

Natalie Sambhi

Analyst | Academic | Lecturer

Perth & Canberra

CURRENT

Verve Research, Perth — *Founder and Executive Director*

Jan 2019 – present

Verve Research is an independent, multidisciplinary think tank focussed on understanding the relationship between militaries and societies in Southeast Asia, www.ververesearch.org.

Asia Society, Canberra — *Senior Fellow (part-time)*

Oct 2023 – present

Lead investigator for a Defence-funded project on Southeast Asia conflict-decision making for Asia Society Australia, a business and policy think-tank and membership organisation dedicated to Asia.

Australian War College & Deakin University, Canberra — *Unit Convenor & Lecturer*

Feb 2022 – present

Presented weekly for junior and senior military courses (O-4 & O-6), lectured on Indonesian strategic issues, designed and moderated panels, designed syndicate activities and led syndicate discussions, guided student research projects; guest lecturer since 2018.

Brookings Institution, Washington DC — *Nonresident Fellow*

Sep 2020 – present

Nonresident Fellow with the Center for East Asia Policy Studies, Foreign Policy Program, Brookings Institution, publishing on Indonesia and Southeast Asian security affairs.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Perth USAsia Centre, Perth — *Research Fellow*

Feb 2016 – Jun 2020

Produced research and policy analysis on Indonesian defence and foreign policy issues. Co-produced *Perspectives* podcast series; managed the Centre's research publications program.

AWARDS & GRANTS

Australian Department of Defence, Strategic Policy Grants Program 2024 awardee

Southeast Asian Young Leaders' Programme 2022, International Institute for Strategy Studies (IISS)

Leo Mahony Scholar 2018, Royal United Services Institute ACT

Australian Government Research Training Program (AGRTP) Scholarship 2017–2020, Australian National University

Australia-ASEAN Emerging Leaders Program 2015, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Hedley Bull Scholar 2007, Graduate Studies in International Affairs, ANU

LANGUAGES

Working: English, French, Indonesian
Social: Japanese, German

Strategic & Defence Studies Centre, The Australian National University, Canberra — Guest Lecturer & Sessional Tutor

Apr 2017 – Oct 2018

Presented guest lectures on Indonesian counterinsurgency to and led tutorial sessions in strategy for Masters courses, presented guest lectures on Indonesia's *Konfrontasi* campaign to undergraduate courses.

Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra — Managing Editor, *The Strategist*

Jun 2012 – Feb 2016

Co-founded ASPI's official blog, *The Strategist*. Managed high-tempo daily operations, commissioned submissions and editing hundreds of blog posts; managed social media.

Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra — Indonesia Analyst

Jun 2012 – Feb 2016

Produced research, policy analysis and media commentary on Indonesian foreign and defence policy, and Southeast Asian security.

University of Canberra, Canberra — Academic Tutor

Feb 2012 – Jun 2012

Led tutorial discussion and conducted academic grading for undergraduate students undertaking international studies.

Department of Defence, Canberra — Capability Analyst

Nov 2009 – Mar 2010

Analysed major capability acquisition projects and provided advice to National Security Committee and Minister for Defence.

Department of Defence, Canberra — Graduate

Feb 2009 – Nov 2009

Completed graduate rotations in Land Division (Capability Development Group), Indonesia desk (International Policy Division) and Special Operations Headquarters (Army Headquarters).

EDUCATION

Strategic & Defence Studies Centre, The Australian National University, Canberra — PhD (*International Politics & Strategic Studies*)

2017 – 2023

Thesis investigated major beliefs and themes in how the Indonesian military recollected its experiences in East Timor (1975–1999), supervised

TWITTER

[@securityscholar](#)

[@verve_research](#)

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

'Civil-Military Relations in Southeast Asia', Straight Talk Southeast Asia, podcast ep 46, Nov 2024

'Indonesia's foreign and defence policy under Prabowo', Defence and Strategic Studies Course, Australian War College, Canberra, May 2024

'Post-election Indonesia', Asia Society Switzerland & Zürich Insurance, March 2024

'Southeast Asia's civil-military relations: why they matter to Australia', Office of Southeast Asia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, May 2023

'The Indonesian military's collective memory of East Timor 1975–1999', Defence and Strategic Studies Course, Australian War College, Canberra, Apr 2022

'Southeast Asia's response to AUKUS', La Trobe Asia panel on AUKUS and regional security, Melbourne via Zoom, Oct 2021

'Transnational maritime threats: IUU fishing, human trafficking and piracy', ANU

by Professor John Blaxland.

The Australian National University, Canberra — *Master of Arts (International Relations)*

2007 – 2009

Hedley Bull Scholar 2007, distinction thesis on the role of local police forces in counterinsurgency in Afghanistan.

The Australian National University, Canberra — *Master of Diplomacy*

2008

Completed intensive Masters course on diplomatic history and practice at ANU's Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy.

University of Western Australia, Perth — *Bachelor of Arts (Asian Studies) (Honours First Class)*

2000 – 2005

Completed double language major in Japanese and French, and graduated with a first class honours on Australia-Malaysia relations.

ADDITIONAL ROLES

Indonesia Institute, Perth — *Director*

Nov 2023 – present

Provide Indonesia expertise and analysis in support of the Indonesia Institute, a WA-based NGO active in promoting Indonesia-Australia relations both in our home state, throughout Australia and in Indonesia.

UWA Defence & Security Institute, Perth — *Visiting Fellow*

Sep 2021 – present

Provide Indonesia and Southeast Asia expertise and analysis in support of UWA DSI activities focussed on Australia's place in the Indo-Pacific.

Australian Institute of International Affairs ACT (AIIA ACT), Canberra — *President*

Sep 2015 – Jun 2016

Led a volunteer council committed to the promotion of international affairs in Canberra and coordinated a range of speaking events. Managed 2016 internship program.

Center for a New American Security (CNAS), Washington, DC — *Visiting Fellow*

Dec 2015 – Jan 2016

Generously hosted by CNAS, conducted further research on Indonesia's civil-military relations and US attitudes to Indonesia's maritime policies.

National Security College course for Royal Australian Navy, Canberra via Zoom, Jun 2021

'The role of identity in Australia-Indonesia maritime security', La Trobe Asia hosted 1.5 track Australia-Indonesia dialogue, Melbourne via Zoom, Jun 2021

'Civil-military cooperation in South China and Sulu Seas: Indonesia's maritime militia', Malaysian Armed Forces Defence College, Kuala Lumpur via Zoom, Mar 2021

'Australia and Indonesia's response to 10 years of the Pivot', Network for Strategic Analysis, Ottawa via Zoom, Feb 2021

'Glass half empty or glass half full? Indonesia's covid-19 response and impact on foreign and defence policy', UWA School of Social Sciences, Perth, May 2020

'Briefing on Indonesia's military in politics and society', Canadian Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Feb 2020

'Back from the Barracks: why Indonesia's military still reigns supreme', Australian Institute of International Affairs WA, Perth, Feb 2020

'Update on Indonesian maritime security under Jokowi', Hudson Institute, Washington DC, Jan 2020

Presented findings to a roundtable session.

Bloggingheads.tv, *Host on Foreign Entanglements vlog*

Jun 2015 – Dec 2016

Commission and record interviews with international guests on video-blog series foreign policy issues with an Asia-Pacific focus.

Center for International Maritime Security (CIMSEC), *Host on Sea Control (Asia Pacific) podcast*

Apr 2014 – Dec 2016

Edit and produce interviews with international guests for a podcast series on Asia-Pacific maritime security issues, provide production for audio file.

Women in Defence & Security Network (WDSN), Canberra — *Founding member*

Oct 2014

Founding member of a network (joint initiative of ASPI and Lockheed Martin Australia) that seeks to enhance professional development opportunities for women in the defence and security sector.

Center for a New American Security (CNAS), Washington, DC— *Visiting Fellow*

May 2014 – Jun 2014

Generously hosted by CNAS, conducted research on Indonesia's presidential elections and recorded US attitudes to Indonesia's role in Asia-Pacific security. Presented findings to a roundtable session.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, article, Natalie Sambhi

Dec 2024

'Evolving Power Dynamics: Civil-Military Relations in Cambodia – from Historical Shifts to Contemporary Challenges',

<https://www.kas.de/en/web/kambodscha/diplomatic-briefing/detail/-/content/geostrategic-competition-in-an-age-of-uncertainty-predict-the-unpredictable-2>

Brookings Institution, article, Natalie Sambhi

Oct 2024

'Why ASEAN should not be a US-China battleground',

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-asean-should-not-be-a-us-china-battleground/>

'The Indo-Pacific: the view from Australia', Foreign Ministry (KEMLU) of the Republic of Indonesia roundtable, Jakarta, Jul 2019

'China in the Indian Ocean: the view from Australia', Center for Naval Analyses conference, Arlington, Jun 2019

'The Indo-Pacific and the Quad: the view from Australia', RAND Corporation's Japan Forum, Santa Monica, Mar 2019

'Going beyond the Indo-Pacific: the geopolitics of kindness and the right to remain human', National Resilience Institute (Lemhannas) 2nd Jakarta Geopolitical Forum, Jakarta, Oct 2018

'Indonesia's naval and coast guard developments and the global maritime fulcrum', Sixth Annual CSIS South China Sea Conference, Washington DC, Jul 2016

SELECTED MEDIA

South China Morning Post, Hong Kong

A Foreign Affair, ABC Radio
BBC News

Channel News Asia, Singapore

ABC News, Australia

Sky News, Australia

Radio National, Australia

SBS Radio, Australia

Brookings Institution, article, Natalie Sambhi

Feb 2024

‘Indonesia’s eras: Reflections on Jokowi’s legacy and Prabowo’s presidency’,
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/indonesias-eras-reflections-on-jokowis-legacy-and-prabowos-presidency/>

Asia-Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, article, Natalie Sambhi

Sep 2023

‘Indonesia and AUKUS: steady pragmatism at work’,
<https://www.apln.network/analysis/commentaries/indonesia-and-aukus-steady-pragmatism-at-work>

ASPI’s The Strategist, blog post, Natalie Sambhi and Hugh Piper

Aug 2023

‘Australia, France and finding equilibrium in Southeast Asia’,
<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/australia-france-and-finding-equilibrium-in-southeast-asia/>

National Bureau of Asian Research, chapter, Natalie Sambhi

Jul 2023

‘Indonesia’s Indo-Pacific aspirations and the reality of its (non)strategy’,
<https://www.nbr.org/publication/one-region-multiple-strategies-how-countries-are-approaching-the-indo-pacific/>

Journal of Global Strategic Studies, journal article, Natalie Sambhi

Jun 2023

‘Jokowi’s Generals, Civilian Control, and the Power of the Panglima’,
<http://ejournal.fisip.unjani.ac.id/index.php/JGSS/article/view/1614>

Observer Research Foundation, report, Premesha Saha, Natalie Sambhi and Evan A. Laksmana

Feb 2022

‘India–Australia–Indonesia Maritime Partnership: Shared Challenges, Compelling Opportunities’,
<https://www.orfonline.org/research/india-australia-indonesia-maritime-partnership/>

ASPI’s The Strategist, blog post, Natalie Sambhi

Sep 2021

‘Australia’s nuclear submarines and AUKUS: the view from Jakarta’,
<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/australias-nuclear-submarines-and-aukus-the-view-from-jakarta/>

La Trobe Asia, chapter, Natalie Sambhi

Jun 2021

‘COVID-19’s impact on Indonesia’s domestic and regional security’, in *The La Trobe Asia Brief: Australia–Southeast Asian Relations, the post COVID-19 regional order*

https://www.latrobe.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/1232028/ltab05.pdf

ASPI’s The Strategist, blog post, Natalie Sambhi

Mar 2021

‘France’s burgeoning defence ties with Indonesia’,

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/frances-burgeoning-defence-ties-with-indonesia/>

Brookings Institution, article, Natalie Sambhi

Jan 2021

‘Generals gaining ground: civil-military relations and democracy in Indonesia’,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/generals-gaining-ground-civil-military-relations-and-democracy-in-indonesia/>

The Diplomat, feature article, Natalie Sambhi

Aug 2020

‘Has COVID re-militarized Indonesia?’,

<https://thediplomat.com/2020/07/has-covid-re-militarized-indonesia/>

RAND Corporation, book chapter, Natalie Sambhi

Apr 2020

‘The Free and Open Indo-Pacific and the Quad as seen from Australia and Indonesia’ in Scott W. Harold, Tanvi Madan and Natalie Sambhi, *U.S.–Japan Alliance Conference: regional perspectives on the Quadrilateral Dialogue and the Free and Open Indo-Pacific*

https://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF414.html

Perth USAsia Centre, book chapter, Natalie Sambhi

Jun 2017

‘India’s ASEAN relations’ in *Realising the Indo-Pacific: tasks for India’s regional integration*,

<http://perthusasia.edu.au/getattachment/Our-Work/Realising-the-Indo-Pacific/PU-24-India-Book-WEB.pdf.aspx?lang=en-AU>