

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the strategic and diplomatic significance of the Garuda Shield joint military exercises between Indonesia and the United States. Using a neorealist framework, this research explores how these exercises enhance Indonesia's defense diplomacy and contribute to the broader Indo-Pacific security architecture. The Garuda Shield has evolved into a crucial component of Indonesia's military strategy, facilitating not only enhanced bilateral relations but also regional stability and cooperative security efforts. Through qualitative interviews with Indonesian military officers and defense experts, alongside a comprehensive review of secondary literature, this study underscores the role of these exercises in bolstering military interoperability, trust, and strategic alignment between Indonesia and the U.S. The study also highlights the transformation of military engagements into diplomatic tools that serve both national and regional security interests. The findings suggest that the Garuda Shield exercises are instrumental in projecting Indonesia's commitment to regional peace and stability, while also aligning with U.S. strategic interests in the region. The thesis concludes that military partnerships like Garuda Shield are pivotal in the contemporary security landscape, where diplomatic and defense strategies intersect to address complex global challenges.

*Keywords:* Defense, Military, Defense Diplomacy, Garuda Shield, Joint Exercise