchase of Rafale fighter jets from France is considered safe from the risk of US sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). Although the US imposed sanctions on countries that act "against" its interests since 2018, Indonesia, along with India and Vietnam, has been assured exemption from such sanctions, even if purchasing military equipment from Russia. The US considers these three Asian nations to be its strategic allies in the region.

Since the establishment of the Strategic Partnership in 2011, France has fully supported Indonesia’s aspiration to become an independent nation. This commitment is reflected in the formation of the Indonesia-France Defense Dialogue (IFDD), which continues to this day. Through the IFDD, Indonesia and France can discuss defense cooperation according to the needs of both countries. France has encouraged its defense industry to assist Indonesia in enhancing its national defense industry capabilities.

Compared to acquiring defense equipment without local content or offset from countries like the US or Russia, France’s well- established defense industry and mastery of technology offer Indonesia the opportunity to develop its defense industry across various areas, from aircraft, helicopters, and ships, to munitions.

Although the total number of weaponry systems fulfilled through Indonesia-France defense industry cooperation during the development of MEF Phase II has not yet reached 50%, this collaboration has significantly contributed to achieving the MEF goals.

CONCLUSION

The defense industry cooperation between Indonesia and France during this period has not only provided physical benefits, such as fulfilling the TNI’s weaponry system’s needs, but also non-physical benefits, such as the realisation of the development targets for MEF Phase II. Through cooperation with France, Indonesia has been able to meet at least 45% of the TNI’s weaponry systems requirements. However, there is still a need for increased cooperation in the naval and air defense sectors. France has made proposals that could support Indonesia’s naval and air defense, but these offers are still under consideration by the Indonesian government. The cooperation between Indonesia and France has produced tangible results, and it can be considered successful in the procurement of weaponry systems to meet the MEF. The Indonesian Ministry of Defense has effectively executed the first contract for the procurement of Rafale fighter jets from Dassault Aviation in September 2022, with the delivery of 6 units, followed by another 18 units in August 2023. In total, the Ministry of Defense has ordered 42 Rafale fighter jets. There is a need for a long-term **Strategic Plan (Renstra) to serve** as a reference for building the independence of Indonesia’s defense industry.

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