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Indonesia and Anti-Access Warfare: Preliminary Policy Thoughts

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Why should Indonesia pay serious attention to the idea of anti-access warfare, the potential military conflict between great powers seeking to prevent or gain access near, into, or within a strategically contested geographic space? This paper offers preliminary answers to this question based on two arguments. First, anti-access warfare is at the heart of Indonesia's deteriorating strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific; it might even shape how a regional conflict will emerge. Second, Indonesia needs to develop its own anti-access strategy given its archipelagic geostrategic character and the centrality of its waterways and airspace in a future regional conflict. I provide both theoretical and practical reasons for the adoption of anti-access as Indonesia's post-Minimum Essential Force strategic theory. Overall, the paper provides various policy considerations for why and how Indonesian strategic analysts should study and debate anti-access warfare further.

Keywords: *Anti-access warfare; Indonesian military; Indo-Pacific; Strategic theory; Defense planning*

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Introduction

Why should Indonesia pay serious attention to the idea of "anti-access" warfare, the potential military conflict between great powers seeking to prevent or gain access near, into, or within a strategically contested geographic space? First, Indonesia's primary strategic environment—the Indo-Pacific—has increasingly deteriorated over the past decade. In particular, the rise of China's Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2/AD) capabilities and strategy has sharpened and hardened the US' counter-access response in their ongoing competition. In other words, if there is a potential regional conflict in the Indo-Pacific in the next decade, anti-access warfare is likely to play a significant part. Jakarta should therefore pay closer attention to the likelihood of an anti-access warfare breaking out and potentially engulfing the Indo-Pacific. Indonesia's ability to thrive, after all, depends on a stable Indo-Pacific.

Second, given Indonesia's archipelagic geostrategic character, it should consider developing its own "anti-access" strategy. For one thing, in any regional conflict scenario involving China and the US and its allies, Indonesia has a clear strategic imperative to prevent the conflicting parties from using its strategic waterways (especially its Sea-Lanes of Communications or SLOCs) and airspace. Indonesia's ability to deter and prevent regional countries from using its waterways and airspace might even help reduce the likelihood of conflict in the first place. On the other hand, Indonesian strategic analysts and policymakers have been thinking about a possible new, long-term strategic plan to replace

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the soon-to-be-completed Minimum Essential Force (MEF) blueprint issued under the Yudhoyono administration. Under Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto, the defense establishment has also been tasked with "revitalizing" Indonesia's revolutionary-era Total People's Defense posture and doctrine. I argue that a new strategic theory built around "anti-access" could provide one alternative to do so while helping policymakers systematically organize the future post-MEF planning and strategy.

The following sections elaborate these arguments. First, this paper provides a brief sketch of Indonesia's deteriorating strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific. This description of the international context grounds our "need" to have a renewed debate on Indonesia's strategic theory for a post-MEF world. Second, I will discuss the fundamentals of anti-access warfare and strategies. I further provide an alternative lens to examine anti-access warfare by disaggregating it into four levels of analysis: grand strategic, military strategic, operational, and technological. In the third section, I provide the theoretical and practical bases for Indonesia to formulate, adopt, and implement an anti-access strategic theory. Taken together, the ideas presented here represent my preliminary thoughts on Indonesia's strategic planning based on dozens of interactions with various policymakers in recent years. They also part of an ongoing research on Indonesia's military operations, defense economics, and organizational development since 1945.[1] The suggestions on Indonesia's anti-access strategy should not be seen as the final product of our ongoing research. More importantly, while this study offers an anti-access strategy as an alternative strategic theory for a post-MEF world centered on the Indo-Pacific, I hope other Indonesian analysts would offer contending approaches.[2]

Indo-Pacific Anti-Access and Indonesia

The Indo-Pacific is in a state of strategic flux. The strategic competition between the United States and China risks creating a new bipolar structure across the region. The frequency and duration of crises

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1   See Evan A. Laksmana, Iis Gindarsah, and Curie Maharani, *75 Tahun TNI: Evolusi Ekonomi Pertahanan, Operasi, dan Organisasi Militer, 1945-2020* (Jakarta: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2020)

2   I use "anti-access strategy" rather than "anti-access/area-denial" throughout this paper to avoid conflating the broader anti-access as a strategic theory with a specific version of that theory as developed by—or presented as such by others—particular countries like China, Russia or others.

among the region's powerholders—between Japan and South Korea, India and China, Australia and China, North and South Korea and others— have also grown. Historical legacies, territorial and maritime disputes, as well as broader strategic competition are all creating regional flashpoints.[3] While these strategic trends are slowly unfolding, day-to-day security challenges, from illegal fishing to transnational crime, continue to strain the resources of regional countries. Domestic political populism across the region has also led to stronger protectionist and isolationist impulses, leaving cumbersome multilateral institutions fiercely competing for attention. The COVID-19 pandemic has also likely accelerated and exacerbated these destabilizing trends across the region.

One of the central drivers of these dynamics is the growing "security dilemma" between the United States and China, particularly over the action—counter-reaction regarding strategic access to the Indo-Pacific maritime theater. In its simplest version, we observe a security dilemma when a state trying to increase its own security ends up decreasing it because another state sees the move as threatening which then respond in kind. Conceptually, the security dilemma is structural in origin, exacerbated by states' uncertainty and fears about each other's present and future intentions, and often caused by defensive actions.[4] In IR parlance, both states caught in a security dilemma are "defensive realist" states.[5] In essence, even if China develops anti-access capabilities as a defensive measure, the US perceives it as potentially offensive. After all, even primarily defensive capability will inevitably contain some offensive capability.

Part of the reason why the US considers China's anti-access strategy— no matter how defensively presented—as threatening is because of its potential to reunify Taiwan with force while preventing American forces from intervening.[6] The general idea is to deter, delay, and if possible defeat any US military intervention based on a combination of assets, including a submarine force, a fleet of fourth-generation aircraft, a variety of

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3   See Brendan Taylor, *The Four Flashpoints: How Asia Goes to War.* (Carlton, VIC: La Trobe University Press, 2018).

4.   These are ideas associated with prominent IR scholar Robert Jervis. See for example his "Cooperation under the security dilemma." *World Politics* (1978): 167-214; "Was the cold war a security dilemma?." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, no. 1 (2001): 36-60; "Realism, neoliberalism, and cooperation: understanding the debate." *International Security* 24, no. 1 (1999): 42-63; *Perception and misperception in international politics* (Princeton University Press, 1976)

5   Tang Shiping, "The Security Dilemma: A Conceptual Analysis", *Security Studies*, 18, No. 3 (2009): 594

6   Indeed, the need to coerce or Taiwan to ensure its unification with the mainland has been a powerful driver of Chinese military capabilities in general. See Thomas G. Mahnken, "China's anti-access strategy in historical and theoretical perspective." *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 34, no. 3 (2011): 313

air-to-surface, ship-to-ship, and ballistic missiles with terminal guidance capability (anti-ship ballistic missiles), and an array of coastal defense measures.[7] An anti-access strategy underpins the development and possible use of those assets to prevent foreign forces from arriving and operating within the PLA's theatre of operations and deny them the effective use of regional facilities such as basing, staging, transit or over-flight rights.[8]

There is some debate whether China has genuinely developed an explicit, coherent, and systematic "anti-access" grand strategy *per se*; PLA public writings and narratives do not appear to use that exact terminology.[9] But recent studies suggest, at the very least, China has developed an anti-access naval doctrine.[10] That being said, one could argue that many US strategic assessments of China conflate operational capabilities with strategic intention, overlook the evolution of Chinese operational and doctrinal preferences, and over-rely on material-based assumptions.[11] These have worsened US-China security relations when combined with China's lack of military transparency and its aggressive behavior in the region. US misperceptions and self-fulfilling analysis notwithstanding, China is indeed boosting its overall regional military capabilities under (some) anti-access strategic logic—which in turn has worsened the US-China security dilemma. Put differently, anti-access warfare lies at the heart of the US-China security dilemma in the Indo-Pacific.

But anti-access warfare has also long been a part of regional countries' doctrinal assumptions. The different logics of strategic denial, for example, have been a central feature of Australian strategic thinking seeking to deter an opponent from attacking the mainland by possessing the military

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7   See details in Taeho Kim, "China's Anti-Access Strategy and Regional Contingencies: Implications for East Asian and Korean Security." *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 24, no. 3 (2012): 359-360

8   Sumathy Permal, "China's Military Capability and Anti-access Area-denial Operations." *Maritime Affairs* 10, no. 2 (2014): 18

9   Initially there were terms like "active defense" or "strategic defense" which came close to anti-access. There were also concepts such as "Counter-intervention", "Active Strategic Counterattacks on Exterior Lines", and others. See more about these terms and the debate over PLA anti-access terminology in Kim, China's Anti-Access Strategy; Christopher P. Twomey, "What's in a Name: Building Anti-Access/Area Denial Capabilities without Anti-Access/Area Denial Doctrine'", in *Assessing the People's Liberation Army in the Hu Jintao Era,* eds. eds. Roy Kamphausen, David Lai, Travis Tanner (US Army War College, 2014): 129-70.

10 See Yves-Heng Lim, "Expanding the dragon's reach: The rise of China's anti-access naval doctrine and forces." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 40, no. 1-2 (2017): 146-168.

11 See the debate in James Johnson, "Washington's perceptions and misperceptions of Beijing's anti-access area-denial (A2-AD) 'strategy': implications for military escalation control and strategic stability." *The Pacific Review* 30, no. 3 (2017): 271-288.

capabilities to stop them as they cross the air–sea gap to its north.[12] Iran and North Korea have likely developed their own anti-access capabilities.[13] Analysts also note that Russia's anti-access and area denial capabilities make it prohibitively difficult for NATO to enter the European theatre of operations forcibly.[14] Even non-state actors operating in challenging environments—such as the Hezbollah in Lebanon, or Hamas in the Gaza Strip—have developed "localized" anti-access capabilities.[15]

In any case, Indo-Pacific anti-access is strategically salient for Indonesia. First, the growth in China's anti-access capabilities is likely to exacerbate its security dilemma with the US. The more China develops its anti-access capabilities, the more the US will increase its "counter—anti-access" response; it could boost military presence and engagement, formulate new operational concepts, field new capabilities, and leverage interoperability with its allies. This "anti-access/counter—anti-access" cycle is exacerbated by the broader strategic competition at play, from the trade war to the dueling visions of the Belt and Road Initiative against the Free and Open Indo-Pacific. These conditions reduce Indonesia's strategic space and autonomy, whether in the bilateral or multilateral spheres. The longer the US-China security dilemma drags on, the more hapless Indonesia's foreign policy becomes.

Second, Indonesia does not gain from an unstable and an increasingly bipolar Indo-Pacific. The US-China anti-access security dilemma and the broader strategic competition has "spilled over" into China's relationship with other regional powers, from India, Japan, to Vietnam and Australia. In some ways, there have always been smaller scale, security dilemmas between China and these states. But the US-China strategic competition— and the growth in anti-access warfare—has exacerbated the problems. Consequently, we are seeing a (semi)bipolar region with a US-China vortex in the middle and a separate, but inter-related, set of (in)security dynamics between China and its regional rivals. Once again, Indonesia's strategic

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12 See Adam Lockyer and Michael D. Cohen. "Denial strategy in Australian strategic thought." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 71, no. 4 (2017): 423-439.

13 See Mark Gunzinger and Chris Dougherty. *Outside-In: Operating from range to defeat Iran's anti-access and area-denial threats* (Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2011); James Holmes, "Anti-Access on the Korean Peninsula", *The Diplomat,* 30 October 2012

14 See Alexander Lanoszka and Michael A. Hunzeker. "Confronting the anti-access/area denial and precision strike challenge in the Baltic Region." *The RUSI Journal* 161, no. 5 (2016): 12-18.

15 See Jean-Loup Samaan, *Nonstate Actors and Anti-Access/Area Denial Strategies: The Coming Challenge* (US Army War College, 2020)

space would shrink because ASEAN—the cornerstone of its foreign policy for decades—will appear irrelevant and strategically insolvent. Further, Jakarta's foreign policy actions and strategies will be measured by regional benchmarks and outcomes at a time when its strategic resources are strained, if not depleted, across the board.

Finally, Indonesia needs to pay closer attention to the unfolding anti-access security dilemma and future warfare because it provides signposts and possibilities for how Indonesian waterways and airspace will be "violated" in the event of a regional conflict. In essence, paying attention to anti-access warfare is not just about a potential instability, but also about a specific type of conflict. If we assume that a future conflict is likely to involve China against the US and its allies, then given Indonesia's geostrategic centrality, its waterways and airspace could quickly become an important operational concern for the conflicting parties. Indonesia therefore needs to develop a response to a possible anti-access warfare unfolding in its strategic environment.

The following part will discuss further the military implications of anti-access warfare and describe the elementary features of anti-access strategy. It draws largely from existing studies working from the perspective of the potential counter—anti-access state and extrapolate key elements from China's experience in developing its anti-access warfare. By doing so, I hope to demonstrate the generalizability of anti-access warfare, which further helps my case for Indonesia to develop its own version of anti-access strategy for a post-MEF world.

Elementary Features of Anti-Access Warfare

In its broadest meaning, an anti-access strategy is simply a "catchall concept" for campaigns designed to complicate or deny enemy power projection into a contested region, to prevent its forces from freely operating within it, and to force it to operate further from the locus of conflict, and if necessary, to eliminate any such forces that might break through.[16] In short, anti-access strategies seek to "deny outside

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16 See Sam Tangredi, *Anti-access Warfare: Countering Anti-Access and Area-Denial Strategies* (Naval Institute Press, 2013), 69; Toshi Yoshihara, "Anti-Access in Comparative Perspective: Imperial Japan, the Soviet Union, and 21st-Century China", in *History of the Joint and Combined Operations* (National Institute of Defense Studies, 2014), 121; Roger Cliff, et. al., *Entering the Dragon's Lair: Chinese Antiaccess Strategies and Their Implications for the United States* (RAND Corporation, 2007), 11

countries the ability to project power into a region".[17] Historically, there is nothing novel about anti-access warfare. From the Greco-Persian wars to World War II and the Gulf War, elements of anti-access warfare have always been part of the equation to varying degrees.[18] Anti-access strategic theory therefore is potentially applicable to different geopolitical and geostrategic dynamics.

But the extant literature on anti-access strategy tends to focus on military capabilities—a set of defensive weapon systems, network, and operational concepts, for example—rather than viewing it as a general strategic theory.[19] In other words, many consider anti-access a technological problem, rather than a strategic one. Most defense policy research also conflates anti-access warfare as a general strategic theory with "anti-access/area-denial" (A2/AD) as used to describe China's military development.[20] Put differently, China's A2/AD capabilities somehow become the primary framework to discuss anti-access warfare.

Arguably one way to untangle these problems is to consider the different levels of analysis of anti-access warfare. Figure 1 below demonstrates the disparate elements across the grand strategic, military strategic, operational campaign, and technological levels.[21] At the grand strategic level, anti-access is the integration and application of different instruments of statecraft—diplomatic, economic, military, information, and others—to deter, dissuade, and potentially defeat an enemy seeking to access and exploit some strategically-contested space. In other words, an anti-access grand strategy is "an all-means-of-power effort" to deter an enemy intervention into one's own territory.[22] In this regard, the national government—not just the military establishment—is in charge of formulating and implementing an anti-access grand strategy.

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17   *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Department of Defense, 2010), 31

18   Tangredi, *Anti-access Warfare.*

19   See for example Vincent Alcazar, "Crisis management and the anti-access/area denial problem." *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (2012): 42-70; Paul K. Davis, Jimmie McEver, and Barry Wilson, *Measuring Interdiction Capabilities in the Presence of Anti-Access Strategies: Exploratory Analysis to Inform Adaptive Strategy for the Persian Gulf* (RAND Corporation, 2002); , Christopher J. Bowie, *The Anti-Access Threat and Theater Air Bases* (Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2002); I. V. Gordon and John Matsumura, *The Army's role in overcoming anti-access and area denial challenges* (RAND Corporation, 2013).
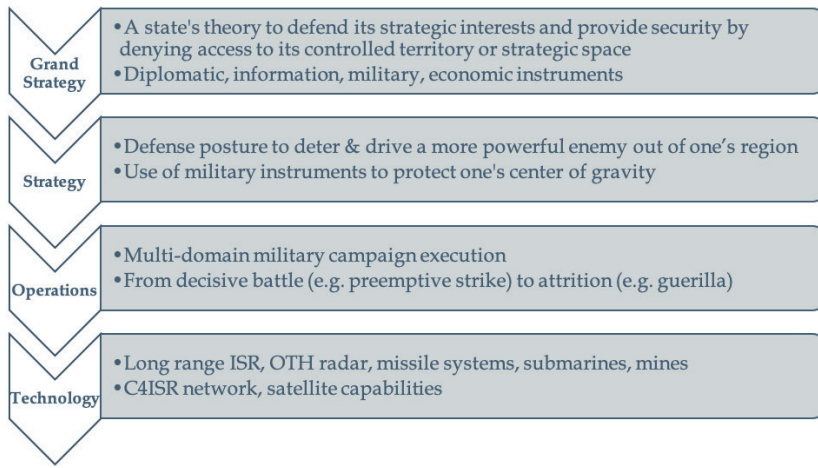
20   See for example Mahnken, China's anti-access strategy in historical and theoretical perspective; Andrew F. Krepinevich, Barry D. Watts, and Robert O. Work, *Meeting the Anti-access and Area Denial Challenge* (Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2003),

21   I only highlight examples and basic concepts. The elements do not represent the full set of capabilities, concepts, or items that could be associated with each level in anti-access warfare.

22   Sam J. Tangredi, "Anti-Access Strategies in the Pacific: The United States and China." *Parameters* 49, no. 1/2 (2019): 8

The government, for example, should figure out how to use diplomatic tools and economic leverage to dissuade a potential enemy from attacking its territory or using its waterways and airspace in the event of a wider conflict with a third party. At the heart of it, anti-access is, after all, a broader strategic problem than simply a military-technological one.

Figure 1. Anti-Access Elements across Different Levels of Analysis

Grand Strategy	• A state's theory to defend its strategic interests and provide security by denying access to its controlled territory or strategic space • Diplomatic, information, military, economic instruments
Strategy	• Defense posture to deter & drive a more powerful enemy out of one's region • Use of military instruments to protect one's center of gravity
Operations	• Multi-domain military campaign execution • From decisive battle (e.g. preemptive strike) to attrition (e.g. guerilla)
Technology	• Long range ISR, OTH radar, missile systems, submarines, mines • C4ISR network, satellite capabilities

The grand strategic level is as if not more crucial than the military one (discussed below). If the essence of anti-access is stopping an enemy from coming in, then the defender's first line of defense is at the grand strategic level, including deterring or limiting any support of the aggressor by surrounding states so as to deny them possible power projection staging grounds. Alternatively, the defender could use diplomatic or economic incentives to influence or persuade the potential enemy that its attack would not only be internationally damaging but also unlikely to be successful. The ability of the defender state to influence "extrinsic events" (e.g., international sanctions) in order to distract and eventually undermine the aggressor is essential for anti-access success[23]—all of which depend ultimately on the broader tools of statecraft (i.e., grand strategy).

At the military strategic level, anti-access is about the preparation by the defense establishment to not only deter an enemy seeking to enter and operate within its territory, but to also defeat it without compromising its center of gravity (assuming there is one). These efforts should include the significant improvement of the range and capability of weapon and

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23 Tangredi, *Anti-access warfare*

sensor systems, doctrinal development, regular high-intensity exercises, personnel education and training, as well as strategic and campaign planning. At this level, an effective anti-access posture is *not* to engage the enemy but to deter it.[24] The idea is to ensure that within the defense establishment all major lines of efforts—from planning, organization to procurement— are geared towards a single, coherent anti-access goal. Without such an orientation, any effort to deter enemies at the grand strategic level is unlikely to be effective.

At the operational level, an anti-access campaign should be "joint" and multi-domain and seek to prevent an enemy from operating its forces near, into, or within a contested region. This access prevention, however, rests on the premise that the anti-access state seeks to avoid symmetrical force-on-force battle.[25] At the campaign level, there are two broad goals to this premise: (1) "operational exclusion", denying enemy forces their potential operating space, and (2) "operational degradation", the gradual erosion of their capability to wage a campaign.[26] These goals follow the broader military strategic and grand strategic levels.

In terms of operations, the key activity rests on the deployment and employment plans, i.e., the campaign initiation phase. The specific campaign naturally depends on the specific theater, enemy goals, and other dyadic features. But some of the following methods might be salient, including threats or attacks on enemy C4ISR systems (e.g., using antisatellite weapons), on logistics, transportation, and support functions, and on allied or partner bases to prevent their use.[27] Anti-access states might also consider cyber-attacks, they might position strike forces at sea, or establish a maritime blockade or a no-fly zone enforced by fighter aircrafts and ground-based anti-air defenses.[28] These operations could certainly be escalated further, including, for example, the use of ballistic missile and aircraft strike attacks on regional partner bases or forward-deployed forces.

Regardless of the tactical plans, the campaign should ultimately exclude superior forces from the contested region until time, attrition, or some extrinsic events undermine their strategic will and resolve. The assumption here is that the defenders have the upper hand by

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24 Ibid., 77

25 Ibid., 75

26 For these two operational goals, see Alcazar, Crisis management and the anti-access/area denial, 50-51

27 See details in Kim, China's Anti-Access Strategy and Regional Contingencies.

28 See more details in Tangredi, *Anti-access warfare*, 77

operating within or along interior lines, they should have nearby bases and forces, agile movement in space, and short lines of communication.[29] The counter—anti-access state, meanwhile, needs to have superior capabilities (number, resources, firepower) to break such a defensive perimeter. In other words, "the interior power concentrates in space while the exterior power concentrates in time".[30]

In some sense, anti-access operations are the weapons of the (militarily) weaker state against a superior force. There is a likelihood that it will fail at preventing access by the superior power. Under this condition, the anti-access state should be prepared to engage in attrition campaigns, hopefully to prevent the attacker from making any decisive strike.[31] Arguably then, an all-out attrition guerilla warfare could be part of any anti-access campaign, albeit as a last resort effort. As I discuss in the next section, this logic fits perfectly with Indonesia's own Total People's Defense doctrine.

Finally, at the technological level, for anti-access operations to work, a defender needs to acquire, maintain, and operate an interconnected series of defensive—and often offensive—capabilities. China, the anti-access *par excellence*, for example, has invested in satellites for covering maritime areas, backscatter radars, Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs) with anti-ship targeting capabilities, long-range cruise missiles, land-based maritime-capable bombers and attack aircrafts, attack submarines, and advanced naval mines. [32] Overall, China has prioritized growing its navy, air force, and rocket forces, while—perhaps more importantly—cutting army manpower.[33] Some of the basic technological assets one normally would need for a successful anti-access campaign against a superior force can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Basic Anti-Access Technological Necessities

Capability	Example of Technological Assets
Long-range precision-strike systems	Long-range anti-ship ballistic missiles and cruise missiles, long-range surface-to-surface rockets.
Littoral anti-ship and naval forces	High-quality non-nuclear submarines, fast missile-armed surface crafts, sophisticated coastal and shallow-water mines
High-quality air defenses	Long-range air defenses capable of engaging non-stealthy aircraft (more than 100 km), advanced low-to-medium altitude air defense systems

29 Yoshihara, Anti-Access in Comparative Perspective, 129

30 Ibid.

31 Tangredi, *Anti-access warfare*, 2

32 See details in Tangredi, Anti-Access Strategies in the Pacific, 5

33 See the discussion in Adam Ni, "Why China Is Trimming Its Army", *The Diplomat*, 15 July 2017

Long-range artillery and rocket systems	Long-range surface-to-surface rockets (beyond 50 km), cannons, heavy mortars, and multiple launch rocket system
Electronic and cyber warfare	Capable of targeting communication networks, GPS, and air- and space-based reconnaissance and surveillance capabilities
Long-range, precision anti-armor systems	Anti-tank guided missiles and indirect-fire and artillery-delivered weapons

Source: Author summary from I. V. Gordon and John Matsumura, *The Army's role in overcoming anti-access and area denial challenges* (RAND Corporation, 2013)

The list in Table 1 is certainly not exhaustive and highly contingent on the specific anti-access scenario. The point is simply that for an anti-access grand strategy, military strategy, and operational campaign to succeed, the defender needs to seriously invest in acquiring many high-quality, sophisticated military technology. It is not clear whether the same set of technological capabilities designed for power projection is ultimately identical than the one needed for anti-access. Regardless, obtaining defensive and offensive weapons would be an exercise in strategic futility without the appropriate, viable, and commensurable anti-access campaign planning, military strategy, and grand strategy. In short, a would-be anti-access state should formulate, invest in, and implement as much as possible of the elements within *all* four levels of analysis to successfully win an anti-access warfare.

To summarize, an anti-access strategic theory is a general outlook on future warfare and not the "sole purview" of some states; there is nothing inherently "Chinese", "Russian", or "Iranian" about anti-access. Each potential defender could develop its own anti-access strategy. This paper offers one way to better understand anti-access warfare by disaggregating it into discrete elements at four levels of analysis. This differentiation is useful for two reasons. One, it demonstrates the generalizability of anti-access warfare. Second, it provides discrete, discernible steps—and thus, the possible policy directions, timeline, and resources—required to develop and implement an anti-access strategy.

"Anti-access" as Indonesia's Strategic Theory?

If we accept that anti-access is not an inherently military or technological problem, nor is it unique to the US-China dynamic, then we can make the case for anti-access as a strategic theory. In the broadest sense, strategic theory concerns thoughts about making effective

strategy and about the proper use of force.[34] While these thoughts are often abstract models, they provide defense planners with a coherent intellectual organization to connect and synthesize disparate problems— from doctrinal development to force planning and procurement —to assist their strategy-making process. But strategic theory cannot be purely abstract; it must be "transferable to the world of action." [35] On the other hand, an overly practical strategic theory would be too bounded by the specific contexts of time and space. A good strategic theory should be able to travel across time, space, and other political, economic, and social contexts because it must account for both the slow-paced nature of strategy-making and implementation as well future strategic challenges. Indeed, the essence of strategy, as Colin Gray argues, lies in "realm of the consequences of actions for *future outcome*."[36] A good strategic theory, in other words, finds the right balance "between practicality and enduring applicability".[37]

This section argues that that an "anti-access" strategy built around the four levels of analysis developed in the previous section is a contender for Indonesia's strategic theory. I build my case using two major parts— theoretical and practical—as required by the dictum of strategic theory. As shown in Figure 2, for both the theoretical and practical elements, there are different drivers and challenges for formulating, adopting, and implementing an anti-access strategy for Indonesia.

Figure 2. The Case for "Anti-Access" as an Indonesian Strategic Theory

Theoretical	Practical			
Anti-access strategy and warfare	Indonesian strategic theory	National	Bureaucratic	Organizational	Technological

The theoretical case for why Indonesia should develop an anti-access strategy is because the broad contours of anti-access warfare provides a good fit for its own strategic thinking. Not only is anti-access warfare generalizable (as noted above), but there are many elements of anti-access theory that fits Indonesia's strategic challenges in the past, today,

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34 Frans Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War: The Strategic Theory of John Boyd* (Routledge, 2007), 11

35 Elinor C. Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction* (Taylor & Francis, 2016), 2

36 Emphasis mine. Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 18

37 Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, 2

and in the future. Sam Tangredi argues that historically there are five key elements of anti-access: (1) the perception of enemy strategic superiority; (2) the primacy of geography as the element that most influences time and facilitates enemy attrition; (3) the general predominance of the maritime domain (both the waterways and airspace above them); (4) the criticality of information and intelligence; and, (5) the determinative impact of extrinsic events.[38] Toshi Yoshihara further adds the importance of economic health that dictates the strength and sustainability of anti-access strategies.[39]

When these elements are present, an anti-access posture is a logical strategic choice. Indonesia's Total People's Defense doctrine has always assumed that its future enemy will be militarily superior and that its strategic geography can be both a source of strength and vulnerability.[40] To some extent, Indonesian doctrinal precepts also have implicit anti-access elements; they sought to deter foreign enemy forces by demonstrating the country's willingness and capabilities to wage guerilla warfare. Indonesia's "layered defense" strategy further implicitly assumes the need to deny access into the country's interior lines of operation and center of gravity by defending the "buffer zone" beyond the 200 nm Exclusive Economic Zone.[41] Indonesia's strategic thinking has been further premised on the importance of its geostrategic location at the heart of the Indo-Pacific as well as its vulnerable geographic features.[42] Overall, we can see that key elements of anti-access warfare are generally present, even if implicit or under-developed, within Indonesia's strategic thinking and history.

As noted above, there is nothing inherently contradictory or mutually exclusive between guerilla warfare on the one hand and anti-access strategy on the other. We can incorporate both types of strategies even if one seems to be antiquated and the other technologically sophisticated.

38　See Tangredi, *Anti-access warfare,* 13

39　Yoshihara, Anti-Access in Comparative Perspective, 135

40　These assumptions go back to the first Total Defense doctrine formulated in the 1960s and continues to be reiterated in subsequent doctrinal precepts and documents until today. See for example *Buku Induk Doktrin Perdjuangan TNI Tri Ubaya Cakti* (Departemen Angkatan Darat, April 1965); Guy J. Pauker, *The Indonesian doctrine of territorial warfare and territorial management* (RAND Corporation, 1963); Andi Widjajanto, "Evolusi Doktrin Pertahanan Indonesia, 1945-1998", *Jurnal Prisma* 1 (2010): 3-20; Robert Cribb, "Military Strategy in the Indonesian Revolution: Nasution's Concept of 'Total People's War' in Theory and Practice." *War & Society* 19, no. 2 (2001): 143-154.

41　See the discussion in Evan A. Laksmana, "Rebalancing Indonesia's Naval Force: Trends, Natures, and Drivers." *Naval Modernization in Southeast Asia: Nature, Causes and Consequences,* ed. Geoffrey Till and Jane Chan (Routledge, 2014), 188-189

42　See Evan A. Laksmana, "The enduring strategic trinity: explaining Indonesia's geopolitical architecture." *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 7, no. 1 (2011): 95-116.

If Indonesia were to develop an anti-access strategy, it does not need to discard its guerilla-based Total People's Defense doctrine. For one thing, the doctrine's basic philosophy—that national defense requires all elements of national power—remains enshrined in the constitution and rightly so. For another, while the philosophy remains constant, the strategy, posture, and employment of Total People's Defense could benefit from "updates". This is where anti-access comes in—it can provide a modernized "outer layer" while maintaining the guerilla warfare "core".

More importantly, anti-access can provide a coherent organizing framework to revitalize Indonesia's stagnating military doctrine, a more strategic and purposeful basis for long-term strategic planning, and a more productive and testable baseline for technological procurement. Theoretically, it ties all of Indonesia's strategic history together— from the revolutionary era to today and beyond—while keeping fundamental elements in place and adding new ones to prepare the defense establishment for the future strategic environment. As mentioned previously, the likelihood of anti-access warfare in Indo-Pacific means that Indonesia will face a possible military "intervention" into its waterways and airspace in the event of a regional conflict. Taken together, these points provide a necessary but insufficient case for anti-access as an Indonesian strategic theory; the basic elements of anti-access warfare fit well with Indonesia's strategic history and thinking as well future challenges.

But to make the sufficient case for anti-access, we need the practical considerations as well. At the national level, Indonesia has consistently supported the growth in defense spending, even in difficult times. This budgetary support fits well with the vision of the current defense ministry under Prabowo Subianto to "complete" the MEF blueprint by 2024. The state of civil-military relations is also somewhat at a junction. On the one hand, there is relative decline in the quality of democratic civil-military relations; the military continues to expand into the civilian sphere, for example. But on the other hand, the stable relationship between the political and military elites also means that technocratic goals like defense transformation or doctrinal revisions could proceed "smoothly".

Under these conditions, formulating and adopting a new strategic theory, especially one built from Indonesia's existing doctrine, should not be too politically or economically burdensome. Furthermore, as noted above, anti-access is more than a military problem. Formulating an anti-access grand strategy requires Jakarta to integrate the different tools of statecraft—diplomacy, trade, finance, investment, political,

and others—to achieve a coherent, strategic goal. Rather than dwelling on which agency gets to lead, an anti-access strategic theory tells us how the different tools could work together in a concerted and purposeful manner. It might even push the government to finally establish an executive office of strategic affairs under the Office of the President, rather than relying on the antiquated ideas of a National Security Council contained in the decades-old National Security Draft Bill. After all, a successful anti-access strategy depends on how the different tools of the state could shape or influence some "extrinsic event" to distract or degrade the will of the aggressor.[43]

At the bureaucratic level, Indonesia's defense and security establishment today are less fragmented compared to 1998. However, the challenges rest in the different operational outlook and "bureaucratic autonomy" of the three armed services within the military. The Air Force and Navy might welcome an anti-access strategy that would prioritize their service development plans. The Army, traditionally the most powerful, is unlikely to embrace a strategic theory that relegates guerilla and territorial warfare to second fiddle. But it can be argued that developing an anti-access joint doctrine, for example, could ameliorate these inter-service challenges. In other words, anti-access could have a "unifying effect" by focusing the attention of the three services to work together under a common, coherent, and systematic strategic theory.

At the organizational level, an anti-access strategic theory could be beneficial in several ways. On the one hand, it could provide a common conceptual baseline in the ongoing process of doctrinal revisions (within the armed services as well as within the joint operations context), along with organizational restructuring activities. On the other, it could provide a shared starting point for strategic planning, force development, and even procurement priorities. Having common conceptual and planning baselines are essential in Indonesia's broader defense transformation process. In other words, an anti-access strategic theory could provide the parameters and signposts to evaluate the defense transformation process. Does an anti-access strategic theory support the development of a nation-wide reserve component, for example, or the procurement of fighter jets rather than missile defense systems? Could anti-access be achieved without the reduction in personnel cost and size? These are useful questions to answer for Indonesia's defense transformation process.

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43 Tangredi, *Anti-access warfare*, 234

Finally, at the technological level, the ministry's list of defense policy and capability development priorities also include elements that could be useful for an anti-access strategy. These include, for example, developing an integrated and modern Total People's Defense system, creating an Air Defense Identification Zone, boosting satellite-based remote sensing and surveillance, building tri-service TNI units in key outer islands, lifting cyber, land, naval, and air capabilities, deploying missile defense systems, and securing strategic chokepoints.[44] While there are challenges in the back-and-forth between the service headquarters and the ministry over procurement plans and operational requirements, adopting an anti-access strategic theory provides a coherent conceptual foundation to push through and even expand those plans. At the very least, it provides a strategic direction and purpose, rather than engaging in procurement for procurement sake. It might even provide the push for a more systematic technological leap in strategic planning. A purposeful technological boost is not only necessary but also prudent at a time when Indonesia's strategic resources are badly strained.

In summary, this section provides theoretical and practical bases for Indonesia to formulate and adopt an anti-access strategic theory. As briefly demonstrated, anti-access warfare shares, historically and comparatively, some common elements with Indonesia's strategic historical experience and doctrinal precepts—and how they might help address future strategic challenges. I further consider how adopting an anti-access strategic theory could provide national, bureaucratic, organizational, and technological benefits for Indonesia's defense establishment. Overall, there are more benefits than losses in formulating an Indonesian anti-access strategy.

Conclusion

This paper offers preliminary answers to why Indonesia should pay serious attention to anti-access warfare. First, how Indonesia's strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific has been deteriorating can be attributed to the security dilemmas underpinned by the development of anti-access strategies. Whether and how Indonesia's waterways and airspace will be "violated" in a future regional conflict will also depend on the pace and scale of the unfolding anti-access warfare. Second, Indonesia should develop its own anti-access warfare because theoretically and practically

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44   See "Kebijakan Pertahanan Negara 2020", Keputusan Menteri Pertahanan No. 104/M/1/2020

it offers one of the best cases for a coherent strategic theory. These two arguments were explored in the above sections. Nonetheless, the policy analysis is far from complete or perfect. As the title implies, it represents preliminary thoughts on the considerations, benefits, and challenges of how anti-access warfare matters for Indonesia. It is certainly not the final word on Indonesian strategic theory. Therefore, I hope this paper could spur other Indonesian analysts to start thinking and debating more seriously and systematically about the absence, or at best stagnation, of Indonesia's strategic thinking.

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