

INDO-PACIFIC

INSIGHT SERIES



An age of uncertainty: Balancing Australia's relations with the U.S. and Indonesia

In the coming decades, Australia's biggest challenge is to maintain its prosperity as a developed economy and democracy. Emerging powers, such as Indonesia and India, and their direct foreign investment will be essential to Australia's future prosperity. Australia must cultivate mutual partnerships and explore new opportunities to get Indonesia to 'look South'. In the face of a Trump presidency, the Indo-Pacific has been thrust into an era of uncertainty. Australia, however, must remain calm and engage the U.S. and our regional partners. So what can Australia do to pursue the opportunities in Indonesia through this era of uncertainty. This publication, based on a speech presented by Professor Smith, clearly outlines 10 key issues that Australia could usefully pursue with Indonesia.

Stephen Smith Volume 1 November 2016





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KEY FINDINGS

- In the coming decades, Australia's biggest challenge is to maintain its prosperity as a developed economy and democracy
- Australia's relationship with Indonesia will be critical in doing so. We must cultivate mutual partnerships and encourage Indonesia to 'look South' and invest in economic partnerships
- A Trump Presidency has thrust the Indo-Pacific into an era of uncertainty, but Australia must remain calm and work constructively with the U.S. and our partners
- Australia must explore economic opportunities, especially after the death of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. This includes Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IACEPA) and regional frameworks such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) or the Free Trade Agreement in the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP)
- Australian businesses must search for opportunities outside of Jakarta, such as in the provinces of Surabaya and Makassar while exploring sister-city links such as between Fremantle and Surabaya
- Australia and Indonesia should be holding more talks, particularly 2+2 dialogues in the lead up to summits such as the G20 and East Asia Summit
- Australia should start a conversation with Indonesia and with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for 'Observer' status
- Australia should explore opportunities to open up trilateral engagement, between Indonesia-Australia-Japan and Indonesia-Australia-India to deepen ties with the Indian Ocean region and explore economic opportunities.

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Part of our job at the Perth USAsia Centre is to help Australian governments and Australian diplomats come to conclusions about what is in Australia's national interest and how we pursue and prosecute those interests.

SO NOW HOW DO WE DEAL WITH THE TRUMP PRESIDENCY?

Let me first make some specific remarks about Indonesia and the importance of the Australia-Indonesia relationship. My analysis is true irrespective of what occurred a week ago. It was true before the U.S. election and remains true afterwards. On any respectable economic analysis and prediction, by the time we get to the midpoint of this Century by the year 2050, there will be four great world economies: United States, China, India and Indonesia. And if it is not Indonesia by itself, the fourth great economy will be Indonesia and the ASEAN economic community. So the U.S., China, India and Indonesia will form the G4.

At the moment of course both Australia and Indonesia are in the G20. In 2050, Indonesia is certainly going to be in a G20, if it still exists. It will almost certainly be in the G4. Australia might be in a G20, but it is just as equally possible we could be in a G30 or G40. So how has Australia managed to make itself and maintain itself as a prosperous, developed economy and democracy, and how do we continue to keep ourselves in that position?

We've become a prosperous economy historically for two reasons: one, we have been a great trading nation, with wheat and wool and gold and then liquefied natural gas and iron ore and now advanced manufactured products.

It is in services into North Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia that we have in very many respects our greatest potential.

Two, because we're a small population country, less than 25 million, with aspirations by 2050 to get anywhere between 35 and 40 million, that has always required being an attractive place for direct foreign investment that is essential to our ongoing economic development and prosperity. We've seen waves of direct foreign investment into Australia, originally from the United Kingdom and then investment, from the U.S., Japan, Korea and now China.

Where is the next wave of direct foreign investment going to come from? In our case, provided we get it right, it is going to come from Indonesia and India. I'm much less concerned about public conversations where we worry about sending incorrect signals to China. My worry is where the next wave of direct foreign investment is coming from. If it doesn't come from Indonesia and India, I don't know where it will come from. Irrespective of the fact that we now have a very healthy superannuation investment capacity, we will still need to have that significant direct foreign investment coming in.

So where are we with our economic relationship with Indonesia? We have something of a trade relationship with Indonesia; Indonesia is our 12th largest trading partner. Eight of our top 10 trading partners are Asian or Indo-Pacific nations, so we do need to grow our trading relationship with Indonesia. But we also need to set the scene for a future investment relationship. When it comes to the competition for investment, by the time Indonesia's economy is such that it will be looking for structural outward flows of investment, Indonesia has many potential destinations. It can go to North America, it can go to North Asia, it can go to Europe. But will it look south to Australia? And from a selfish, state-centric point of view, will it look south to Western Australia? So how do we set the scene for greater Indonesian investment into Australia and vice versa? They will only do that if we are in their faces from now. To me that is the challenge. Don't think that competition from the north for this investment isn't there already. Allow me to give you an illustration: Often it's the scientific data backed up by the anecdotal experience that paints the clearest picture.



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A month or so ago, I went on behalf of the Perth USAsia Centre with CEO Gordon Flake to Seoul and Tokyo. We flew Garuda from Perth to Jakarta then Jakarta to Seoul. On the return from Tokyo we flew Garuda to Denpasar and then back to Perth.

The plane that you fly on out of Perth to Jakarta is a small-body plane with little capacity for passengers or for goods. The plane flying the route from Jakarta to Seoul is twice the size, a newer aircraft model, and seats far more passengers than the route from Perth to Jakarta. The same is true of the comparisons of the planes from Tokyo to Denpasar.

When you check the airline routes on the Garuda flight magazine you'll see that everyday there is a flight from Jakarta to Seoul. There are also daily flights from Jakarta to Tokyo. But there are only four days a week when Garuda flies to Jakarta from Perth, Sydney or Melbourne. So already there is much greater exchange of people and goods from Jakarta heading north than south. So if that's already occurring in terms of traded goods and movement of people, why in 10 or 15 or 25 years' time, when you're looking for structural outward flows of investment, would they look south?

The psychological change which needs to occur in our relationship with Indonesia is that Australia needs to come to the conclusion that we actually need to conduct ourselves like the mendicant in this relationship.

It is more important to us to get the relationship right than it is to Indonesia. If you look at our traditional successful trading areas - cattle, wheat, students and tourism - we do good work in those areas. IndoFood is a good example, using Western Australian wheat to produce its famous noodles in Indonesia. There are other examples. In Surabaya, Simply Stainless from Osborne Park in Perth producing stainless steel products for home and commercial kitchens, in partnership with an Indonesian group of families and exporting to the United States and Europe. Blue Steel boots is another good story.

That is my ideal model - if you can get the right partnerships, if you can get the right synergies then you will get mutual investment - Indonesian into Australia and vice versa. This is the way forward. If we can get joint investment in cattle, joint investment in agricultural products then you will start to build and grow those traded goods and investment.

We also need to look at other new areas. What are some new possibilities? There are tremendous opportunities and this approach is proselytised by Paul Grigson, our Ambassador to Jakarta. Indonesia and Australia are two countries in the world who are among the fastest users of new technology, the fastest adopters of new technology.

Our skill and ingenuity, our design work here can get us into a market that is 250 million people not 25 million people. These new, expanding opportunities are also in the arts, graphic arts, design, furniture and fashion. It's these sorts of opportunities that we can turn into investment.

So if all of those things were true before the U.S. election and are also true after, what has changed?

What has changed is that we're now living in a much more uncertain world than we thought we were in. One of the niceties about a Clinton Presidency was that it was known and knowable. It wasn't a surprise, it wasn't an unknown commodity.

Every time you have a change of administration, a change of U.S. President, then there is always some uncertainty. But this one is much more uncertain than the rest. In uncertain times, we have to be public policy optimists.

There is no point lamenting what might have been. We're dealing with an unknown quantity, so what do we do now? The time is now right for Australian diplomacy to earn its money and by Australian diplomacy and I mean that broadly, generally, not just government. So what do we need to do with President-elect Trump? The first thing is to be calm and not panic. In the end, in public policy and in the governance of nations,

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you're judged by not your instant reaction but by your considered response.

I expect my reaction to Trump's election result would be exactly the same as the bulk of Australians.

But what is our response going to be? Our response has to be calm, sophisticated, nuanced and sensible - build on our strengths and find a pathway to the future. The first thing to do is we need to be in the face of the Trump Administration's transition team, and to his credit our Ambassador Joe Hockey has been doing this already. Then we have to be in the face of those people who form the Trump Administration. That's a full-court press from the first moment. People will emerge in the Trump Administration who are known to Australia.

We have gone through this before but to a much lesser degree. There was lots of concern about having a B-grade Hollywood actor as President of the United States. He surrounded himself with mainstream Republican figures who were internationally well-regarded. When George Bush Jr became President, he also surrounded himself with mainstream Republican figures who aren't quite so well-regarded now. Cheney and Rumsfeld have a lot to be held responsible for.

A problem on this occasion is that you do not have a mainstream Republican Party figure, but someone who has won the nomination and won the Presidency from outside the mainstream of the Party. So we have to look carefully at who he goes to. Many people say it's not the President who counts - it's those people who are doing the day-to-day business - Secretary of State, Secretary of Defence, and so on. But in the end, like the Australian Prime Minister, there are always times when the American President is in a room by himself or herself. Who the President is really does matter.

I'm not seeking to allay concerns which have been expressed in a very dignified way by Obama. We have to try and deal with this in a sensible methodical way, so we need a full-court press on the Administration transition team and a full court press on the Administration itself, in their faces, expressing what Australia's view is of our Alliance relationship, what our view

is of our key partners in our part of the world, what our view is of North Asia - China, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia and ASEAN and our view of South Asia, letting our view be known. I've seen a fair amount of commentary that the opportunity has now come, indeed the requirement has now come for Australia to walk away in whole or in part from our Alliance with the U.S.

The U.S. Alliance has worked for Australia very well for more than 60 years and also works very well for the Indo-Pacific region. I strongly believe that at this point in particular, it would not be in Australia's interest to walk away from the U.S. Alliance.

On the contrary, now is the time for us to be in the face of the US and also in the faces of our other key partners in the broader Indo Pacific region - all of our partners, whether it's China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia and ASEAN or India and South Asia, know that we know the U.S. well and they know us well. Why would we downplay our currency with the US at precisely that point when all of our partners are saying; what do you think Trump will do? How should we respond? What should our strategy or tactic be?

This is a time where we can actually use our long-standing Alliance relationship to better our relationships with our partners in the region.

Some of the people who have made public remarks include my old boss Paul Keating and his Foreign Minister Gareth Evans. Paul, for example, says that Trump's a big power guy, Trump wants to improve the U.S. relationship with Russia, which is a sensible thing to do. But if you're dealing with a big power guy and you're dealing with big powers, from the perspective of a small country with 20-25 million people, might not always be right.

For a country like Australia having a military alliance with a superpower helps, but also doing what we have done historically, diligently and effectively. We don't just have an Alliance with the U.S., we have regional and multilateral commitments and engagements. One of the amusing things to me when it is said that we

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have a U.S. Alliance, therefore we have no independent foreign policy.

It's as if all the work we've done for a long period of time was only done with the United States' permission or not done at all. I don't recall anyone saying at the time that we had to ask U.S. permission to become ASEAN's first dialogue partner in 1974. I don't recall anyone saying at the time, including Paul Keating or Gareth Evans, that we had to ask the U.S. for permission before we suggested to them that APEC would be a good thing to do as a trading arrangement. Or that Paul Keating had to ask Clinton's permission before he said to Bill Clinton, "Bill I think it would be a good idea to raise APEC to a Leaders' Summit".

I can personally tell you that when I was sitting next to Hillary Clinton at a dinner in Singapore, I didn't ask her permission before I said to her "you need to get the United States into the East Asia Summit, because that's going to be the piece of regional architecture that will be really important to Australia, to the U.S. and everyone else in our part of the world".

Australia has been successful in advocating to the U.S. that they do things in our part of the world and to do significant things. So, it is an erroneous view to say, that because we're in an Alliance relationship, we only do things with permission or we don't do enough of Asia. I think the contrary is very much the case.

Gathering from Gareth's op-ed piece and Paul's remarks on the 7.30 Report, I notice that on the one hand we're perfectly entitled to take advantage of the intelligence which flows from the U.S. Alliance through the Five Eyes agreement, perfectly entitled to take advantage of the defence capability and technology which flows, but on the other hand not allowed to stay firmly in Alliance with United States. Indeed, if you read Gareth's comment piece, he concludes by writing "more self-reliance, more Asia, less US". Yet when you read the body of his comment piece, he also says that if a large power, on his example, China, oversteps the mark as he says it has done in the South China Sea, then a quiet but firm response from the U.S. to push back is required, expected and is desirable.

In other words, we're perfectly happy on the one hand to walk away from our U.S. relationship and our association with it, but if anything goes wrong in a world of big powers - and Trump is a big power guy, China is a big power guy, Russia is a big power guy, India is a big power guy - if anything goes wrong then we can expect as part of our inalienable right to see a quiet but firm U.S. response by way of big power pushback!

Unfortunately, big powers don't work like that. If you want to rely upon a big power then you've got to put some skin in the game and that's what we've done over a long period of time. But our skin in the game has always included arguing with the United States about things they should or should not do and arguing our interest. An independent foreign policy simply means pursuing our own national interest, our own national security interest.

There of course have been any number of U.S. foreign policy clangers and the two biggest in our lifetime are Vietnam and Iraq. Iraq is the one which brings our military Alliance with the U.S. into most disrepute. That was an issue which divided Australians at the time, but it was an issue which the Howard Government allied with the United States in what was a misplaced venture.

We know that venture was opposed by my political party at the time and opposed by millions of Australians at the time. It now causes more trouble than we can manage and we are still seeing the ongoing difficulties in Syria and in Iraq. As a fitting consequence we have seen the international reputations of Blair and Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld tarnished.

There are examples of when we do something with our Alliance partner which we shouldn't have done. Very many of us grew up in the post-Vietnam era and that one is burned into our memory banks and in our DNA. For younger people it's Iraq. But that is not the way in which the Alliance works on a day-to-day basis.

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So what do we do? We need to be in the face of the United States administration but we also need to be in the faces of our partners in the region, utilising the fact that we have got plenty of experience with the U.S. over a long period of time.

Now it's all well and good to give gratuitous advice to governments or to Australian diplomacy generally, but in the end you've got to come up with practical concrete proposals which you might be able to pursue, which might actually help. Some practical concrete proposals about what we might do in the face of the Trump Presidency - be calm, don't panic, respond to reality, not speculation, be in their faces, put our view and if, as Shadow Foreign Minister Penny Wong says, "from time to time, the President or the Administration does something that we don't like, or does something which we believe is not in your national interest, or does something which doesn't reflect our values, then say so." It was ever thus. It wouldn't be the first occasion that a U.S. President was publicly or privately criticised by an Australian Prime Minister or Member of Parliament.

I will finish, however, by putting forward *ten suggestions* which in this new environment and in this new context, Australia could usefully pursue with Indonesia, to help see us through an uncertain time, but also to enhance our engagement with Indonesia and ASEAN.

1. Agree on IA-CEPA, and do it in the next 12 to 18 months

One of the results of the Trump Presidency is that the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is dead, at least for now. No point trying to breathe life back into that during the lame-duck session. So if we want to try and get Indonesia into our top 10 trading partners and set the scene for deep investment by Indonesia into Australia, then the first thing we need to do is to get our skates on and get the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement (IA-CEPA) done and dusted. Do it over the next 12 to 18 months and do it in the way in which good trade agreements have always been done. Unleash the trade negotiators, get down to the dozen items which are in contention, have ministers resolve half a dozen of those, send the negotiators back and if anything can't be resolved in time, kick it into touch. The geo-strategic and economic benefits which come from doing an agreement and doing it sooner rather than later always outweigh, in my view, hanging around for years trying to resolve trade niceties.

2. TPP is dead, but work with Indonesia to see if we can make progress on Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) or even on the Free Trade Area in the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP)

If you accept as I do that the TPP is dead, then work with Indonesia to see if we can make progress on RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) or the Free Trade Agreement in the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), which I haven't seen mentioned for a long period of time. This was originally an APEC idea, but as you've seen emerge in the few days after the U.S. election, whether it's RCEP or whether it's the APEC FTAAP, let's work with Indonesia to make progress on a more general regional trade and economic agreement. RCEP is the one we would want to get done more quickly but there is also work to be done to raise its standard.

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3. Have an Economic 2+2 of Finance Minister/Treasurer and Trade Minister and meet in the lead up to G20

4. Have our Foreign and Defence 2+2 meeting in the lead up to the East Asia Summit

Chris Bowen MP who, in a speech in Indonesia, called for Australia to hold an annual Economic 2+2 with Indonesia. It would include Indonesia's Finance Minister and our Treasurer and our two Trade Ministers. My modification to Chris Bowen's good idea is that since we're both members of the G20, Australia and Indonesia should be talking more, and meet in the run-up to significant summits, whether it is the G20 or the East Asia Summit. If we are going to meet with Indonesia in the run-up to the G20, which is a sensible thing to do, the most appropriate forum in which to do that is an Economic 2+2. Indonesia and Australia already have a 2+2 Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers - as we do a 2+2 with a small number of countries including the U.S., U.K., Japan and Korea, The best time in my view to do the Indonesian Foreign and Defence 2+2 is in the run-up to the East Asia Summit. The great advantage of the East Asia Summit and why Australia wanted United States in the East Asia Summit is that the ASEAN 10+8 (Australia, United States, China, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Russia and India) see all of the key players that we want to have a conversation about economy prosperity or about security in the room at the same time. If we were to have a conversation with Indonesia in the run up to that then we would understand our mutual view about the issues coming before the East Asia Summit.

5. Next year on the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN, start a discussion about becoming an ASEAN Observer by the time we get to our 50th Anniversary as ASEAN's first Dialogue Partner in 1974

Indonesia has grown from a regional influence in ASEAN to a global influence. Next year is the 50th anniversary of ASEAN. Who would have thought in 1967 when ASEAN started with a half a dozen countries that would now see the architecture that surrounds ASEAN. Or that Australia would become ASEAN's first Dialogue

partner. 2024 will be the 50th anniversary of Australia as ASEAN's first Dialogue partner. We should start a conversation with Indonesia and with ASEAN about Australia becoming an Observer to ASEAN. The qualitative difference between a Dialogue Partner (which all of the East Asia Summit plus 8 members are) and an Observer, is that being an Observer potentially puts you on a pathway to membership of ASEAN. At present Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea are ASEAN Observers. This puts them on a potential pathway to membership of ASEAN. This is not something for today but it might be something for 2050. So you go to a halfway house, to Observer status that says to ASEAN and Indonesia, "we're serious about this" and puts you on a potential pathway to ASEAN membership but not a pathway you necessarily have to adopt.

6. Encourage deeper Australian engagement with Indonesia's provinces. A new Consul General in Surabaya to add to Makassar. Revitalise the WA-East Java Sister State Agreement

When Australians think Indonesia, most think of the capital city Jakarta. When Indonesians think Australia, most think Sydney or Melbourne. We've got to get more to understand that it's Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Otherwise we'll see a deleterious economic impact on the western part of our country. All of Indonesia's economy is not in Jakarta so we should be encouraging our business and encouraging our businesses to get out into the Provinces of Makassar and Surabaya which are good places to start. Australia recently opened a Consulate in Makassar and some are urging the Australian Government to contemplate a Consulate in Surabaya.

Western Australia and East Java, of which Surabaya is the capital, have had a sister-state relationship for 26 years. If you go to Surabaya and sit down with Surabaya members of the Indonesia Australia Business Council, they'll tell you that in the 1980s they were part of a 100 strong delegation which came from Surabaya to Perth. The regrettable truth is that we have not made enough of the sister-state relationship. Surabaya is going to become Indonesia's most effective and important port. Surabaya

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has a sister-city relationship with the port of Fremantle. So there's lots of the work that would be done there. WA's Trade and Investment Representative to Indonesia, Chris Barnes, is based in Jakarta, but makes a practice of getting to Surabaya at least once a month. The presence of an Australian Consul General's office would add to that.

7. In addition to getting Indonesia into our Top Ten Trade Partners, make mutual investment the hallmark statistic of our economic relationship

Again this is a modified Chris Bowen idea. The real key to our long-term economic relationship with Indonesia is investment. So why don't we start making Indonesian investment in Australia and vice versa the hallmark and the measure of our economic relationship?

8. Enhance our India and Indian Ocean efforts by again engaging an Indonesia-Australia-India trilateral

We have in the past suggested to Indonesia and India that we think about the trilateral conversation, India-Indonesia-Australia. This is Indian Ocean-centric, as we are the three maritime powers in the Indian Ocean. India is the next big power cab off the rank. It makes sense for Australia to up our engagement with India and we can do that through IORA - the Indian Ocean Rim Association, the relevant regional architecture, but we can also do it the trilateral way with Indonesia. We should now revitalise the suggestion.

9. Enhance Japanese engagement in the Indo-Pacific by suggesting an Indonesia-Japan-Australia trilateral, starting with a post-TPP discussion

Enhance Japanese engagement in the Indo-Pacific by suggesting an Indonesia-Australian-Japan trilateral, starting with a post-TPP discussion. When Gordon and I were in Tokyo recently, by coincidence the very day Prime Minister Abe was on his feet arguing in the Diet for approval from Japan to ratify the TPP, arguing passionately that the farmers he represented had an inalienable right to export their product to other countries in Asia. This is qualitatively different from the remarks that

any Australian Trade Ministers heard from any Japanese Trade Minister for decades. With the TPP collapsing, but with Prime Minister Abe wanting access to agricultural markets, why don't we do two things - strategically start to draw Japan to the southern end of the of the Indo Pacific and have a conversation about this with two countries with which it gets on well, Indonesia and Australia.

10. Joint Australia-Indonesia Maritime efforts and ensuring South China Sea maritime disputes are settled amicably, maintaining freedom of navigation and open sea lanes, communication and transport

Finally, Australia and Indonesia are both maritime countries, so why don't we sit down with Indonesia, who have their own issues with Chinese encroachment in the South China Sea and ask what can do together? ASEAN and Australia in the East Asia Summit can try and help make sure that the maritime and territorial disputes in the South China Sea are settled amicably. That maintains freedom of navigation, sea lines of communication. Let's make it a specific task with Indonesia to make a contribution to this issue, particularly given. President Jokowi has made maritime issues one of his key priorities of this term as President.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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ABOUT PERTH USASIA CENTRE

The Perth USAsia Centre at The University of Western Australia is a non-partisan, not-for-profit institution strengthening relationships and strategic thinking between Australia, the Indo-Pacific and the USA. The Centre is a leading think tank focusing on geo-political issues, policy development and building a strategic affairs community across government, business and academia. Since the Centre's inception, we have collaborated with over 30 partners to convene more than 400 events across 11 cities in 7 countries, engaging a world class community network of over 4,500 strategic thinkers and leaders.



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