

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono inaugurated Wednesday Indonesia's first-ever university dedicated entirely to defense studies

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The Indonesian Defense University, initiated by the Defense Ministry, offers three major postgraduate programs in three schools.

These schools were earlier operated separately as the National War College (SSPS), the Joint Forces Staff College (Sesko TNI) and the Institute for Defense and Strategic Studies (SKPS).

The SSPS — established by the Army in 2007 — focuses on studies of war and leadership in defense and security. The Sesko TNI — established in the 1970s — prepares senior military officers to hold strategic positions in the military. The SKPS adopts defense management programs, previously run jointly by the Bandung Institute of Technology and United Kingdom's Cranfield University.

"This is a historical moment. I hope in the future, with the establishment of this institution, military and police officers, as well as their civilian counterparts can continually expand their insight and knowledge [on security and defense]," Yudhoyono said during his opening lecture at the university following the inauguration ceremony at the State Palace, Jakarta.

"I have since the beginning supported and encouraged the establishment of this institution. I hope it can develop into a credible and world-class defense university," the President added. In his welcoming speech at the inauguration ceremony, Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono said Indonesia needed a defense university given the country's emerging position in the Asia Pacific region and in the global economy.

"The Defense Ministry, with support from President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, has identified the need to enhance the capability of human resources in the defense sector as a key area in defense and security reforms.

"The Indonesian Defense University is intended to improve the quality of existing defense education while producing would-be future leaders in defense and security fields, either from the military force or civil society," Juwono said.

In developing its curriculum and courses of study the Indonesian Defense University will continue its partnership with a number of foreign institutions, including Cranfield University, the US National Defense University and **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies** at Singapore's Nanyang Technology University (NTU).

Local and foreign academics, mostly from the Cranfield University and Germany's Giessen University, will serve as lectures. Both the SSPS and the SKPS are open to both military and civilian students with certain positions at their organizations, the Sesko TNI is however exclusively for military officers. Students who wish to study at the new institutions have to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Test of Academic Potential and an oral test. Graduates will earn a Masters degree in Defense Studies.

President Yudhoyono also officially opened a two-day international seminar with the theme, "Indonesia 2025: Geopolitical and Security Challenges", hosted by the Defense Ministry.

He said that by 2025 Indonesia would play a significant role in the global economy and geopolitics, especially with its unique position as home for mixed Eastern, Islamic and Western civilizations.

The seminar will present a number of local and international defense strategy experts, including Barry Desker from NTU, Donald Emmerson from Stanford University (USA) and Takashi Shiraishi from Japan's National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies. Strategic issues discussed at the seminar will include the future of the Asia Pacific region, security sector reform and emerging issues in maritime security in Southeast Asia.