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WATCH IT ON



KERTAJATI'S HERCULES MRO HUB AMBITION:

A STRATEGIC LEAP FOR INDONESIA'S DEFENSE FUTURE

The operational readiness of defense equipment remains a cornerstone of military success. Modern armed forces depend not only on advanced hardware but also on robust maintenance frameworks that keep aircraft, vessels, and vehicles mission-ready at a moment's notice. In this light, the proposal to establish a regional maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) hub for the Lockheed C-130 Hercules in Indonesia is far more than a mere infrastructure project—it is a strategic pivot to strengthen national defense capabilities and curb long-term reliance on foreign contractors.

Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin's recent disclosure that the US has offered Indonesia the opportunity to become Asia's central hub for Hercules maintenance warrants serious strategic consideration. President Prabowo Subianto's decision to earmark Kertajati International Airport for this venture reflects a forward-thinking vision that bridges national security with economic growth. Blessed with vast land reserves, an expansive runway, and underutilized aviation facilities, Kertajati presents a rare opportunity to transform an existing asset into a high-value strategic center for both Indonesia and the broader Indo-Pacific.

However, it should be noted that this initiative is still in its formative stages. The Defense Ministry has clarified that no formal pact has been inked, with talks currently restricted to conceptual designs, cooperation models, and implementation frameworks. This measured approach is highly appropriate. Any bilateral pact involving critical defense infrastructure must be meticulously structured to protect national sovereignty, satisfy the operational demands of the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI), and guarantee the active involvement of the domestic defense industry. Ultimately, success should not be measured by the influx of foreign capital alone, but by the depth of technology transfer, localized expertise, and long-term industrial capability Indonesia stands to gain.

What makes this initiative particularly compelling is the government's broader ambition to cultivate a Sustainable Aerospace Park rather than a siloed MRO facility. By anchoring military and commercial aviation maintenance under one roof, Indonesia can foster a comprehensive aerospace ecosystem that generates high-skilled employment, attracts foreign direct investment, fortifies local supply chains, and spurs technological innovation. This strategy meshes perfectly with national development priorities centered on industrial downstreaming, advanced manufacturing, and high-value, technology-intensive sectors.

Nevertheless, translating this blueprint into reality demands clearing substantial hurdles. Indonesia still relies heavily on overseas MRO providers, shackled by gaps in international certifications, original equipment manufacturer (OEM) backing, capital access, and specialized technical expertise. Overcoming these barriers will require seamless, coordinated action among government bodies, the military, state-owned enterprises, and private sectors. If executed with precision, Kertajati will evolve beyond a standard maintenance depot—it will stand as a monument to Indonesia's growing defense autonomy and its ascent as a leading aerospace power in Asia.

Budi Putra

Editor-in-Chief

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A parachute instructor stands at the door of a C-130 Hercules during parachute training at Marine Combat Training Center (Puslatpur) 3, Grati, Pasuruan.
IDM/Septo Kun Wijaya

KERJA SAMA INDONESIA-AMERIKA SERIKAT

DI BALIK WACANA PEMBANGUNAN 'BENGKEL' PESAWAT HERCULES DI BANDARA KERTAJATI

Nurhidayat Nasution, Yuli Ari, dan Nirmala Maulana Achmad



Kesiapan alat utama sistem persenjataan (alutsista) berperan penting dalam menentukan efektivitas pelaksanaan misi. Dalam konteks ini, keberadaan fasilitas MRO (*maintenance, repair, and overhaul*) menjadi faktor yang krusial. Sejalan dengan itu, terdapat wacana pembangunan fasilitas MRO pesawat angkut militer Hercules di Indonesia. Wacana tersebut dipandang sebagai salah satu opsi untuk memperkuat kapasitas pemeliharaan alutsista sekaligus industri pertahanan nasional.



AGUNG WAHYUDI

Dalam rapat kerja bersama Komisi I DPR RI pada 19 Mei 2026, Menteri Pertahanan RI Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin mengungkap adanya tawaran dari Menteri Perang Amerika Serikat (AS) Pete Hegseth agar Indonesia menjadi pusat fasilitas MRO (*maintenance, repair, and overhaul*) pesawat angkut militer C-130 Hercules untuk kawasan Asia. "Dia (Pete Hegseth) menawarkan dan ini tidak ada di negara ASEAN. Dia menawarkan, 'Bagaimana kalau pemeliharaan C-130 di seluruh Asia saya pusatkan di Indonesia atas biaya kami?'," kata Sjafrie.

Ia kemudian melaporkan tawaran tersebut kepada Presiden RI Prabowo Subianto. Presiden selanjutnya menginstruksikan agar Bandara Internasional Jawa Barat (BIJB) Kertajati, Kabupaten Majalengka, Jawa Barat, dipersiapkan sebagai lokasi pembangunan fasilitas tersebut. "Saya lapor (ke) Bapak Presiden, beliau katakan, 'kasih Kertajati'. Nah kita sedang bekerja untuk itu," tutur Menhan Sjafrie.

Pemilihan Bandara Kertajati dilatarbelakangi oleh ketersediaan lahan yang luas serta infrastruktur pendukung penerbangan yang dinilai memadai untuk menunjang pengembangan fasilitas pemeliharaan pesawat. Dalam laman resminya, Bappenas menjelaskan bahwa Bandara Kertajati memiliki infrastruktur mumpuni, namun utilisasinya baru mencapai 6,42 persen. Dengan landasan pacu 3.000 meter dan terminal kargo seluas 90.000 meter persegi, ini menjadi peluang besar jika dikembangkan secara strategis.

Kementerian Pertahanan Susun Konsep MRO

Kepala Biro Informasi Pertahanan Sekretariat Jenderal Kemhan RI (Karo Infohan Setjen Kemhan RI) Brigadir Jenderal (Brigjen) TNI Rico Ricardo Sirait menjelaskan bahwa hingga saat ini belum terdapat kesepakatan antara Indonesia dan Amerika Serikat terkait rencana pengembangan fasilitas MRO di Bandara Kertajati. "Kalau level *deal* belum, masih dalam tahap pembahasan," kata dia.

Rico menjelaskan, pemerintah pada prinsipnya masih merencanakan

TIM MEDIA MENHAN SJAFRIE



Menteri Pertahanan Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin bersama Menteri Perang Amerika Serikat Pete Heghset.