

Indonesian Foreign Policy In Maintaining Multilateral Relations of ASEAN Members

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Abstract:

Indonesia's foreign policy remains consistent, adhering to free and active diplomacy principles grounded in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. The Indonesian foreign policy is characterized by its autonomy and proactivity, maintaining a neutral stance while consistently adapting to the ever-changing dynamics of world politics. Independently shape perspectives on global issues without being bound by military might or alliances, and actively promote peace, justice, camaraderie, and mutually advantageous collaboration among states. Indonesia continues to regard ASEAN as the primary foundation of its foreign strategy. Hence, this article seeks to elucidate Indonesia's foreign policy towards ASEAN, the collaborative relations between Indonesia and ASEAN member states, and the outcomes of their cooperation in fostering political stability in Southeast Asia. The conclusion asserts that Indonesia's foreign policy remains committed to the principle of free and active engagement with ASEAN and endeavours to uphold the stability of multilateral relations among ASEAN member nations.

Keywords: Foreign policy; Multilateral relations; ASEAN

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A. PROLOG

Essentially, the fundamental tenets of Indonesian foreign policy have remained unchanged. This means that foreign policy continues to be independent and proactive, with Pancasila as the ideal foundation and the 1945 Constitution as the constitutional basis. The Indonesian foreign policy elucidates that its free and active approach is neither a "neutral" policy characterized by passivity and impartiality nor a politics that is "indifferent" or detached from global developments and issues.¹

"Free" politics refers to being liberated and having the autonomy to form one's own opinions and assessments concerning global issues while also being independent of any particular authority or military partnerships. "Active" politics refers to the deliberate and productive efforts to promote peace, fairness, goodwill, and mutually advantageous collaboration among states worldwide.²

Purnomo Yusgiantoro, the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia from 2009 to 2014, highlighted that despite Indonesia's significant size and influence within ASEAN, it does not possess complete authority over the area. ASEAN strongly focuses on achieving consensus and making

¹ Haryanto, A. (2015). Prinsip Bebas Aktif Dalam Kebijakan Luar Negeri Indonesia. JIPSI-Jurnal Ilmu Politik dan Komunikasi UNIKOM, 4.

 $^{^{\}rm 2}$ Rosyidin, M. (2020). Indonesia: Menuju Kekuatan Global Abad 21. Elex Media Komputindo.

decisions collectively among its member countries. Hence, fostering collaboration among ASEAN constituents is crucial in upholding regional stability and security. Despite its almost fifty-year age, ASEAN continues to confront security risks arising from strategic environmental trends. The dangers encompass a range of issues, such as conflicts in the South China Sea, the humanitarian crisis involving the Rohingya population, unauthorized fishing activities, border disputes, piracy, and terrorism. The global landscape is characterized by multipolarity when multiple centres of power and diverse entities are involved in international interactions.³

A significant factor in contemporary times is a terrorist organization that aims to disrupt the global framework by perilous methods. Given the current international and regional strategic landscape, fostering bilateral and multilateral collaboration is the most suitable course of action. None of the countries can confront this threat in isolation. Hence, forging amicable relations with adjacent nations is a crucial initial measure.

Buzan and Waever emphasize the significance of the Regional Security Complex (RSC), in which

³ Widiatmaja, A., & Albab, U. (2019). Indonesia di Era Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) dan Joko Widodo: Kebijakan Luar Negeri di Tengah Dinamika Lingkungan [Indonesia under Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) and Joko Widodo: Foreign Policy in the Middle of Regional Strategic Environment Dynamics]. Jurnal Politica Dinamika Masalah Politik Dalam Negeri Dan Hubungan Internasional, 10(1), 77-93.

the surrounding context shapes security risks. Hence, engaging in collaboration with adjacent nations is imperative and obligatory.⁴

ASEAN, the regional organization representing South East Asian Nations,

is a prime example of successful regionalization in developing countries. Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Thailand established the organization. It includes members from all Southeast Asian countries,

excluding Timor Leste.⁵

Even though the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional organization that firmly adheres to the principles of collaboration, mutual respect, and non-interference in each member's domestic affairs, it appears to have reached a consensus on how to approach the fight against international terrorism. Regarding this matter, Indonesia maintains that ASEAN is the primary pillar of its foreign policy.⁶

⁴ Buzan, B. (2011). The South Asian security complex in a decentring world order: reconsidering regions and powers ten years on. International Studies, 48(1), 1-19.

⁵ Aini, D. C. (2022, January). ASEAN Regional Diplomacy and Cooperation in Reducing Poverty and Building Resilience: Towards Covid-19 Recovery. In Universitas Lampung International Conference on Social Sciences (ULICoSS 2021) (pp. 637-648). Atlantis Press.

⁶ Tabirawa, A. (2018). Kebijakan Pertahanan Dan Keamanan Indonesia Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Stabilitas Politik Kawasan Asia Tenggara (Doctoral Dissertation, Perpustakaan).

B. DISCUSSION

1. Indonesian Foreign Policy Objectives

Regarding its foreign policy, Indonesia's primary objective is maintaining multilateral connections with ASEAN members. In addition, Indonesia is making efforts to expand its participation in various international forums, including the Group of Twenty (G-20), the United Nations (UN), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - Enhanced Engagement. In addition, Indonesia is trying to broaden the participation of leaders at the Ministry of Finance in formulating policies at international multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).⁷

Law Number 37 of 1999 concerning Foreign Relations is the foundation for Indonesia's foreign policy toward other nations. These principles are defined in the Constitution of Indonesia. Individual liberty and active participation in the management of relations with other countries, international organizations, and other areas of international law are included among these concepts. These principles

⁷ Arpan, M. (2022). Pandemi Covid-19 dan Orientasi Kerjasama Multilateral Indonesia (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Ar-Raniry).

aim to address global issues to accomplish national objectives.8

Implementing Indonesia's foreign policy aims to achieve several objectives, including preserving national independence and protecting the state, acquiring essential goods from other countries to improve the welfare of the people, and enhancing world peace and security.⁹

Indonesia is working toward expanding its position and influence in resolving global and regional issues by participating in



various international organizations and forums. As part of this endeavour, Indonesia works to preserve positive relations with other nations and encourage increased international collaboration to accomplish national objectives and enhance its citizens' well-being.¹⁰

A country's foreign policy is a plan and action adopted by its decision-makers to relate to other

⁸ Lihu, A. H. L., Massie, C. D., & Paseki, D. (2023). Pemberian Suaka Menurut Undang-Undang Nomor 37 Tahun 1999 Tentang Hubungan Luar Negeri. Lex Administratum, 11(5).

 $^{^{9}}$ Budiman, A. (2014). Implementasi Politik Luar Negeri Bebas Aktif Pada Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin 1959-1965.

¹⁰ Dzikri, N. (2020). Kontribusi Indonesia dalam Hubungan South-South Cooperation Periode 2016-2018. Indonesian Journal of International Relations, 4(2), 164-186.

countries and international political units to attain national goals and interests. Foreign policy is also known as foreign policy implementation. This goal is an endeavour to defend the sovereignty of the country as well as the territorial integrity of the country against threats from the outside. This can be accomplished through the formation of military alliances, the establishment of security agreements, and the collaboration of intelligence agencies. Increasing economic growth through international commerce, foreign investment, and economic cooperation is another objective that should be pursued. The nations' policies are designed to preserve domestic sectors and open new markets.

Increasing the country's standing influence on the world scene is another objective that Indonesia is working to achieve. This can be by participating actively accomplished organizations, engaging in public international diplomacy, and aiding foreign organizations. Additionally, the advancement of social welfare through collaboration in health, education, and poverty reduction aims to be accomplished. Development assistance and technical cooperation are frequently included. One further objective is to contribute to world peace and stability through diplomacy to resolve conflicts, maintain political stability, and foster international collaboration.

Indonesia's Freely Active Foreign Policy is an example of a government policy that strengthens its

international involvement through economic cooperation and peacebuilding. This policy does not take sides with any particular parties within the global community. Participating in the Non-Aligned Movement, which seeks to eradicate colonialism and establish peace, is one way to demonstrate this reality.¹¹

Indonesia's foreign policy towards other nations is guided by the principles of liberty and dynamism, as stated in Law Number 37 of 1999 on Foreign Relations. The policy aims to achieve various objectives, including safeguarding national sovereignty and ensuring state security, acquiring essential commodities overseas, and promoting global peace and security.¹²

Indonesia's foreign policy is grounded on three distinct categories: ideology, constitution, and operational underpinnings. The ideological basis is deeply ingrained in Pancasila, and Mohammad Hatta stressed the significance of Pancasila in foreign political ideology. Furthermore, the 1945 Constitution provides the established constitutional basis delineating foreign policy objectives. The operational basis is contingent upon implementing foreign policy concepts and is subject to modification

¹¹ Sadewa, D. P., & Hakiki, F. (2023). Dinamika Kebijakan Politik Luar Negeri Bebas Aktif Indonesia Melalui Gerakan Non-Blok (GNB). Jurnal Lemhannas RI, 11(1), 13-28.

¹² Setiawan, B. D. (2015). Politik Luar Negeri Indonesia Terhadap Asean Pada Masa Adam Malik Tahun 1967-1973. Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta.

based on the priorities of the governing administration and the nation's requirements. These three principles serve as the basis and influence Indonesia's foreign policy to accomplish the nation's objectives during different governmental periods.¹³

2. Indonesia's role in ASEAN

Indonesia is actively working towards developing a New Multilateralism characterized by more inclusivity, a stronger focus on society, and a more results-driven approach. This new approach encompasses additional dimensions beyond the traditional monetary and fiscal aspects.

Indonesia aims to contribute positively to its own economic progress and shape global and regional cooperation to achieve new multilateralism.¹⁴

Indonesia plays a crucial role in advancing the ASEAN organization. Indonesia has significantly influenced its vision, direction, and objectives as one of the original five countries that established ASEAN in 1967. Additionally, Indonesia has actively contributed to advancing regional integration, security, and stability in Southeast Asia.

Assagaf, N. H. (2023). Kerja Sama Indonesia-Asean dalam Penanganan Pandemi Covid-19 Tahun 2020-2022 (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Indonesia).

¹³ Indrawati, & Nugroho, A. Y. (2018). Penerapan Prinsip Politik luar negeri Indonesia Melalui Diplomasi Maritim. Verity Jurnal Ilmiah Hubungan Internasional (International Relations Journal), 10(20): 14-26.

Indonesia plays a crucial role in steering the direction and shaping the vision of this organization by discerning strategic measures and common objectives. Indonesia plays an essential role in establishing the foundation for sustainable regional collaboration.¹⁵

As the initiator of ASEAN, Indonesia actively encourages conversation and resolves conflicts among ASEAN countries, advocates for peaceful resolutions, and fosters harmonious regional relations. Indonesia's participation in ASEAN exemplifies its exceptional contribution to establishing this organization. During the formation of ASEAN, Indonesia was represented by a highly significant individual, namely Adam Malik.¹⁶

Indonesia has been entrusted with the responsibility of hosting multiple ASEAN Summits. The ASEAN Summits hosted in Indonesia encompass the inaugural ASEAN Summit, which took place on 23-24 February 1976 in Bali. During the summit, a consensus was reached about establishing an ASEAN secretariat, which would be located in Jakarta. The inaugural Secretary General of this secretariat was H.R. Dharsono, an Indonesian national.

¹⁵ Julina, S. (2023). Peran Indonesia dalam Keketuaan ASEAN 2023: Perspektif Konstruktivisme. Jurnal Alternatif-Jurnal Ilmu Hubungan Internasional, 14(2).

¹⁶ Setiawan, B. D. (2015). Politik Luar Negeri Indonesia Terhadap Asean Pada Masa Adam Malik Tahun 1967-1973. Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta.

Thus, Indonesia has played an active role in strengthening regional coordination and integration and increasing its role and influence within ASEAN.¹⁷

Indonesia's participation in ASEAN encompasses:

First: Initiator of the Birth of ASEAN. Indonesia was key in establishing ASEAN, a regional organization focused on economic and geopolitical cooperation in Southeast Asia.

Second: Organizer of the first ASEAN Summit in Bali. Indonesia has served as the venue for multiple ASEAN Summits (KTT), including the inaugural ASEAN Summit on 23-24 February 1976 in Bali.

Third: Initiator of the Formation of the ASEAN Community. Indonesia has suggested the establishment of an ASEAN Community that includes the economic, social, cultural, and security domains during various ASEAN Summits.

Fourth: Leader in forming policies and



¹⁷ Darma, A., Hutauruk, A. F., & Kaban, B. J. (2024). Analisis Peran Perdagangan Maritim Terhadap Sejarah Perekonomian ASEAN. Polyscopia, 1(2), 43-51.

strategies. Indonesia is a frontrunner in formulating diverse policies and methods to accomplish ASEAN objectives, including security, trade, investment, and defence.

Fifth: Bridge builder. Indonesia is a bridge builder, bridging world peace efforts and increasing synergy between regional organizations and the UN.

Sixth: Indonesia is the initiator of the ASEAN security community. Indonesia has proposed the formation of an ASEAN security community to prevent and control forest and land fires in the ASEAN region.

Thus, Indonesia's role in ASEAN reflects its extraordinary contribution to forming this organization and is central to strengthening regional coordination and integration.

3. National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) and ASEAN Regional Stability

Indonesia aims to employ accessible and proactive diplomacy in the 2005-2025 National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) to highlight the significance of global multilateralism. This will be achieved by prioritizing reform and establishing a fairer global political, economic, and socio-cultural framework. Indonesia aims to enhance its position as a Regional Great Power and establish international

norms and regulations that are more equitable, inclusive, and oriented towards peace.¹⁸

The National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) is a strategic blueprint designed to accomplish Indonesia's national development objectives over an extended duration. The 2005-2025 RPJPN will conclude that Indonesia requires additional strategies to achieve its objectives in 2045.

2026-2045 The **RPIPN** holds significant this importance in context as a strategic and crucial development pathway towards the attainment of the aim of a prosperous Indonesia by 2045.19



It is crucial to pay close attention to establishing the 2026-2045 RPJPN to foster favourable collaborative relationships with other ASEAN member nations.

Establishing the 2026-2045 RPJPN, which aims to foster favourable collaborative ties with ASEAN

¹⁸ Irewati, A., & Kartini, I. (2020). Potret politik luar negeri Indonesia di era reformasi. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.

¹⁹ Octavia, N. N. (2022). Tinjauan Siyasah Dusturiyah Terhadap Perbandingan Sistem Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional Di Era Orde Baru Dan Reformasi (Studi Perencanaan Pembangunan Model Garis Besar Haluan Negara (GBHN) Dan Model Rancangan Pembangunan Jangka Panjang (RPJPN) (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu).

member nations, is paramount in guaranteeing stability and economic advancement, bolstering geopolitical standing, enhancing quality of life, and adjusting to global problems. Through the enhancement of regional collaboration, Indonesia will not only improve its national wealth but also make a valuable contribution to the advancement and stability of the ASEAN area.

Indonesia's enhancement of cooperative efforts can effectively promote stability and peace within the ASEAN area. For sustainable economic and social progress to occur, regional stability is a necessary condition. Furthermore, by utilizing the RPJPN to foster regional collaboration, Indonesia has the opportunity to actively contribute to reducing conflict and facilitating peaceful resolutions for all types of disputes, including those related to maritime, border, ethnic, and political matters.²⁰

ASEAN is one of Indonesia's primary economic partners. Consequently, the RPJPN, which supports favourable ties, will promote a rise in commerce within ASEAN and attract more significant foreign investment from other ASEAN member nations. Indonesia can utilise regional

²⁰ Muni, A. (2023). Arah Politik Hukum dalam Pembangunan Sistem Hukum Nasional Menurut Undang-Undang RPJPN 2005-2025. As-Shahifah: Journal of Constitutional Law and Governance, 3(2), 187-203. Rahmansyah, B. Korelasi Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Nasional (Rpjpn) 2005-2025 Dan Konsep Negara Ideal Al-Farabi (Bachelor's thesis, Fakultas Syariah dan Hukum UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta).

economic structures like the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to broaden markets, enhance the competitiveness of domestic products, and foster innovation and technology.

Effective collaboration within ASEAN is crucial in addressing global concerns like climate change. Through the RPJPN, Indonesia can enhance cooperation in managing natural resources and conserving the environment. Indonesia has the potential to collaborate with ASEAN nations to guarantee energy and food security, which are crucial concerns in the upcoming decades.



4. Development of ASEAN Centrality

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guarantee energy and food security, which are crucial concerns in the upcoming decades.²¹

Indonesia ensures internal and regional stability through its foreign policy by prioritizing political stability for achieving economic growth, social welfare, and sustainable development.

In the context of Indonesia's geopolitics, the political stability at both national and regional levels has profound implications for Indonesia's role and position in the global political order. The political stability of Indonesia has implications not just at the national or regional level but also plays a crucial role in the global political context. Indonesia strives to enhance regional and international cooperation to maintain internal and regional stability.²²

Indonesia has consistently used multilateral diplomacy in its foreign policy since gaining independence. Achieving solutions to global issues through international agreements necessitates unwavering commitment. This commitment entails assuming a prominent position in international forums to identify resolutions for diverse global issues. Leadership and leadership are distinct concepts. Leadership specifically pertains to a

²¹ Yates, R. (2017). ASEAN as the 'regional conductor': understanding ASEAN's role in Asia-Pacific order. The Pacific Review, 30(4), 443-461.

²² Ardianti, D. E., Rosyidin, M., & Alfian, M. F. Di Bawah Spirit Liberal-Institusionalisme: Kajian Komparatif Gagasan Dynamic Equilibrium dan ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. Indonesian Perspective, 8(1), 1-23.

nation's function as a multilateral forum catalyst, facilitator, and manager. These positions require individuals to possess intellectual and entrepreneurial leadership abilities.²³

As a regional organization, ASEAN significantly impacts Southeast Asia by promoting economic and political integration in the region. ASEAN must exhibit its centrality by adopting a unified stance that reflects the interests of its member nations in response to diverse external threats. However, variations in economic, political, and social origins result in various and perhaps conflicting national interests across member countries.

The South China Sea Dispute, which involves four ASEAN member nations and China, is currently challenging ASEAN's importance due to divergent perspectives and opinions among member countries over this matter. Despite differing viewpoints, ASEAN and China have agreed to finalize the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) negotiations.²⁴

²³ Rosyidin, M. (2023). Pragmatisme Multilateral dalam Momen Keketuaan Indonesia di G20 dan ASEAN, 2022-2023 [Multilateral Pragmatism in The Moment of Indonesia's G20 and ASEAN Presidency, 2022-2023]. Jurnal Politica Dinamika Masalah Politik Dalam Negeri dan Hubungan Internasional, 14(2), 131-152.

²⁴ Prasetyo, F. X. H. D. (2020). Sentralitas asean dalam sengketa laut cina selatan (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Pelita Harapan).

C. EPILOG

Indonesia's foreign policy aims to cultivate multilateral relations with ASEAN members by prioritizing the development of New Multilateralism, enhancing its active participation in ASEAN, and strengthening its position as a Regional Great Power. By doing so, Indonesia may actively contribute to its own economic progress and shape multilateral and regional cooperation in Southeast Asia, thereby advancing the concept of New Multilateralism in the area.

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