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NATIONAL DEFENSE

INDONESIAN ARMY POLYTECHNIC (POLTEKAD)

FORGING INNOVATIVE AND TECHNOCRATIC FUTURE SOLDIERS FOR THE INDONESIAN ARMY

SPECIAL REPORT

AIR SUPERIORITY AS GEOSTRATEGIC INSTRUMENT

BUILDING AIR POWER TO ENHANCE DETERRENCE IS AN INEVITABILITY IN TODAY'S STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

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TECHNOLOGY KSOT-008: INDONESIA'S FIRST UNMANNED SUBMARINE, A BREAKTHROUGH IN DEFENSE INNOVATION

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15 November 1945 - 15 November 2025



"JALESU BHUMYAMCA JAYAMAHE"



Air superiority: the cornerstone of deterrence, national sovereignty

"To command the sky is to command destiny."

Air superiority is more than a mere symbol of power — it is the cornerstone of deterrence and national sovereignty. As Indonesia modernizes its air force with state-of-the-art fighters, autonomous systems, and key defense partnerships, the nation is reasserting its role in the skies of Asia — with pride, purpose, and precision.

Modern warfare has fundamentally transformed. From the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh to Ukraine, one lesson remains unwavering: air dominance is war dominance. Air superiority has transcended being merely a tactical advantage; it is now a geostrategic instrument that is fundamental to a nation's strength, deterrence, and influence. For Indonesia, establishing a robust air deterrence capability is not optional — it is a strategic imperative to safeguard sovereignty in an increasingly volatile, technology-driven world.

History is replete with examples of air power determining victory. From the attack on Pearl Harbor to Azerbaijan's decisive use of combat drones in its war against its neighbor, air dominance consistently dictates the outcome of conflict. President Sukarno grasped this truth early, ordering the Indonesian Armed Forces in 1955 to "control the air to fulfill the national will." His visionary message resonates even louder today, as new threats emerge from cyberspace, autonomous systems, and information warfare — all of which demand absolute command of the air.

As detailed in this edition's Special Report, Indonesia's current defense agenda is a direct reflection of this strategic awareness. The acquisitions of A400M military transport aircraft, Rafale and F-15IDN fighter jets, Anka drones, and participation in the KF-21 Boramae project underscore a clear commitment to strengthening the nation's air power . These are more than mere procurement programs — they represent long-term investments in technological advancement, human expertise, and defense industrial growth, thus ensuring a sustainable deterrence posture for the years ahead.

This renewed push evokes the glory days of the 1960s, when Indonesia was rightfully nicknamed the "Asian Tiger." With its formidable fleet of Soviet-built MiGs and Tupolevs, the Indonesian Air Force once commanded regional respect. That historical spirit of strength and self-reliance must now be channeled through modern strategy, relentless innovation, and robust industrial collaboration, enabling Indonesia to stand proud once again in the skies of Asia.

Achieving true air superiority demands strategic vision, decisive leadership, and unwavering consistency. President Prabowo Subianto has championed this imperative — urging the integration of cyber defense capabilities, the development of effective UAV/UAS countermeasures, and systematic modernization to meet the demands of future warfare. As Indonesia consolidates its role as a regional power, one truth endures: air superiority is more than military dominance; it is a powerful instrument of deterrence. But more importantly, it is an ultimate expression of national pride, resolve, and destiny.

Budi Putra

Editor-in-Chief

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An Indonesian Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon, performing an aerial maneuver over Jakarta
Photo by: **Septo Kun Wijaya/IDM**



AIR SUPERIORITY JADI INSTRUMEN GEOSTRATEGIS INDONESIA

MEMBANGUN *DETERRENCE* DARI UDARA ADALAH SEBUAH KENISCAYAAN

Konflik global beberapa tahun terakhir menunjukkan bahwa penguasaan udara atau *air superiority* menjadi kunci keberhasilan operasi militer. Negara yang menguasai ruang udara diklaim mampu untuk menjalankan serangan presisi, menahan agresi lawan, serta menjaga kedaulatannya. Di tengah dinamika tersebut, pembangunan kekuatan udara menjadi keniscayaan bagi Indonesia.

Nurhidayat Nasution dan Yuli Ari



Jet tempur F-16 Fighting Falcon dan T-50i Golden Eagle TNI Angkatan Udara.

WIKIMEDIA



Jet tempur Mikoyan-Gurevich 21 (MiG 21) Angkatan Udara Republik Indonesia (AURI).

Pola peperangan modern saat ini tidak semata ditentukan oleh jumlah pasukan darat maupun kekuatan laut. Pergeseran strategi militer global menunjukkan bahwa kekuatan udara (*air power*) menjadi *game changer* di medan pertempuran. Sejarah mencatat, Perang Dunia II merupakan momentum kebangkitan, di mana kekuatan udara menjadi senjata baru yang mematikan dalam pertempuran. Contohnya, serangan Jepang terhadap Armada Pasifik Amerika Serikat di Pearl Harbor, yang dilancarkan melalui skadron pesawat pembom dan pesawat tempur dari kapal induk, berhasil melumpuhkan sebagian besar armada tersebut.

Nilai strategis kekuatan udara kemudian semakin terbukti dalam konflik modern, seperti yang terjadi pada konflik Azerbaijan dan Armenia di Nagorno-Karabakh pada 2020. Azerbaijan menggunakan pesawat tak berawak (*Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle*/UCAV), Bayraktar TB2 buatan Turki untuk melumpuhkan kekuatan Armenia. Begitu pula dalam konflik Rusia-Ukraina. Dominasi sistem udara dan penggunaan drone memberi keuntungan bagi salah satu pihak untuk melakukan serangan presisi dan signifikan.

Contoh konflik tersebut kembali mengingatkan pada pesan Presiden pertama RI, Ir. Soekarno mengenai pentingnya kekuatan udara. "*Kuasai udara untuk melaksanakan kehendak nasional, karena kekuatan nasional di udara adalah faktor yang menentukan dalam perang modern*," tegas Soekarno pada peringatan HUT ke-9 TNI Angkatan Udara (TNI AU), 1955.

Dengan demikian, negara yang mampu menguasai ruang udara dapat melaksanakan operasi secara presisi, mendukung pasukan darat dan laut, serta menahan agresi lawan dengan lebih efektif. Fenomena tersebut menegaskan bahwa keunggulan udara (*air superiority*) telah menjadi faktor kunci dalam dinamika pertahanan modern.

Kekuatan dan Keunggulan Udara

Kekuatan udara (*air power*) menjadi modal dasar sekaligus fondasi untuk mencapai keunggulan udara (*air superiority*). Tanpa *air power* yang mumpuni, mustahil bagi suatu negara