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A return on investment The future of police cooperation between Australia and Indonesia



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Executive summary

This Special Report presents a strategy for the future relationship between Indonesia's National Police—known as POLRI—and the Australian Federal Police (AFP). It draws on 60 interviews with current and retired police officers, officials from other Australian and Indonesian agencies, and academic experts in related fields.

The benefits of past AFP–POLRI cooperation have been felt largely in the transactional dimension of crime fighting, but the police-to-police relationship benefits other government agencies and the broader bilateral relationship too. Benefits have also accrued to the community and businesses in both countries, and the police-to-police relationship has promoted Australian and Indonesian interests in Southeast Asia.

While these benefits are clear, the relationship has reached an inflection point created by a reduced prominence for

some capacity building initiatives and recent revelations about Australian intelligence activities relating to Indonesia. Neither the AFP nor POLRI can assume that their relationship will return to the *status quo ante* after a bilateral 'code of conduct' is negotiated.

This report presents a strategy for the future POLRI–AFP relationship in two parts. The first part examines the near term to early 2015. POLRI and the AFP should first aim to restore full trust and cooperation in all relevant policing areas, especially in cybercrime. Early initiatives could include a 10-year celebration for the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation, workshops for future AFP and POLRI leaders, and a request for POLRI officers to support the AFP during the G20 meeting in November 2014. It would also be worth sponsoring an international 'needs analysis' for POLRI. Reinstating funding for the Law Enforcement Cooperation Program is needed to promote the AFP's flexibility and responsiveness during this time.



An Australian forensic investigator, right, looks at her Indonesian counterpart during an investigation of the two bomb explosions at cafes on Jimbaran Beach, Bali, Indonesia, 3 October 2005. AP Photo/Ed Wray via AAP.

Broad economic and technological changes over the next decade will increase Indonesia's wealth and expand its middle class. These changes will have important implications for law enforcement.

In particular they'll highlight the police-to-police relationship's key objective: promoting democracy, security and prosperity through the rule of law. But that shouldn't be the only aim: it's possible to leverage the relationship to support institutional development in POLRI, to promote whole-of-government operations and policymaking, and to enhance regional security.

Central to this strategy is deepening and broadening the relationship: deepening it by adding new areas of cooperation that build on previous investments, and broadening it with activities in Australia, across Indonesia and in Southeast Asia.

The second part presents initiatives to achieve these longer term objectives, including a formal police alumni association and short- and long-term secondments between POLRI and the AFP. The first capacity building priority should be to complete the existing cyber centre project. It would also be worth funding teleconferencing facilities for the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation and provincial-level police headquarters so more training can be provided by the centre. Beyond that, new ideas should emerge from the needs analysis mentioned above.

Providing better ways to exchange information with business about criminal threats, especially in Indonesia, is another longer term initiative that would have direct benefits for economic development.

Australia and Indonesia have shared interests in Southeast Asia—one of which is a successful democratic transition in Myanmar. The AFP and POLRI could cooperate to provide capacity building assistance to the Myanmar police force to help it become an independent, professional police organisation.

This new level of activity should be supported by a ministerial-level meeting that involves Australia's Minister for Justice and POLRI's Chief, who has ministerial status in the Indonesian Government.

On a practical note, both forces must have enough people with language skills. Adding training pool positions for language students to the AFP's staffing structure would ease the burden of releasing officer for language training before deployment.

The Australian Government could explore a range of ways to fund this relationship, including closing some positions in Indonesia to fund places for POLRI officers in Australia, targeting investments to protect Commonwealth revenue, and using foreign aid for initiatives that promote the rule of law in Indonesia.

A remarkable partnership

Of the many elements of bilateral cooperation between Australia and Indonesia, one of the most remarkable is the partnership forged between the Indonesian National Police (POLRI¹), and the Australian Federal Police (AFP).

Over the past four decades, and especially since the late 1990s, the two police forces have built a relationship based on trust, mutual benefit and shared concern for fighting crime. It's a relationship that's moved from simple information sharing, to capacity building, and into truly cooperative operations. It's also withstood most of the fluctuations in the broader bilateral relationship. This is a rare achievement for any international partnership, and one both sides must value and protect.

What's more, the AFP-POLRI relationship has bought significant benefits to both countries' interests, most notably in cooperation against transnational crime and related security threats, such as terrorism. The relationship's also been beneficial for each organisation, as it's added to their sense of mission and heightened their standing as police forces.

But will this close cooperation continue? And, if it does, what shape could it take into the future? These are important questions because the revelations of late 2013 and early 2014 about Australian intelligence activities concerning Indonesia have created a rift in the bilateral relationship. This rift has led Indonesia to suspend cooperation in some security-related areas, including people smuggling and cybercrime.

That's troubling because Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has previously said that police cooperation—'in contrast to defence and intelligence relationships—'can usually be done without much political inhibition'.² That the police relationship was affected in this case is therefore a concern.

But it's also an opportunity for both parties to think about the future. We can be sure the relationship won't be resumed as if nothing has happened, and it's also worth observing that the police relationship has already achieved a level of maturity in some areas. Both forces could therefore see this time as an inflection point in their relationship, and think about what they want their cooperation to deliver into the future.

This paper provides analysis and recommendations designed to help the AFP and POLRI set a course for their future. It begins with a brief description of POLRI-AFP cooperation over the past few decades and analyses its benefits for law enforcement, the bilateral relationship, and the broader regional objectives of Australia and Indonesia.

Next, it outlines a strategy for the future police-to-police relationship in two parts. The first covers the period from now until when the bilateral relationship is restored after the

‘spying scandal’—which seems unlikely before early 2015 unless favourable conditions emerge sooner. The second part looks out 5–10 years. This is important because both nations will need a functioning police-to-police relationship due to the impact of changing socioeconomic, technological and strategic conditions, and an expected increase in criminal threats to Australia’s and Indonesia’s national prosperity and security.

The recommendations for both periods are based on similar objectives and include a focus on people-to-people links, leader-to-leader interaction and capacity building initiatives. If leveraged well, it’s possible that the police-to-police relationship could also make the overall bilateral relationship more resilient.

Other Australian and Indonesian agencies play roles in all of the activities described in this report, but it’s not possible to discuss those contributions in detail. As a result, the report does not consider the significant contributions of the two countries’ law and justice departments, prosecution offices, customs and immigration agencies, and intelligence and counterterrorism bodies; or specialist agencies such as Australia’s AUSTRAC or Indonesia’s financial intelligence unit, anti-corruption commission or National Narcotics Bureau.

This paper is based on 60 interviews with Australian and Indonesian officials, retired and serving police officers, academics and businesspeople. Representatives of international organisations with a role in policing have also been consulted. The authors are particularly grateful for the assistance provided by the AFP, POLRI and Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including during field work in Indonesia.

From information sharing to joint operations

The police-to-police relationship between Australia and Indonesia was founded upon a desire to exchange information about crime.

Australia posted its first police liaison officer to Jakarta in 1977, with a remit focused on drug trafficking, training delivery and facilitating enquiries by Australian law enforcement agencies.³ With the exception of a five-year hiatus starting in 1987, Australia has maintained a policing presence in Indonesia ever since. Today there are around 30 AFP officers working in Indonesia on a range of cooperation initiatives.

Indonesia stationed its first liaison officer in Canberra in 2003. The early priorities for POLRI’s liaison officer included counterterrorism cooperation and building the Australian side of the POLRI–AFP relationship. Once those priorities were achieved, the POLRI officer became more focused on

transnational crime, and the position was retitled ‘police attaché’. This change reflected the attaché’s dual reporting lines to both the POLRI Commissioner and the Indonesian Foreign Ministry, and broader duties involving legal affairs.

Expanding priorities

The 1997 POLRI–AFP memorandum of understanding (MOU) established a firm basis for an expanding relationship. It focused on cooperation against transnational crime and agreed processes for consultation, criminal intelligence exchange and joint investigations. While this MOU was important, the relationship was just one among many for both the AFP and POLRI at the time.

The relevance of the relationship increased as connections between crime and the interests of both nations expanded after President Suharto’s resignation in May 1998 and the subsequent period known as *reformasi*. One of the main changes as Indonesia returned to democratic governance was POLRI’s re-emergence from its subordinate position to the Indonesian military. The force needed significant assistance to make the transition and it welcomed international help.

The AFP also became more heavily involved in Indonesia at the same time. In addition to providing officers to support the independence referendum in East Timor and providing a liaison officer to POLRI headquarters in 1999, the AFP and other Australian Government agencies increased their support to counter-people-smuggling initiatives as the number of these ventures grew. The new support included patrol boats and another liaison officer. Additional advice on physical security, and offering the Management of Serious Crime course in Jakarta, were further demonstrations of the expanding relationship.

These instances show how cooperation between the AFP and POLRI broadened, even at a time when bilateral relations were severely strained by the events of 1999. While these activities were to remain important into the next decade, terrorism would bring a new focus to the relationship.

Terrorism: not new, but different

While Australia–Indonesia cooperation on terrorism pre-dated the al-Qaeda attacks of September 2001, those events led to a new AFP–POLRI agreement on combating international terrorism in February 2002, and a renewed MOU on combating transnational crime four months later.⁴

The agreements were timely. On 12 October 2002, the Indonesian-led terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah exploded two bombs in nightclubs in Kuta, Bali. What followed was a remarkable act of detective work amid significant domestic political pressure and close international interest (see box).

Jemaah Islamiyah and the Bali bombings— October 2002

A cell of Jemaah Islamiyah members detonated explosive devices in the tourist district of Kuta on the Indonesian island of Bali on 12 October 2002. In two near-simultaneous attacks, 202 people were killed, including 88 Australians, 38 Indonesians and others from 20 other countries. Hundreds more were injured. A third attack occurred the same night at the US Consulate in nearby Denpasar, injuring one person. The AFP and POLRI began a joint investigation almost immediately, under Indonesian leadership.

At the time of the bombings, a number of AFP officers were already in Bali and within 24 hours a team from the AFP and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation flew in to join them—including experts in disaster victim identification and bomb-blast investigation. The overall international effort in this investigation followed, with 10 countries being represented at the forward command post in Kuta.

The investigation involved identifying 7,300 possible witnesses and then processing 600 statements. Forensic teams examined 2,900 exhibits from 46 sites across Indonesia and tested other samples in Australia. Success soon followed, with the arrest of four principal suspects between 5 November 2002 and 12 January 2003.

At the height of the operation, around 100 Australian police were deployed to Bali, including officers from the AFP and state police forces. The investigation was also supported by 400 officers based in Australia, making this the largest investigation in the AFP's history.

—AFP, 'How we handled a crisis that shook the nation: a round-the-clock response', *Platypus Magazine*, December 2002; AFP, *Annual report 2002-03*, pp. 30-32

Within hours of the blasts, POLRI Chief Da'i Bachtiar and AFP Commissioner Mick Keelty discussed how the AFP could provide assistance. In the view of senior Indonesian police officers, Australian expertise in crime scene management, intelligence analysis and computer and bomb forensics would be important contributions to the investigation.

Operation Alliance was a multinational effort. While the Indonesian police under Brigadier General Pastika led all aspects of the investigation, POLRI gave the AFP unprecedented access to the crime scene. POLRI also provided access to witnesses from the beginning and shared the task of analysing evidence.⁵ Further cooperation included a joint investigation by Indonesian and Australian police officers, led in the field by senior Indonesian detective Gories Mere, to capture the suspected terrorists after they'd moved back to Java.

During this phase, officers from both countries lived and travelled together in the field, shared information openly, and coordinated support from Jakarta and Canberra. The effectiveness of the investigation was demonstrated by the conviction of more than 30 terrorists, including seven of the main perpetrators.⁶

Cooperation to fight terrorism and transnational crime

Within weeks of the 2002 Bali bombings, the Australian Government increased its commitment to helping Indonesia build its counterterrorism capacity. The early priorities were organised into initiatives in areas such as infrastructure, information systems, physical security, assistance with legislation, and training for POLRI and other law enforcement officials.

Enhanced cooperation in counterterrorism investigations was among the most important priorities of the time. Once the Bali investigation was complete, the AFP's Operation Alliance team formed the Jakarta Operations Centre. This group provided close support to POLRI's major counterterrorism operations over the next few years, including after the 2003 Marriott Hotel bombing, the 2004 Australian Embassy bombing and the 2005 Bali bombing. The Jakarta Operations Centre also worked alongside POLRI's investigative taskforce, known as SATGAS BOM, in its field investigations. Today's smaller team, now known as the Jakarta Regional Cooperation Team, focuses on information sharing and training.

Building on the desire for even stronger cooperation, the Australian and Indonesian Governments agreed in 2004 to create a school that would focus on transnational crime and counterterrorism. The resulting initiative was named the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC).

Located in Semarang, Central Java, and opened in July 2004, JCLEC has become a bricks-and-mortar reminder of the interests and experience shared by Australia and Indonesia. The centre began with a strong focus on counterterrorism training for Indonesian and regional police forces, but it now offers courses on a wide range of transnational crime areas and broader topics such as Islamic law.

More than 15,000 students from 69 countries have participated in nearly 600 training experiences at JCLEC since it opened its doors. Most are from POLRI, but around 20% of places on each course are reserved for officers from other countries. The centre also trains other law enforcement officials, including those with border security, anticorruption and judicial responsibilities.

Other key initiatives during this time were designed to improve POLRI's physical and information infrastructure. Principal among these were the Transnational Crime

Cooperation Centre, the Multinational Operational Support Team, and the Republic of Indonesia Bomb Data Centre. Also important were training and equipment for areas such as disaster victim identification, fingerprinting and, later, DNA analysis. Most of these initiatives included equipment, office accommodation, information technology and, perhaps most importantly, skilled AFP officers to work beside their Indonesian counterparts. This close support enhanced their collective ability to solve crime, which became increasingly important as the areas of security cooperation expanded.

Continued evolution of the POLRI–AFP relationship

While counterterrorism remains a bilateral priority, Australia and Indonesia now have a broader range of shared security challenges. These include persistent crimes, such as drug smuggling, people smuggling, human trafficking and illegal fishing, and newer concerns arising from technological change.

One of the most important new initiatives was the Cyber Crime Investigation Centre. Launched in 2011, the centre is a joint operation that sits within POLRI headquarters in South Jakarta. In the years since, satellite offices have also been rolled out in four major Indonesian cities, which has increased the number of skilled cyber analysts in POLRI.⁷

This period has also seen AFP and POLRI make efforts to sustain already delivered projects. This has included updated equipment and new iterations of training courses. Much of this cooperation has been funded through official development assistance, and is essential to sustaining the two forces' cooperative efforts against transnational crime.⁸

Close cooperation has also been required in times of tragedy, such as after the 2007 Yogyakarta air crash, and after the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Australia when POLRI provided six officers to assist with victim identification.⁹ This kind of cooperation is significant because it familiarises officers with each other's methods and conditions, and shows that AFP and POLRI officers can 'reinforce' each other to cope with major incidents.

While this decade of very close cooperation has achieved much, it's had to withstand some buffeting winds too. These have been created by general tensions in the bilateral relationship, and more specific matters such as premature ministerial comments about important arrests and travel warnings in 2007.¹⁰ This period also included other controversial events, including the arrest of the 'Bali Nine' heroin ring in 2005, a summons issued to visiting Jakarta governor Sutiyoso in 2007 over his alleged role in the Balibo Five killings of 1975¹¹, concerns over the detention of Indonesian minors involved in people smuggling, and the *Oceanic Viking* stand-off in 2012. These events show how conflicting policy objectives can create difficulty in

the relationship, and how nimble footwork is needed to maintain balance.

People smuggling again

Another area that's required considerable agility from both forces is people smuggling. For a time after 2002, people smuggling was reduced to a minor concern due to the decline in irregular movements between Australia and Indonesia. However, shifts in international conditions and Australian policy after 2008 would re-raise people smuggling to a prominence that persists today.¹²

When unauthorised arrivals reached a new peak in 2009, the AFP established a renewed relationship with POLRI's People Smuggling Taskforce. The taskforce's early focus was on disrupting people-smuggling journeys, assisted by Australian funding, training, equipment for provincial forces and joint operations support. In order to make the most of its core skills and maximise its resources, the AFP switched from disruption operations to providing investigative support and intelligence on the people-smuggling syndicates as the numbers of asylum seekers travelling through Indonesia grew in 2012.

Policy changes by the Australian Government in mid-2013 led to increased bilateral cooperation against people smuggling for a time¹³, but revelations of November 2013 about Australian intelligence activities concerning Indonesia led to a freeze in bilateral cooperation on people smuggling that's likely to continue for some time yet. This freeze makes it worth examining what this history of cooperation has actually delivered.

The impacts of the AFP–POLRI relationship

Cooperation between POLRI and the AFP is often called an 'investment': it includes 'deposits' and 'withdrawals', like a bank account, and multi-purpose infrastructure that others can use. Regardless of the analogy used to describe it, it's clear that the relationship delivers real returns at many levels.

The analysis below is based on discussions with people with a close involvement in the bilateral relationship, so it reflects aggregated viewpoints and inferences from those discussions. It doesn't claim to be an 'audit', or allow for a quantitative analysis of costs and benefits, but it provides an assessment of the workings of this longstanding collaboration that demonstrates its considerable value to both nations.

Police-to-police impacts

The day-to-day work done by Indonesian and Australian police officers in fighting crime delivers the clearest benefits

of this relationship. These include practical assistance, such as when the POLRI attaché in Australia helped to manage the cases of young Indonesians caught fishing illegally, and many cases that have been resolved through information sharing or on-the-ground cooperation.

Capacity building assistance—the transfer of skills and equipment to improve another’s ability to operate—for POLRI has been extremely beneficial because it’s promoted interoperability between the two forces. It’s also been possible to leverage capacity building assistance in one area to obtain cooperation in another. As a result, both forces are better able to meet each other’s requests and conduct joint operations.

Training has also led to positive benefits. According to one senior Indonesian officer, training at JCLEC is highly valued by POLRI officers because it’s modified to Indonesian needs and provides skills they can apply in the workplace. POLRI has also passed skills and knowledge to the AFP during this time, particularly on terrorism, counter-radicalisation and transnational crime. It’s also helped to broaden AFP’s cross-cultural experience more generally, as many AFP officers gained skills for working in Southeast Asia by virtue of their Indonesian postings.

These benefits arise because AFP and POLRI officers know each other, understand each other’s situations, focus on being police, have direct access to their counterparts, and feel comfortable discussing mutual concerns. Many interviewees for this project described interactions with their colleagues in terms of ‘mutual benefits’, ‘mutual trust’ and ‘close collaboration’. They also described a ‘low key’ approach to cooperation that places a premium on respect for jurisdiction.

Despite the success, there have been instances in which the closeness of the relationship might have contained some detriment. The case of the Bali Nine could fall into this

category. Critics might also say that the AFP hasn’t leveraged its influence to promote human rights and accountability in POLRI. Some initiatives, such as the Multinational Operational Support Team and early stages of the Bomb Data Centre, didn’t necessarily deliver as expected.¹⁴ Some Indonesians might be concerned about how the large number of Australian police in their country affects Indonesian sovereignty. And some think the focus on counterterrorism and then people smuggling since the early 2000s has reduced the attention paid to other crimes, especially drugs. Such instances highlight the complexity of the relationship as much as anything else. Clearly, some compromise has been needed to achieve what leaders in both countries have considered to be in their interests.

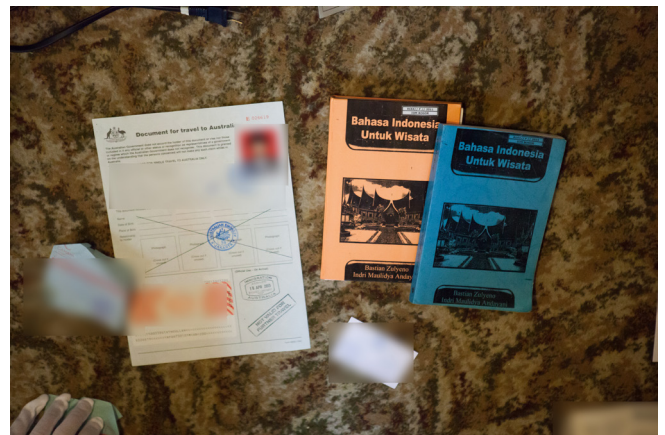
Impacts on organisational identity

According to a number of long-serving AFP officers, both the international network and its leading role in overseas counterterrorism have made the AFP distinct from its state counterparts. The practical benefit, which was especially noticeable to some after the 2002–03 Bali investigation, was that the operations in Indonesia helped to cement the AFP’s ‘sense of mission’. That investigation enhanced the AFP’s national and international profile, and provided an opportunity to show leadership among Australian police forces.

Capacity building assistance and successful responses to terrorist attacks have helped POLRI to assert itself as an institution separate from the military. This assistance, especially after the first Bali bombings, greatly improved POLRI’s credibility with government and the Indonesian people, according to one academic with deep experience in researching POLRI. This success has allowed POLRI to increase its legitimacy, despite competition from the Indonesian Army and continuing concerns about corruption.



A targeted Australian Federal Police operation, known as Operation Delphinium, resulted in arrests across Australia in relation to people smuggling investigations, 29 August 2013. Photos courtesy of the Australian Federal Police.



Impacts for other government agencies

Other Australian and Indonesian departments and agencies have also accrued benefits from the AFP–POLRI relationship. For instance, the police-to-police relationship provides a conduit for Australian agencies to share information about matters such as human rights, biosecurity, money laundering and corruption with their Indonesian counterparts through JCLEC. These contacts also help Australian agencies broaden their discussions with Indonesian agencies into non-security areas. For example, cooperation on illegal fishing led to broader discussions about sustainable fisheries and marine conservation parks, according to one Australian official.

On the Indonesian side, the police-to-police relationship has brought numerous law enforcement, judicial and regulatory agencies together on important themes. These have included workshops on people smuggling, financial crime and corruption, and training for judges and prosecutors on counterterrorism laws and the interpretation of digital evidence. At the local level, cooperation between police and other law enforcement agencies in Indonesia has also addressed the exploitation of fishermen and dealt with some aspects of smuggling.

Broader impact on the bilateral relationship

The police-to-police relationship has also delivered benefits to the broader bilateral relationship. It's certainly contributed to a 'habit of cooperation', and for a short time the police sustained the major link on security matters between the two neighbours. However, given the depth and breadth of the bilateral relationship, and the number of shared challenges, it's important not to claim too much for the AFP's and POLRI's contribution.

Still, former Australian ambassadors to Indonesia and others highlighted the importance of the police-to-police relationship. In the view of many, it played an important role in helping the two countries to repair the rift created by the East Timor intervention, primarily because the police relationship provided mutual benefits.

The general public and the business communities in Indonesia and Australia also receive direct and indirect benefits from the police-to-police relationship. Because police are likely to be involved when citizens or businesses need help, good communication and cooperation between police forces can be very important for protecting legal rights. Contact between the AFP's liaison officers in Indonesia and their colleagues in provincial police headquarters can also add an 'international' dimension to particular cases and help them receive attention.

Other direct benefits from the POLRI–AFP relationship include opportunities for industry arising from capacity building projects and information sharing—although not everyone in industry agrees with that. Private-sector

participants in this project noted some improvements in Australia, particularly for information about criminal threats in Southeast Asia. The benefits weren't so clear for those in Indonesia, however, because threat warnings from the Australian Government are generally delivered through general advice like travel advisories. Some Australian businesses in Indonesia also think that more information should be provided on criminal threats, although a suitable model for this doesn't exist yet.

Benefits in Southeast Asia and elsewhere

In addition to these bilateral impacts, the AFP–POLRI relationship has been beneficial for both countries' regional objectives and profiles.

In the case of JCLEC, the presence of regional police forces and international donors allows both Australia and Indonesia to promote issues of mutual concern. JCLEC has a multiplier effect, too. While there, all participants are encouraged to build new networks that, according to JCLEC's leaders, encourage cooperation among them. This benefit is illustrated in the Regional Executive Leadership Program, which involves 20–30 senior police executives from Southeast Asia who hold influential policy and operational positions in their respective forces. JCLEC also helps both Australia and Indonesia to complement other regional training initiatives, including some by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and INTERPOL.

The bomb data centres in Australia and Indonesia allow the AFP and POLRI to promote technical cooperation through the Southeast Asian Bomb Data Centre network. The network provides 'an effective means for engaging with regional [bomb data centres] and maintaining an awareness of emerging capabilities and issues', according to the Australian National Audit Office.¹⁵

The close relationship has also allowed cooperation in regional and global police meetings, such as the Chiefs of ASEAN Police (ASEANAPOL) forum and the Virtual Global Taskforce to combat online child sexual abuse. In these instances, POLRI and the AFP have introduced each other to the forums, where membership allows both to pursue their objectives on a broader basis.

An additional layer is the benefit that other countries receive from AFP–POLRI cooperation, including help to gain access to POLRI and the international coordinating role played by the AFP in major investigations. Once again, JCLEC is important because it's a focal point for international donor contributions to POLRI—which reduces the transaction costs of cooperation—and it allows third countries' liaison officers to engage POLRI through training courses.

Taken together, these activities—led prominently by joint operations and JCLEC—have a positive effect on the bilateral relationship and international police cooperation

in the region. But no relationship should stand still: changes to needs and in the external environment mean that assumptions and conditions change quickly. As a consequence, it's timely to consider how the AFP and POLRI could prepare for both the next phase of the bilateral relationship and the longer term.

Restoring the POLRI–AFP relationship after a political crisis

On 18 November 2013, two Australian media outlets carried revelations about Australian intelligence activities in Indonesia, leading to a swift fracture in the official relationship. The break was felt mainly in the defence and security domain, but it also created some ambiguity about bilateral dealings in general.

At present, Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa of Indonesia and Foreign Minister Julie Bishop of Australia are negotiating a 'code of conduct' or protocol to guide future ties. They're also managing other sensitive bilateral issues, including counter-people smuggling operations. What emerges from this negotiation will be important to POLRI and the AFP. While both police forces seem determined—as expressed in interviews for this report—to return to the close relationship of the past, this situation will create a 'new normal' that will influence the future police partnership.

The AFP–POLRI relationship today

The police-to-police relationship today is very strong, particularly in counterterrorism cooperation and at JCLEC, but it's affected by the political winds. In this case, the intelligence controversy has led Indonesia to freeze cooperation on people smuggling and cybercrime. While the areas affected directly reflect domestic political priorities and the nature of the allegations about Australian activities, the freeze is concerning because police cooperation has been solid during other times of tension in the bilateral relationship.

It's also concerning that POLRI inspected its communications equipment to ensure that it hadn't been compromised, and that Australia was specifically mentioned as one country that might have 'tapped and misused' the equipment. Statements attributed to Dr Natalegawa recently about the importance of trust, and continued revelations courtesy of the Snowden theft, also add to the ongoing tension.¹⁶ While the implications of these actions and statements should not be overdrawn, it's possible that a trust deficit—perhaps only in the increasingly important cyber area—will emerge in the relationship.

This political tension also comes around a time when a number of initiatives that built the AFP–POLRI relationship have reached maturity or are no longer operating. Projects

such as the forensic laboratories have been completed. The Multinational Operational Support Team no longer functions, while the Transnational Crime Coordination Centre might be nearing the end of its useful purpose. In another major area—cooperation to curb people smuggling—it's possible that policy changes might attenuate the trade again and reduce this as an area for future cooperation.

It's also possible that some existing areas of cooperation are underutilised. While we shouldn't forget JCLEC's contribution in Indonesia, the numbers of POLRI officers studying in Australia and the numbers of Australian police studying in Indonesia are small in absolute and comparative terms.¹⁷

Still, a number of current activities remain relevant: JCLEC and capacity building activities such as the Republic of Indonesia Bomb Data Centre and the Cyber Crime Investigation Centre (once full cooperation resumes). These same initiatives are likely to remain relevant for the future, too, and may contain significant potential for growth.

An inflection point

When the political context and current status of capacity building cooperation are viewed together, it's possible to describe the police-to-police relationship as being at an inflection point. There are now opportunities for both parties to reflect on the benefits of past links and think more about their future under new conditions.

Those conditions will be shaped by a number of factors, of which the political relationship is the most uncertain because of the upcoming 2014 legislative and presidential elections in Indonesia. It's also possible that further Snowden revelations, or incidents involving people smugglers, could complicate ministerial discussions. As a result, it's unlikely that the 'new normal' will become apparent until early 2015, and a clear political 'OK' will probably be needed to allow cooperation to recommence.

In that time, aspects of the police-to-police relationship will change. While strong links are likely to be sustained, some liaison officers will move to other work before full cooperation is restored. There will also be a need to restore trust in the cyber realm, so that current projects can continue and new ones might start. And POLRI's needs for cooperation and support are likely to change in some ways, too. In other words, the POLRI of early 2015 will be at least subtly different from the force in November 2013.

Step by step, softly and quietly

Until the Indonesian Government provides a clear mandate to resume cooperation, the AFP and POLRI will probably use the tried and trusted methods they've employed for a long time: they'll respect jurisdiction, stay in contact but in the background, work on and through people-to-people

relationships, and be prepared for change. It will be important to take nothing for granted, and to recognise the tight domestic political situation in Jakarta for the time being.

Other important factors are the shared interest in crime fighting, the track record of benefit described above, and the areas less affected by the current troubles. Specifically, this means making the most of cooperation on counterterrorism and transnational crime. It also means being ready with some targeted assistance in areas that promote agreed priorities. According to a retired senior Indonesian officer, that will always be welcomed by POLRI if it's presented well. That both forces are in this relationship for the long term won't hurt either.

Objectives and initiatives to restore the AFP–POLRI relationship

Given that the overall purpose of this relationship is to establish the best possible conditions for the rule of law in both countries—and so promote their shared interests in economic growth, democracy and security—the primary objective should be to re-establish a trusting partnership across all crime areas of mutual concern. We'll know this objective has been achieved when the remaining phases of the Cyber Crime Investigation Centre project are complete, and cooperation is fully restored in both that area and in the people-smuggling domain (if that's still necessary).

The forces should consider a range of initiatives designed to restart cooperation and enhance trust in this period (see figure 1). This will also help to remind both governments and both publics of the value of police–police cooperation, albeit in a subtle way.

People-to-people contact is likely to be the first area where full cooperation will be resumed. Indeed, all the AFP and POLRI officers interviewed for this project think the current tension has not damaged this aspect, although some note that the ambiguous situation has made some Indonesian officials hesitant to engage their Australian counterparts. Because these established relationships are not easily transferable, the AFP and POLRI should not change their senior liaison officers unless absolutely necessary during this period; stability in those positions will provide continuity in the relationship and ensure that people with experience are positioned to manage the resumption.

Opportunities to promote people-to-people links should also be pursued. One particularly auspicious milestone will occur soon: July 2014 will mark the 10-year anniversary of JCLEC. Given both forces'—and indeed governments'—shared pride in this facility and its achievements, it's worth planning a major activity to mark this anniversary. While July mightn't be convenient due to the Indonesian presidential election, the celebration could be held soon after the result is clear.

Planning involving a steering group of senior serving and retired officers with strong attachments to the relationship and JCLEC should start as soon as possible.

Increasing the number of Indonesians with experience in Australia is another initiative for later in this period. This might include short courses or workshops in Canberra, with participants including future AFP and POLRI leaders. There are many options for subject matter. For instance, a workshop might focus on case studies of past operational successes and discuss the mechanics of good international partnerships, while promoting a transfer of knowledge between generations and building new relationships. Understanding whole-of-government operations and policymaking, again based on case studies, could also demonstrate the benefits of multiagency cooperation within and between the two countries. Another useful topic for workshops and courses is cybercrime, which should include government, academic and private-sector participants.

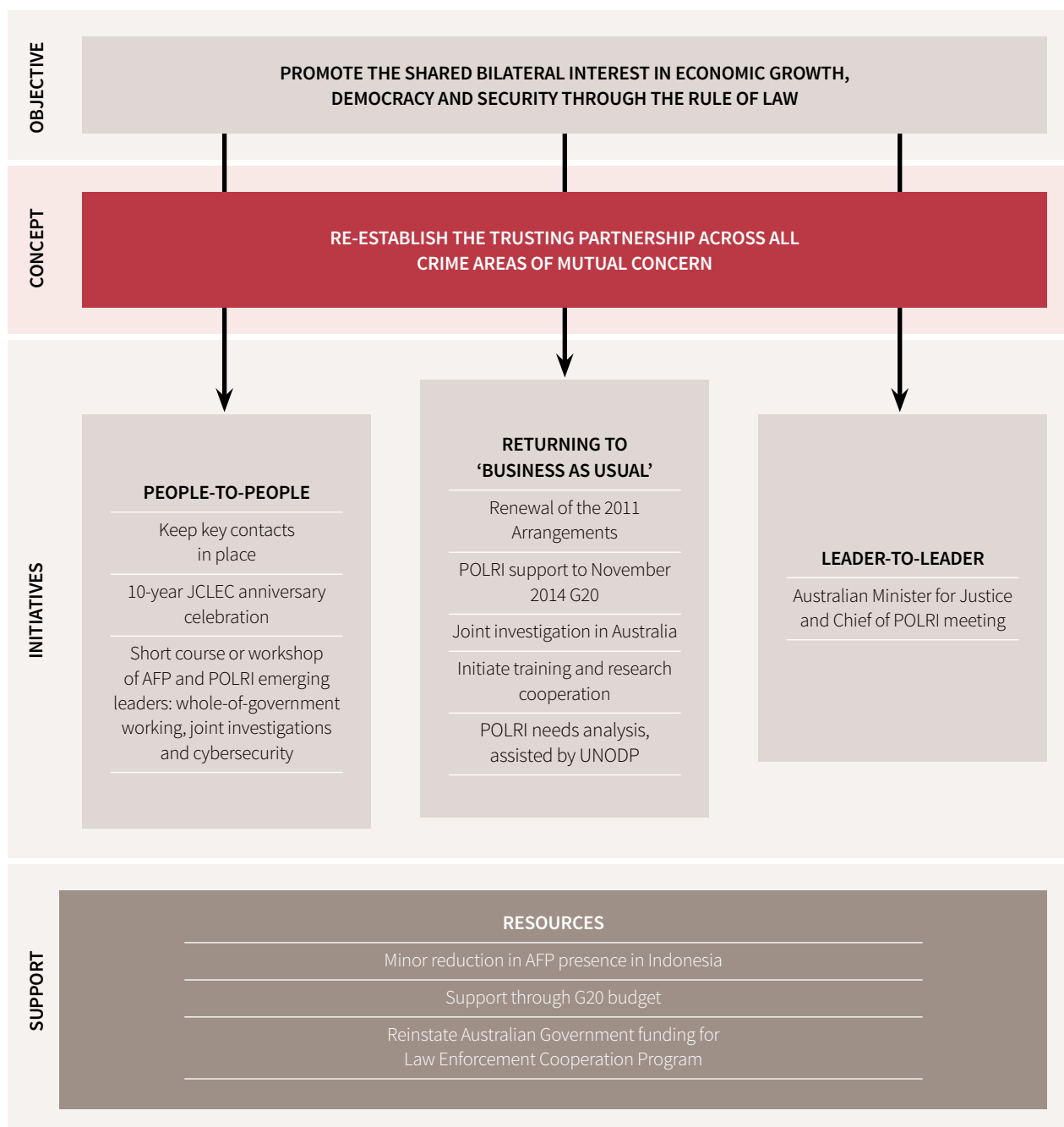
The leader-to-leader dimension of the relationship is also important. Senior-level visits to Jakarta and Canberra should take a priority, but it will be important to schedule them in an appropriate order and at a suitable rate. An opportunity for Australia's Justice Minister to engage with Indonesian counterparts should also be found, including with the Chief of POLRI, who holds ministerial rank. This will ensure that the Australian minister responsible for the relationship is engaged and can build contacts too.

Returning to 'business as usual' is the third leg of the near-term strategy. The renewal of the three-year police-to-police framework, which is due in November 2014, is one important aspect. Before then, there will be opportunities to facilitate some operational activities through the present arrangement. These activities should, in the main, stress the partnership between the AFP and POLRI and use the functioning structures in an optimal way.

One possible initiative that the AFP could take is to request POLRI assistance for the G20 meeting scheduled for November in Brisbane. These meetings require a large number of additional police, including specialists in intelligence, bomb data and forensics. Accordingly, the AFP could ask for support from a small number of POLRI experts in those areas and employ them in the main AFP work areas in Canberra. It would also be worth inviting POLRI to send a liaison officer to Brisbane for the event. Such requests would enhance transparency, send a clear message about mutual respect, and provide practical support at a time of high activity and international attention.

Should the opportunity arise, the AFP should also look to invite POLRI to participate in a joint investigation in Australia. While this has been done before, there are likely to be other, and perhaps more regular, opportunities for this kind of practical assistance.

Figure 1: Strategy map: near term



The AFP could also invite POLRI to assist with training and research in Australia. This might include instructors for disaster victim identification and forensic courses, or support for management training. Specialised workshops, which could provide information on the Indonesian security situation and counter-radicalisation, could be useful too.

In addition, Australian law enforcement agencies might invite POLRI to support research projects on topics such as transnational crime in Australia, or the impact of Australian crime in Indonesia. The latter theme could highlight the operations of Australian criminal motorcycle gangs and paedophiles in Indonesia.

Another piece of research that would be very useful is a law enforcement sector needs analysis in Indonesia. While the timing is flexible, the analysis should be Indonesian-led and internationally supported, and aim to provide better information on POLRI's needs for international donors. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has already employed a suitable tool in Pakistan and is planning to apply that methodology across its program areas in Indonesia if it receives funding from international donors. Given the inflection point in the POLRI–AFP relationship, which is heightened by the completion of some recent and existing capacity building projects, a needs analysis could provide a good sense of Indonesian priorities and some new areas for mutually beneficial cooperation.

Achieving these goals needn't be particularly expensive, and indeed may be offset in a few ways. There's probably an opportunity to reduce the AFP's presence in Indonesia and redirect those resources to initiatives that bring Indonesians here. And the Australian Government could also redirect some resources to the AFP–POLRI relationship, at least in the short term, as part of a broader package to strengthen the bilateral relationship.

The need for resources and flexibility points unequivocally to the need to re-establish the Law Enforcement Cooperation Program (LECP) in the next budget. Cutting it reduced the AFP's ability to make and take opportunities overseas without reducing its effort in other areas, and, at around \$1 million per year, the cut was only a very small contributor to the fiscal rebalancing effort.¹⁸ Again, there are other areas of security spending that could be reviewed to provide the necessary resources, including money spent domestically on counterterrorism, or in areas that promise to deliver 'sometime in the future', such as most aspects of defence cooperation. While this might seem like shuffling deckchairs or robbing Peter, the LECP will be an essential contributor to restoring a relationship that delivers on a day-to-day basis.

Start preparing now

The current hiatus in the relationship is not only an impediment to bilateral cooperation: it's also an opportunity. As these recommendations show, there are a number of ways for the AFP and POLRI to engage in constructive and operationally useful ways during this period. That some represent opportunities to engage POLRI in international activities in Australia, or draw upon its skills and knowledge, is important. Indeed, initiatives such as workshops, research, training and—critically—operational engagement will demonstrate that the partnership is genuine, interests are indeed shared, and activities are conducted for mutual benefit. This is important as the new 'normal' of the relationship is negotiated over the next 12 months or so, and as the relationship develops over the next 5–10 years.

Collaborative and broad: an outline strategy for the future AFP–POLRI relationship

The POLRI–AFP relationship has proven highly beneficial to both countries, but it will face challenges and a changing environment and its importance to both sides shouldn't be taken for granted. We shouldn't assume that both sides agree that the police relationship should be a priority, especially because it will compete with other relationships for resources and attention. So it's important to examine how the AFP–POLRI relationship can maintain its relevance, because not doing so could lead to the continuation of out-of-date activities or misdirected new ones.

This section outlines a strategy for the future of the AFP–POLRI relationship over the next 5–10 years (Figure 2). The strategy suggests objectives for the relationship, provides an overarching theme for engagement, and identifies new initiatives that both countries and their forces could undertake. The supporting basis of people-skills and resources is also considered because these are key contributors to a successful relationship.

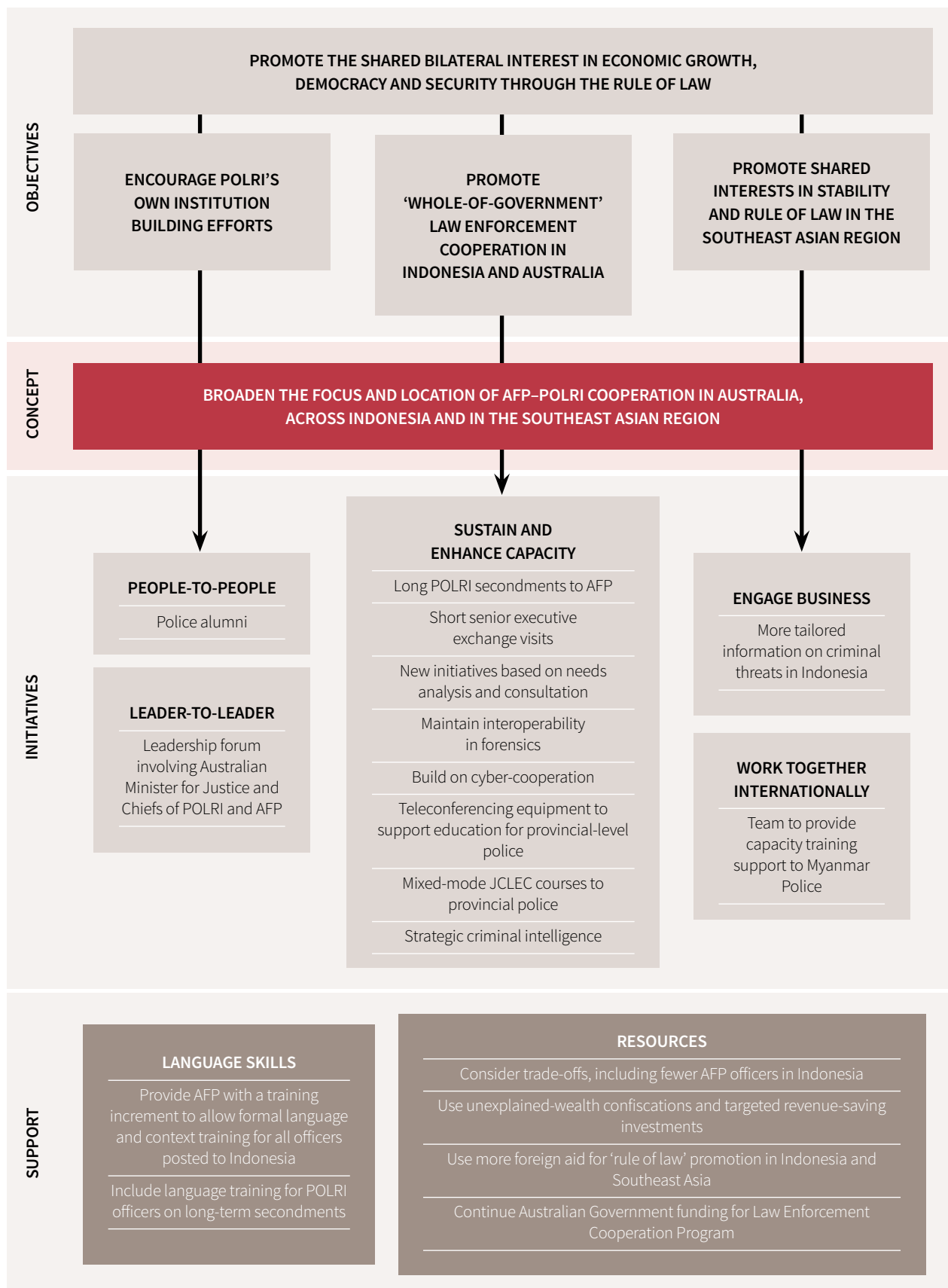
A relationship with a future—and challenges

It's possible to lose sight of the increasing importance of the relationship between Indonesia and Australia when the media is dominated by one or two issues. Despite that, a number of Australian and Indonesian analysts have looked at the effect of change in both countries and most see increasing economic, strategic and law enforcement connections.

Economic growth will be a leading contributor to change over the next decade. It's likely that Indonesia's GDP will exceed Australia's within a few years.¹⁹ This would see Indonesia's tech-savvy middle class increase dramatically within a decade, and they'll want some of the trappings and vices of their Western counterparts.²⁰ Australia, too, seeks ongoing prosperity and a diversified economic base. This need could see Indonesia become a greater source of opportunity for Australian business, tourism, education and research.²¹ These factors mean that Australia and Indonesia are likely to become more open and economically important to each other over the next decade.

Indonesia's strategic importance has long been a feature of Australian security policy, and it could increase in salience. As Hugh White notes, Indonesia's increasing wealth and population mean that Australia might need to start thinking of its northern neighbour as a 'great power' within the decade, which is an unusual situation for Australian policymakers.²² This factor is likely to make the continued evolution of Indonesia's democratic system a strategic factor, too.

Figure 2: Strategy map: 5-to-10 years



The increasing exposure of both countries to the international economic system and each other means that they'll continue to face common criminal threats. Drug production and smuggling is likely to grow in importance, particularly as Indonesian criminals become producers of cheap methamphetamines like 'ice'. While these drugs are mainly produced for Indonesian consumption at present²³, the increasing presence of transnational crime gangs, including criminal motorcycle gangs from Australia, means that Indonesia is becoming a source and transit country for drug importation into Australia.²⁴

Cybercrime was mentioned as a rising concern by a number of law enforcers interviewed for this project. While many mentioned the benefits that police obtain by exploiting cyber-evidence from criminal activities, cooperation has also helped to disrupt cybercrime at its source in Indonesia, according to an AFP officer. That cyber cooperation is currently under a cloud is a real concern, because the AFP and POLRI have achieved significant results by working together in the cybersphere on crimes such as money laundering, child exploitation and drug trafficking. It's also helped in the fight against terrorism in Indonesia.

That's important because the terrorist threat in Indonesia is likely to remain for some time. Indonesian and Australian experts interviewed for this project think that the impending release of some involved in the 2002 Bali bombings and a new cohort of extremists returning from Syria might give terrorist groups more capacity and skills. Such a change is likely to promote further interest in bilateral counterterrorism cooperation, and possibly also increased foreign assistance.

Of course, there are a number of other types of crime that concern both countries. For example, Indonesia is a target for Australian paedophiles, whether they're in Indonesia or using the internet. Indonesia also serves as a transit point to Australia for irregular migrants, and from Australia for smuggled wildlife.

But managing economic, strategic and law enforcement change will pose challenges for both countries. In addition to the changes and uncertainties mentioned above, promoting economic development and dealing with non-traditional security issues in Indonesia require continued improvement to the rule of law in that country. This is important because corruption, weaknesses in its legal system, and poor bureaucratic and ministerial coordination are often mentioned as barriers to Indonesian growth and cooperation.²⁵ On the softer side, the currently narrow base of people-to-people links is also seen as a factor that limits mutual understanding.²⁶

These and other practical issues will create challenges for future police-to-police cooperation. Along with the changing needs of both forces, the potential trust deficit in the cyber area and the other factors mentioned above, it's also worth noting the impost created by a large AFP

presence in Indonesia. In the future, these challenges could extend to a possible reduction in Australia's willingness to allocate resources to this relationship. Furthermore, internal competition between POLRI and the Indonesian Army over internal security functions looks set to continue, while expectations about POLRI's accountability and resistance to corruption are likely to rise. These factors make it essential to think more closely about the police-to-police relationship so that it suits both governments' future needs and overcomes these challenges.

What should the AFP and POLRI try to achieve over the next 5–10 years?

This analysis of the ongoing need for the AFP–POLRI partnership shows considerable continuity with the past, but it's possible that the dominant concerns of the past 15 years could wane. For example, recent Australian policy changes might foil people smugglers and there might not be an upsurge in Indonesian terrorist attacks over the next few years. This uncertainty makes basing a future relationship on those particular shared interests risky, and probably not the best way to sustain a durable and responsive partnership.

It's also possible that the atmosphere in the broader bilateral relationship might contain considerable uncertainty for some time yet. This could keep some brittleness in the relationship and expose the police-to-police relationship to the political issues of the day.

A long-term strategy for the AFP–POLRI relationship should have, as its primary objective, promoting the shared bilateral interest in enhancing economic growth, democracy and security through the rule of law. This is the central value of the bilateral relationship, and professional police-to-police interaction promotes it.

But it's possible to extend the objectives of the relationship in three other areas. First, there's value in encouraging POLRI's own institution-building efforts, because it continues to face competition over its internal security functions and increasing expectations to be more transparent and accountable. This last factor, while sensitive and needing careful discussion and management, was one mentioned by numerous POLRI officers interviewed for this project. Second, it's possible to use the police-to-police relationship to promote whole-of-government law enforcement cooperation in Indonesia and Australia. Third, there's an opportunity to promote the shared interests of both nations in stability and the rule of law in the Southeast Asian region, to the extent that that's practical and mutually agreed.

To achieve these objectives, opportunities to broaden the relationship's focus, both geographically and thematically, should be a priority. Those opportunities should be pursued in areas that make the most of AFP–POLRI interoperability. In particular, the strategy should include cooperative

activities in Australia, in Indonesia (including in the provincial police commands) and in the Southeast Asian region. The purpose of this broader geographical focus is to give both governments the highest possible stake in maintaining law enforcement cooperation, even if the bilateral relationship is troubled. It's also possible that, by demonstrating the value of cooperation for crime fighting and respective international objectives, the AFP–POLRI relationship can add some ballast to the bilateral relationship.²⁷

The success of the relationship should be judged in practical terms. Measures should include successful joint operations, be they physical or cyber-based. Also relevant are shared educational outcomes, which include the number of participants in courses jointly sponsored by the AFP and POLRI and the content of those courses. Success should also be measured by the instances in which both forces have provided information that reduces crime. Only then should the measures turn to the intangible, such as the relationship's contribution to the 'atmosphere' of bilateral ties or the way it promotes international goals. In this way, both governments will be able to identify and analyse the value of the police-to-police relationship over time.

Longer term initiatives to enhance the AFP–POLRI relationship

The AFP and POLRI could take a number of initiatives to enhance and sustain their relationship over the next 5–10 years in ways that contribute to the objectives described above. The suggestion is to sequence these activities over a few years to allow consultation and to ensure that each is effectively implemented, and to avoid a rush of activities that might strain the capacity of both organisations. It's worth starting this discussion with people-to-people links because they can be the easiest to implement.

Building people-to-people links

As this report shows, both police forces have achieved significant operational outcomes, developed a leading educational institution, and achieved a level of interoperability. But the nature of police service means that people move on, so new links need to be formed. And the challenge of sustaining long-distance friendships over time—and managing strains in the bilateral relationship—can diminish the remaining contacts. It's also worth finding a way to keep retired officers engaged because they can help smooth troubled waters, especially in the Indonesian system. However, at present, there's no structured way for the AFP and POLRI to achieve any of those outcomes. It's left to chance.

This gap could be filled with a POLRI–AFP alumni association. This initiative would reinforce the links between the two forces. It could be based on the successful models used by Indonesia's LEMHANAS and the defence alumni association, IKAHAN.²⁸ It should be overseen by a board representing the most senior POLRI and AFP officers with experience in the relationship, whose remit would be to guide the association and encourage participation. The key membership group should be those with shared operational experience and those who've worked on capacity building initiatives such as JCLEC, the Transnational Crime Coordination Centre and the Bomb Data Centre. Also included should be those who've undertaken training activities at JCLEC or in Australia.

Such an association needs to get beyond websites and the occasional cocktail party. The program should include study tours that refresh serving officers on the relationship and shorter professional development experiences such as seminars and workshops. Importantly, alumni activities should also create opportunities for junior officers to meet their seniors. This is a very attractive feature of IKAHAN for Indonesian Army officers because the size of their force limits such interaction. Given POLRI's similar size, this feature could help to encourage participation and add value to the experience.

Enhancing leader-to-leader links

Australia and Indonesia already have strong mechanisms for leader-to-leader consultations, but, as explained above, there's no standing arrangement that would allow the minister responsible for the AFP, usually the Justice Minister, to engage with Indonesian leaders on police matters. While there's some asymmetry between the two systems, there are ways around that.

One could be to create a law enforcement meeting, where the Australian Justice Minister hosts Indonesian ministers responsible for counterpart Indonesian agencies, including POLRI's chief. Also included could be the heads of relevant Australian agencies, including Customs and the Australian Crime Commission. This meeting could focus on practical law enforcement cooperation, which would leave engagement in the new Australia–Indonesia Law and Justice Ministers Meeting to focus on legal and other policy matters. Such a meeting could also present law enforcement as a whole-of-government activity that requires political leadership and cooperation and coordination between many agencies.

New capacity building activities

Given the depth and maturity of this relationship, new ideas must be based on mutual desire and need, so it's essential for both forces to understand and share their needs and translate them into projects.

While this report hasn't had the benefit of extensive consultations, discussions with Australian and Indonesian officials and an examination of the broader environment have identified areas where both forces could cooperate in new capacity building activities. As POLRI and the AFP produce a formal plan for their cooperation, consultation should occur through the existing senior officers meeting mechanism and perhaps through the ministerial forum suggested above. The proposed internationally-facilitated needs analysis would provide an evidence base for future cooperation and resource requests.

The people-to-people initiatives proposed above can be complemented by inviting some junior POLRI officers to participate in long-term secondments with the AFP. Under this scheme, selected officers would receive intensive language training and then play either line or specialist advisory roles within the AFP. The areas for secondments could include disaster victim identification, forensics, protection, community policing management and high-tech crime investigation. POLRI could also provide instructors on some AFP training courses, which would further enhance the Indonesian force's professional reputation while reducing a cost to the AFP.

It's also possible to use similar secondments in corporate areas. Work in strategic planning, acquisition, human resource management, finance and fraud control would give AFP and POLRI officers significant exposure to the management of their counterpart institutions. For Indonesians attached to the AFP, this would include exposure to whole-of-government policy development and implementation, which could help address (in a small way) one of the current barriers to investment and economic growth in Indonesia.

In time, and with appropriate consultation, secondments might also be considered for the intelligence and cyber analysis areas. Some will draw a deep breath at this suggestion, because these are very sensitive areas. But if the AFP is to demonstrate full trust in their Indonesian colleagues, and if Indonesia is to develop long-term trust in information sharing and cyber cooperation, the AFP should seriously consider giving POLRI some access to these functions.

A shorter program of exchange visits for senior POLRI and AFP officers could be another relationship- and institution-building activity. Such exchanges—lasting perhaps two weeks each way—would allow counterpart officers to gain a deeper understanding of the other force while developing close associations between the officers involved.

Of course, this opportunity could be extended to officers during or soon after their initial training. While this move would be more suited to the Indonesian system, such

opportunities provide a chance for new trainees in both nations to learn about the value of the relationship.

Sustaining capacity initiatives

It will be important to identify some new directions in capacity building and to deliver them in a multiagency context. At present, a significant amount of cooperation—but not all—is delivered between counterpart Indonesian and Australian agencies. While practical now, that's not totally desirable because it reinforces the barriers mentioned above. It's also possible that some current cooperation activities might actually work at cross-purposes. For instance, Defence's counterterrorism cooperation with the Indonesian Army is completely pragmatic from an Australian viewpoint, but makes it harder for POLRI to assert its responsibility for that area.

Both nations should encourage cross-agency and multiagency working as a way of increasing both the effectiveness and the efficiency of cooperation. One initiative that already delivers programs in this way is JCLEC. That initiative should be sustained into the future: its model and practices are robust and flexible, and its facilities are a long-term investment. While JCLEC's strategic plan for the next five years is nearing completion, it's worth noting that the facility is running close to its physical capacity. While more courses could probably be done with tight scheduling, new offerings would probably come at the expense of established activities.

There are other ways to increase JCLEC's utility and throughput—and train a broader range of international police, POLRI officers (including provincial-level officers) and other Indonesian officials. This training could include police leadership, tailored courses on transnational crime recognition and investigation, and multiagency approaches to law enforcement challenges. Courses on matters of intense interest in Indonesia—including protecting police officers from terrorism and protecting domestic workers overseas—might also be welcome.

In addition to current plans to expand the use of computer-based training and to deliver courses in different locations, JCLEC could also consider mixed-mode delivery, including teleconferences. This would increase the intimacy and responsiveness of distance education courses and the sources of instructional support. While this initiative will require an investment in teleconferencing equipment and maintenance, POLRI's internal command system would benefit from that investment too.

It will be important to sustain cooperation in forensic and bomb data so that both forces remain broadly interoperable in those areas. In addition, the cyber area is particularly suitable for future multiagency law enforcement cooperation.

Finishing current projects, particularly the satellite cyber offices in Indonesia, should be the first priority, but it would also be worth leveraging this established relationship to build trust, and then to use it in a broad push that would be useful to the bilateral relationship as a whole. Areas for capacity building here will include policy discussions, education, legislative development and standard setting, and practical cooperation to share information, fix problems and defeat threats emanating from or using the cybersphere.

A number of interviewees mentioned strategic intelligence—which identifies patterns and trends in criminal activity, as distinct from targeting individual criminals—as a key area that’s currently underemphasised and ripe for further cooperation. This has been recognised by the AFP, which started a comprehensive engagement program with POLRI’s peak intelligence branch in 2013. This work could build on the existing joint Transnational Crime Assessment and include advice and assistance to build a multiagency criminal intelligence system for Indonesia and deeper strategic assessments on issues of mutual interest.

Cooperation to engage business

The difficulty in exchanging information on criminal threats with businesses in Indonesia might be another basis for a future cooperative program into the future. This program could provide information to Indonesian and Australian companies, regardless of where they work in Australia or Indonesia. It could start with basic briefings and countermeasures advice for business, and perhaps evolve over time into a ‘trusted information sharing network’. One model to consider is the US State Department’s Overseas Security Advisory Council, but with a broader mandate and perhaps based in police, rather than diplomatic, cooperation. Another possibility is working through an Indonesian non-government organisation, such as the Indonesian Crime Prevention Foundation.²⁹ Either way, the aim is to foster the rule of law by promoting the ability of businesses to protect themselves from crime.

Working together to achieve international objectives

The benefits of previous capacity building in POLRI and the existing track record of cooperation in the international sphere coalesce in the last major recommendation of this report. During the past few years, a number of forensics initiatives have matured, and quite a few AFP officers noted that POLRI officers had achieved a level of competency on a par with their former mentors. This is an outstanding result and one that should be leveraged as a way of demonstrating value from previous investments.

Myanmar’s process of political change has some similarities with Indonesia’s experience. The most pertinent factor is the transition of Myanmar’s police force to an independent institution from its subordinate position under the Army. While the situations aren’t exactly the same, observers of Myanmar’s security sector report that its police force also lacks technical crime investigation skills, and has broader needs for institutional capacity building and assistance with cultural change.³⁰

One proposal involves POLRI and the AFP working together to deliver police training in Myanmar. This could be conducted under a trilateral agreement with Myanmar or organised multinationally through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime or ASEANAPOL. Regardless of the mechanics, the training could focus on shared transnational crime concerns, which could include drug production and smuggling, people smuggling, child sex tourism, human trafficking and economic crimes, especially money laundering.

Courses delivered under this initiative should be a true partnership, using POLRI, Myanmar police and AFP instructors wherever practical. Assistance should also be provided to help the Myanmar police gain experience in modern training systems and course management. Trial courses should first test the concept. If they’re successful, the program could expand to include new facilities, permanent staff and perhaps, in time, a JCLEC-like venture focused on drugs or human trafficking.

The value of this proposal lies in the shared Australian and Indonesian interest in Myanmar as a source for significant transnational crime, its democratic transition, and the centrality of the rule of law to that transition. It would also build on the AFP’s current program of cooperation with the Myanmar police and provide a demonstration of Indonesian and Australian police cooperation. In future, this approach could be extended into the Pacific, and perhaps in Cambodia once political conditions change there.

Supporting the strategy—language training

It’s also timely for both forces, particularly on the Australian side, to enhance their officers’ ‘soft’ skills. Time and again in interviews, serving and former AFP officers spoke about their limited preparation for postings to Indonesia. While language training was mentioned most often, the need for education in culture, government and law was also raised.

The AFP received dedicated resources for language training in the past, but this funding has gone even though the need has not diminished.³¹ As the Australian National Audit Office’s *Fighting terrorism at its source* audit identified, a very large proportion of AFP officers deploying to Southeast Asia receive no language training before their posting.

When asked about this, AFP officers identified opportunity cost as a major impediment to language training: while an officer is away for training, others need to do their work. Given the undoubted (but unquantified) benefit of language competence³², it would be worth allocating resources to the AFP for a ‘training increment’ of officers. This would allow officers to be formally posted to language training for perhaps 8–12 months, and allow their old positions to be filled by new officers.

While information on English-language preparation for POLRI officers isn’t as readily available, it was mentioned by interviewees. Indeed, two thought that short courses in Australia didn’t always represent good value for Indonesian officers without suitable English-language skills. This is one reason why longer term secondments are proposed above—they would remove ‘demonstrated language competence’ as a selection factor and open positions to a broader range of candidates. While these proposals will have consequences for human resource policies and require more resources, they ultimately offer ways to get even more from the bilateral police relationship.

Supporting the strategy—resources

No strategy is complete without an understanding of the resources involved. The most expensive suggestions presented here are likely to be the POLRI secondments to Australia, teleconferencing, additional language training, cooperation in Myanmar, reinstatement of the LECP and the alumni program. While it’s not feasible to cost these initiatives, it will always be hard to find new money. Fortunately, there are some sources that could be utilised or redirected by the Australian Government.

The first involves trade-offs in current spending. These could include reducing the size of the AFP’s presence in Indonesia over the next year, particularly if there’s less need for direct AFP involvement in the Indonesian Transnational Crime Centre and if the number of people-smuggling ventures falls. Of course, any change should be the result of discussions with POLRI. Allowing the AFP to redirect this funding to other initiatives would provide a positive incentive to change.

New sources could be found, too. Unexplained wealth confiscations are one way to fund some initiatives; perhaps there could be an incentive to invite Indonesian to cooperate in relevant investigations. Some targeted investments in new cooperation might be used, especially to protect Commonwealth revenue.

Another source is Australia’s official development assistance. While it’s already used for law enforcement purposes, a change to give the ‘rule of law’ greater prominence in the post-2015 development agenda would make the link more explicit and more available as a tool to assist POLRI.³³

Conclusion: leveraging the relationship

The AFP–POLRI relationship has broadened in both scope and depth over the years, and it’s been founded on operational success, but the current environment has created an inflection point in the relationship. This provides both forces with the need and opportunity to consider their future and how the relationship might be pursued for mutual benefit.

There’s good reason to believe that the police-to-police relationship will return to a close and productive basis once current political tensions are resolved, but it’s smart to recognise that the relationship and both forces’ needs will change—and the magnitude of change will be related to the duration and depth of the current ‘freeze’ and the outcome of the negotiated code. Having a clear re-engagement strategy, which should be based on demonstrating respect and building trust, is essential. Some resource flexibility for the AFP—which has been reduced lately—will be needed to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

This outline of a longer term strategy for the AFP–POLRI relationship is based on the judgement that this partnership will remain in the interests of both nations for the foreseeable future. That judgement is built on an analysis of past benefits, a view that criminal threats will be even more salient to national interests in the future, and an assessment that police forces are essential tools of national policy.

The principal outcome—promoting economic growth, security and democracy through the rule of law—can be achieved by further spreading the focus of activity across Indonesia; building an alumni; conducting more long-duration activities in Australia; conducting more activities in multiagency settings and with the business sector; and drawing upon past investments and mutual interests to cooperate on police development in Myanmar. This broader approach will allow the AFP and POLRI to refresh their cooperative engagement, make sure it’s relevant to future needs, and give it a more outward-looking perspective.

All these things are important because they’ll leverage shared capability and add ballast to the bilateral relationship. But neither government should lose sight of the police-to-police relationship’s core benefit: cooperation against crime. This benefit will become even more important as criminal challenges become more complex. It’s also likely that joint action will be needed to protect security or to investigate major crimes, such as terrorist attacks.

Having police forces that are capable, able to work together and ready to help each other has been an essential component of the Australia–Indonesia relationship in the recent past. It’s clearly worth an investment to sustain this unique relationship in the future.

Notes

- 1 POLRI is the abbreviated form of *Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia*.
- 2 President Yudhoyono, 'Remarks at the 19th ICPO–Interpol Asian Regional Conference', 11 April 2006.
- 3 AFP, *Annual report 1981–82*, p. 23; AFP, 'Submission no. 62, Inquiry into Australia's Relations with Indonesia', Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, November 2002, p. 8.
- 4 AFP, *Annual report 2001–02*, p. 27; Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), *Fighting terrorism at its source*, Audit report no. 30, 2011–12, pp. 28 and 42.
- 5 Brendan Nicholson, 'We had an open door', *The Australian* (online), 5 October 2012.
- 6 John Lawler, 'The Bali bombing: Australian law enforcement assistance to Indonesia', *The Police Chief*, August 2004; AFP, *Annual report 2003–04*, p. 29.
- 7 In addition, there are plans for three more satellite offices in Batam, Palembang and Surabaya.
- 8 Between 2008–09 and 2011–12, Australia provided \$24.6m in official development assistance to POLRI. See AFP, 'Response to FOI request of 5 June 2012', <http://www.afp.gov.au/about-the-afp/information-publication-scheme/~media/afp/pdf/ips-foi-documents/foi/disclosure-log/2013/1-2013.ashx>.
- 9 Tom Allard, 'Indonesians fly in to help identify bodies', *Sydney Morning Herald* (online), 15 February 2009.
- 10 Yuli Tri Suwarni and Agus Maryono, 'Police deny Australian favoritism', *The Jakarta Post* (online), 15 June 2007; Reuters, 'Travel warning could harm business ties: Indonesia', *ABC News* (online), 26 June 2007.
- 11 Geoff Thompson, 'Balibo Five inquest sparks diplomatic row', *PM*, ABC Radio, 30 May 2007.
- 12 Angus Houston (Chair), *Report of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers*, Australian Government, Canberra 2012, p. 10, paragraphs i, iv–v.
- 13 Harriet Spinks, Cat Barker and David Watt, *Australian Government spending on irregular maritime arrivals and counter-people smuggling activity*, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2013, p. 27.
- 14 ANAO, *Fighting terrorism at its source*, pp. 63–64.
- 15 ANAO, *Fighting terrorism at its source*, p. 20.
- 16 'Indonesia's Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa says rebuilding trust with Australia has begun', Australia Network News, 9 December 2013; Peter Alford, 'Natalegawa gloomy over talks', *The Australian* (online), 30 January 2014.
- 17 At present, there are six POLRI officers studying at Australian universities, but four of them are sponsored by Indonesia's Anti-Corruption Commission. In the past decade, around 10 POLRI officers have attended courses at the Australian Institute of Police Management, and about 20 have been trained on institute courses at JCLEC. Contrast this with Defence, which offers about 150 places per year to its Indonesian counterparts (Sam Bateman, Anthony Bergin and Hayley Channer, *Terms of engagement: Australia's regional defence diplomacy*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2013, p. 89). In a good sign, the AFP recently sent an officer to POLRI's senior staff college.
- 18 Australian Government, *Budget 2012–13, Part 2 Expense measures—Attorney-General's—Law Enforcement Cooperation Program and International Deployment Group—savings*, <http://www.budget.gov.au>. \$1.3 million was cut in this budget. In the 2011–12 revised estimates, LECF funding was \$1.2 million, http://www.aph.gov.au/~media/Estimates/Live/legcon_ctte/estimates/sup_1112/ag/QoN_32_AFP.ashx.
- 19 World Bank, *GDP growth (annual %)*, <http://data.worldbank.org>; Australian Government, *Australia in the Asian century*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2013, p. 51.
- 20 Vaishali Rastogi, Eddy Tamboto, Dean Tong and Tunnee Sinburimsit, *Indonesia's rising middle-class and affluent consumers: Asia's next big opportunity*, Boston Consulting Group, March 2013, <https://www.bcgperspectives.com>.
- 21 *Australia in the Asian century*, pp. 115 and 125–129.
- 22 Hugh White, 'What Indonesia's rise means for Australia', *The Monthly* (online), June 2013.
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- 28 LEMHANAS (*Lembaga Ketahanan Nasional Republik Indonesia*) is a government staff college for senior military and security sector officials. IKAHAN (*Ikatan Alumni Pertahanan Indonesia–Australia*) was established in 2011 as an association for Australian and Indonesian army personnel.
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Acronyms and abbreviations

AFP	Australian Federal Police
ASEANAPOL	Chiefs of ASEAN Police
IKAHAN	Ikatan Alumni Pertahanan Indonesia–Australia (defence alumni association)
JCLEC	Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation
LECP	Law Enforcement Cooperation Program
LEMHANAS	Lembaga Ketahanan Nasional Republik Indonesia (National Resilience Institute)
MOU	memorandum of understanding
POLRI	Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia (Indonesian National Police)
SATGAS Bom	POLRI Bomb Task Force

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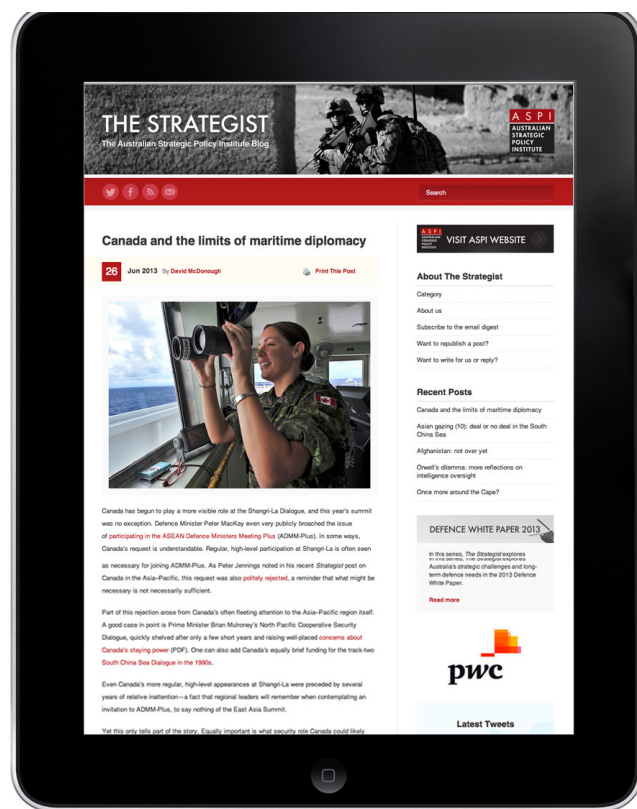
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