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Indonesia's "Great Power Balance" Diplomacy in Foreign Relations: Constructing a Balanced Relationship with the United States and China

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Abstract

This article intends to offer a comprehensive analysis of Indonesia's foreign policy strategy, known as the "balance of powers." It specifically examines how Indonesia has successfully maintained balanced relations with both China and the United States. The article provides a comprehensive overview of the historical background of Indonesia's foreign relations. It also delves into the concept of "great power balance" and its significant role in guiding Indonesia's diplomacy. The article proceeds to examine the global context in which Indonesia operates and the strategic consequences of competition among major powers, highlighting Indonesia's drive to maintain equilibrium between them. The article further explores Indonesia's approach to maintaining a delicate balance in its diplomatic relations. It delves into Indonesia's positioning and strategy in the complex US-China relationship, as well as its efforts to establish equilibrium in its relations with both countries. The article specifically highlights Indonesia's "global maritime pivot" strategy and its aspirations to attain "maritime power" status. This section of the article examines Indonesia's strategy of a "global maritime pivot" and its efforts to attain the position of a "maritime power" through the enhancement of maritime security. Indonesia holds substantial worldwide influence, and its foreign policy plays a vital role in promoting regional and global peace, stability, and development. Indonesia may surmount diplomatic obstacles, optimise its national interests, and make a constructive contribution to the prosperity of the region and the world by developing its foreign policy in a logical and practical manner.

Introduction

The countries in Southeast Asia, which are predominantly small and medium-sized, formed the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with the goal of fostering self-improvement and expediting the integration process. As a result, they have swiftly emerged as a significant force in the Asia-Pacific region (Schensnovich, 2022; Wang et al., 2022). The post-Cold War era witnessed a significant transformation in the political and security landscape of Southeast Asia, with the triangular relationship between China, the United States, and Japan emerging as a key determinant. This dynamic has exerted a profound influence on regional security strategies. The United States and Japan adopted a strategic approach that involved a combination of containment and engagement with China. This approach created opportunities for Southeast Asian nations to pursue a strategy of balancing power among major players (Clarke & Sussex, 2022; Harold et al., 2023; Wyne, 2022). Indonesia, being the largest country in Southeast Asia, has adopted a strategy of great power balance to maintain strategic parity and ensure the stability and security of both itself and ASEAN.

Basic Situation of Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia (Southeast Asia) is a new regional name that emerged in the late stages of World War II. During the Second World War, the Allied Command for military operations in southeastern Asia set up the "Southeast Asia High Command" because of its correct expression of the geographic location of the region, and since then, gradually, in the international community. Southeast Asia is situated in the southeastern part of Asia, encompassing the Central and Southern Peninsulas as well as the Malay Archipelago. China borders Southeast Asia to the north, while Australia borders it to the south. The Pacific Ocean lies to the east, and the Indian Ocean lies to the west. Additionally, it shares borders with Bangladesh and India, which are part of the South Asian subcontinent ([Goud, 2023](#); [Heng, 2023](#); [Stošić, 2023](#); [Wang et al., 2023a](#); [Wang et al., 2023b](#)).

Following World War II, Southeast Asian nations emerged victorious over their colonisers and subsequently formed modern nation-states. Presently, there are a total of 11 countries in the region, namely Timor-Leste, the Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Brunei, Singapore, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Laos stands out as the sole landlocked country in Southeast Asia, while Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar have a common land border with China. Many countries are familiar with Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and Myanmar, which are considered "land countries" or "peninsular countries" in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines, Singapore, and Timor-Leste are known as the "Maritime States" or "Island States" of Southeast Asia.

On July 31, 1961, Malaya (now Malaysia), the Philippines, and Thailand began the process of forming the Association of ASEAN in Bangkok. Then, on August 7-8, 1967, the foreign ministers of Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, and the deputy prime minister of Malaysia convened in Bangkok and released the Bangkok Declaration (Declaration on the Establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the establishment of the Association of ASEAN was formally proclaimed. The membership of ASEAN has expanded to encompass a total of 10 countries. ASEAN has established various cooperation mechanisms to enhance political, economic, and security integration and cooperation in the Southeast Asian region, with a focus on economic cooperation. Southeast Asia serves as a crucial link between Asia and Oceania, connecting the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. It holds a significant strategic position, safeguarding the vital sea and air transportation routes that span across Asia, Europe, Africa, and Oceania. As a result, it has emerged as a key hub for global maritime and aviation networks ([Asif, 2022](#); [Khan & Omid, 2023](#); [Mukherjee, 2022a, 2022b](#); [Schnepel, 2023](#)).

Overview of the Great Power Balance Diplomatic Strategy of Southeast Asian Countries

"A country's influence on the international system determines the size of that country." The system serves as a crucial point of reference for categorising countries. Robert Keohane, a prominent American scholar in the field of international relations, offers a significant perspective on the relationship between states and the international system. He classifies countries worldwide into categories based on their level of influence from the system, distinguishing between those that are "system-determined" and those that are "system-influenced" (Do, 2022; Manoharan, 2023; Peng, 2022; Teo, 2022; Umar, 2023). The author used the state's relationship with the international system as a basis for differentiation, classifying the world's countries into categories such as 'system-determining', 'system-influencing', 'system-acting', and 'system-irrelevant'. As depicted in Figure 1,

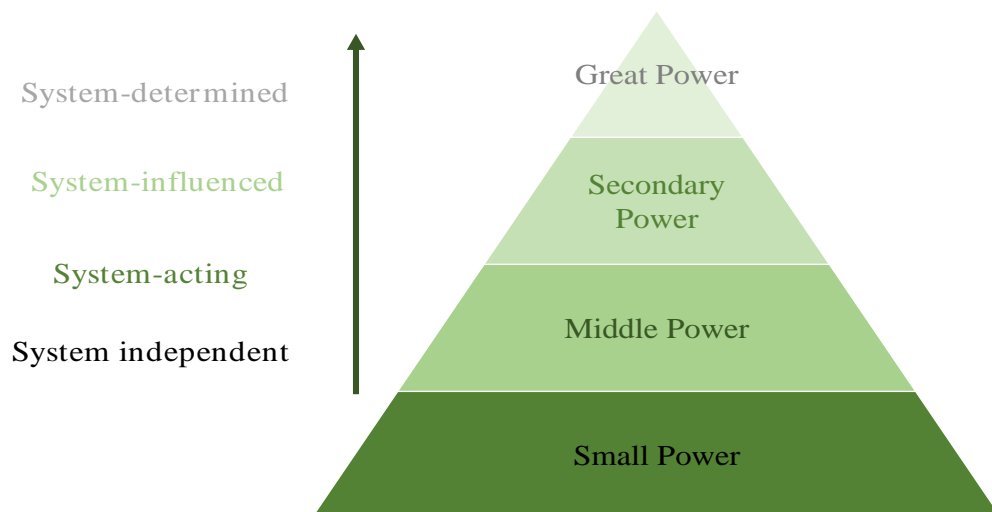


Figure 1. Criteria for differentiation of national systems

"Balance of Power," also referred to as "parity" or "balance of power," is a crucial concept in realist thought that aims to maintain global peace. Ensuring international peace is a fundamental concept in realist thinking. It serves as a valuable strategy for small states to effectively navigate and negotiate with major powers to safeguard and advance their interests. "Small countries surviving in the cracks of great power rivalry, lacking self-defence or defence power, can only practice 'equidistant diplomacy' among the powerful countries, remain impartial, non-aligned, and do not fall back to any of the great powers, and use flexible diplomacy to take advantage of the contradictions of various countries and try their best to adjust the balance of power among the great powers, to maintain a relatively stable strategic pattern. Thus, maintaining a relatively stable strategic pattern and guaranteeing a harmonious external environment for survival and development."

Southeast Asian countries, being relatively small and vulnerable, have historically faced challenges in asserting dominance in the region due to the presence of powerful neighbouring nations and competing rivals. Consequently, they have sought to establish peaceful coexistence with major powers. Since the Second World War, Southeast Asian countries have conducted valuable theoretical and practical investigations into their foreign strategies. They have sought to address the ongoing intervention and interference from external forces while also protecting their interests and maintaining regional peace and security. A key focus has been understanding the role of major powers in the region and effectively managing their relationships. After a long period of practice, the external strategies of the Southeast Asian countries have undergone an evolution from the non-aligned policy, the neutralisation viewpoint, to the theory of the balance of powers. The Southeast Asian countries recognise that the major Powers have important interests in the region and that it is unrealistic to completely exclude the major Powers from the region, which is both unachievable and detrimental. The most pragmatic approach is to embrace the presence and influence of the major Powers in the region, as it contributes to the attainment of peace and stability (Anwar, 2020; Bishwakarma & Hu, 2022; Jahanger et al., 2023; Koga, 2023; Kuik, 2021; Liu, 2020). Thus, when it comes to their interactions with the major powers, Southeast Asian countries have opted for a prudent approach. They aim to uphold a delicate equilibrium among these powers, preventing any one from exerting excessive influence in the region. This cautious stance is crucial to prevent any potential disruptions to regional stability.

Following the Cold War, Southeast Asia experienced significant changes, including the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and the "9-11" incident. As a result, many Southeast Asian countries have adopted the principle of balance of power as a fundamental approach in managing their relationships with major powers.

"The great power balance strategy of Southeast Asian countries refers to the fact that Southeast Asian countries do not exclude the influence of the great powers in Southeast Asia, take advantage of the contradictions between the great powers as well as their respective pursuit of power, take the initiative to develop all-round relations with them in terms of politics, economy, security, etc., but do not ally themselves with them, and at the same time, prevent the power of any great power from becoming too strong, to achieve a balance of power among the great powers in the region, and to safeguard the regional security and stability purpose."

"The great power balance strategy of Southeast Asian countries is a diplomatic balancing act, which seeks to maintain good relations between China, the United States, Japan and other great powers, and ostensibly not to become the 'vassal' of any great power, and tries very hard to attract the

attention of many great powers, to make them form a pattern of intertwining their interests and power with each other in Southeast Asia, and eventually The formation of a regional pattern of relative balance of power among the major powers. Southeast Asian countries can obtain security assurances and economic benefits from the major powers, but also from the major powers to obtain additional benefits from the competition, and even be elected as the 'leader' of the regional cooperation process in East Asia, and at the same time, 'amplify' its international influence. "

Indonesia's Strategy of Balanced Major Power Diplomacy

Indonesia, a prominent player in Southeast Asia, has long followed a diplomatic approach characterised by independence and proactivity. The country has strategically cultivated relationships with major global powers, with a particular emphasis on the United States, China, and Japan. Indonesia utilises the robust defence relationship between the U.S. and Southeast Asian countries to manage and control China through multilateral security dialogues. Additionally, Indonesia aims to leverage the U.S. and Japan's efforts to integrate China into the global community to enhance China's international standing (Abbondanza, 2022; Darwis & Putra, 2022; Dwi, 2020; Pratiwi et al., 2021; Riyanto et al., 2023; Wahyuni, 2020; Yeremia, 2022). Moreover, Indonesia seeks to secure additional funding from China to counterbalance the dominance of the U.S. and Japan in East Asia. These actions maintain a balance of power among major nations in Indonesia and uphold peace and security in Southeast Asia.

One of the key advantages of Indonesia's diplomatic strategy of major power balance is that Indonesia is middle power in Southeast Asia, as shown in Figure 2. "Middle power is a comprehensive concept that refers to those countries that have strong comprehensive national power, have a position in the international system second only to the major powers, are widely recognized as having the right to participate in dealing with the international system, especially major regional and international issues, and are valued by the international community, and have a certain degree of regional and even global influence in the international community." (Ibrahim, 2022; Laksmana, 2021; Priyandita, 2019; Rezasyah, 2022).

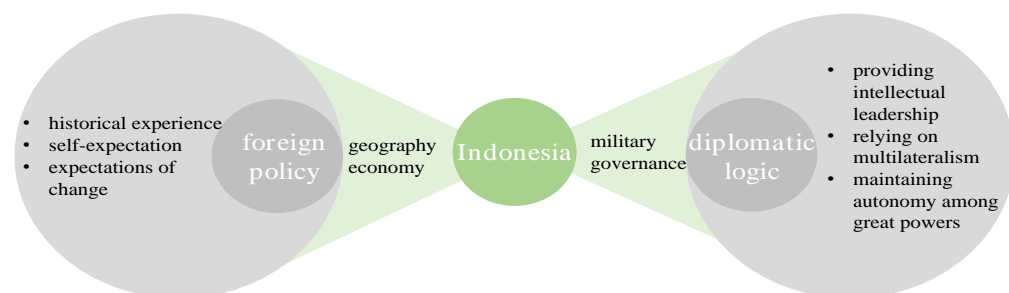


Figure 2. Indonesia's "Middle Power" Behavioural Model

Assessing a country's status as a middle power considers several factors. These include geopolitical conditions, national governance, economic strength, international image, and military power. Based on the given criteria, Indonesia possesses the fundamental prerequisites to establish itself as a rising middle power: firstly, Indonesia's geopolitical conditions are distinct and strategically advantageous, a crucial factor in attaining middle-power status; secondly, its robust and rapidly developing economy provides a solid foundation for achieving this status. Thirdly, Indonesia's friendly and moderate international image, coupled with its increasing role in regional and global affairs, creates favourable conditions for its ascent as a middle power; fourthly, Indonesia's international reputation is characterised by its friendly and moderate image, as well as its growing involvement in regional and global matters. This favourable situation positions Indonesia well to emerge as a middle Power ([Djalal, 2021](#); [Mubah, 2019](#)).

This situation presents a favourable opportunity for Indonesia to establish itself as a middle power. Additionally, Indonesia's military force is well-suited and possesses a strong deterrent capability, which serves as a crucial assurance for its aspirations as a middle power. Indonesia has effectively leveraged its position as a middle power and employed a balanced diplomatic approach with major nations, aiming to establish itself as a regional force and aspire to global prominence in the future. First, the primary focus is on fostering relationships with significant nations, particularly major Powers and other middle powers, to establish a strong regional presence and bolster regional influence. Secondly, we aim to excel as a driver of ASEAN, with a focus on the Asia-Pacific region. Our goal is to foster a strategic framework for Greater ASEAN and empower ASEAN to assume a prominent position in the Asia-Pacific. Additionally, we will prioritise engaging in comprehensive multilateral diplomacy, actively participating in global economic governance, advocating for the reform of international multilateral mechanisms, and bolstering Indonesia's international standing and influence ([Anwar, 2023](#); [Radjendra et al., 2022](#); [Yoshimatsu, 2022](#); [Zhu, 2023](#)).

Analysis of Indonesia's Great Power Balance Diplomatic Strategy

Evolution of Indonesia's Diplomatic Strategy of Great Power Balance

Throughout its history, Indonesia has experienced a range of events, including gaining independence, establishing the 1945 Constitution, and witnessing the shift from a bipolar to a multi-polar world. Since gaining independence, Indonesia has consistently pursued an independent and non-aligned foreign policy, emphasising principles such as equality, mutual respect, and the balance of powers. These principles have become

fundamental to Indonesia's state policy. Indonesia's strategy for maintaining a balance of power has varied over time, shaping both its domestic and foreign affairs. This strategy has also had significant implications for Southeast Asia and the global landscape. This section intends to provide a concise overview of Indonesia's foreign policy regarding the great power balance. It will examine the historical evolution of this policy from the presidency of Sukarno to the first term of Susilo. The review will be divided into four periods: the Sukarno period (1945–1965), the Suharto period (1965–1998), the Habibie, Wahid, Megawati periods (1998–2004), and the Habibie, Wahid, Megawati periods (1998–2004). Figure 3 displays the timeline of the four periods.

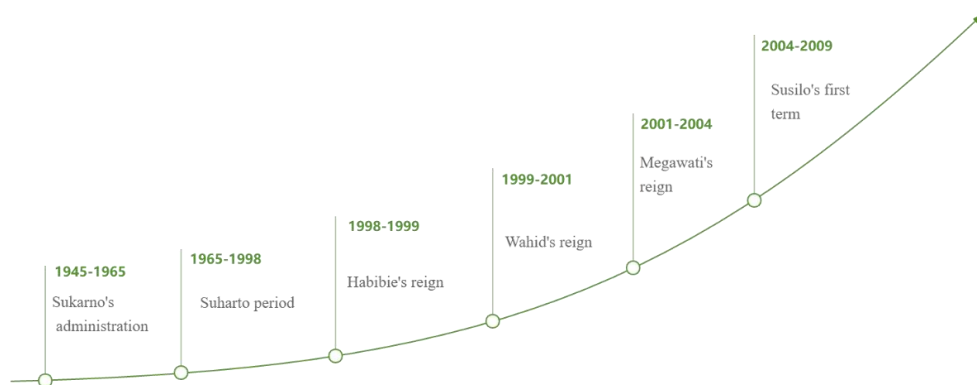


Figure 3 Evolution of Indonesia's Great Power Balance Diplomatic Strategy

Sukarno period (1945-1965)

Under Sukarno's leadership, Indonesia's foreign policy experienced a significant shift. Initially aligned with Western nations, the country gradually realigned itself with Eastern Third World and socialist countries. This transformation also saw a shift from a peaceful approach to a more radical stance. During the initial phase of Sukarno's leadership, Indonesia pursued a policy of independent and proactive diplomacy in order to protect its crucial national interests. Indonesia implemented a parliamentary system and prioritised liberal democratic policies. The country focused on independent and autonomous development, fostering closer relations with Western countries, and maintaining positive ties with the Eastern camp. Indonesia refrained from participating in the U.S. containment of the Eastern camp and remained neutral during the Cold War between the East and the West.

In the later stages of his administration, Sukarno's policy underwent a shift towards radicalism, as he advocated for unity among nationalists, religious believers, and communists through the concept of "Nashagun." He also promoted "led democracy," which granted the president sole control over

power, prioritised an independent foreign policy, and vehemently opposed the United States. The emphasis was placed on maintaining an independent foreign policy, vehemently opposing foreign interference from the U.S. and the West, and providing strong support to national democratic movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Additionally, there was a decision to withdraw from the United Nations to expand its own influence, aiming to break free from Western control and establish itself as a prominent leader in the Third World and the Non-Aligned Movement. Indonesia's foreign relations have faced significant challenges, resulting in the loss of support from the United States and Western countries. This has also caused tensions with neighbouring and Western nations, prompting Indonesia to seek closer ties with Eastern countries.

Suharto period (1965-1998)

Under Suharto's leadership, Indonesia experienced a significant shift in its foreign strategy. Previously aligned with the United States and heavily reliant on them, Indonesia transitioned to a more balanced approach, pursuing diplomacy with multiple major powers. In the initial phase of Suharto's regime (1965–1989), Indonesia's diplomatic approach leaned towards the West, particularly with a focus on the United States and Japan. There was a cautious stance towards the Soviet Union and a sense of detachment from China. To revive and enhance the domestic economy, Indonesia established strong ties with the United States and Western nations. It actively sought economic and military aid from the West while also playing a key role in the formation of ASEAN. This helped strengthen regional coordination, foster cooperation, and maintain peace and stability in the region. Building on its membership in ASEAN, Indonesia capitalised on the organisation's growing influence to exert its own impact in the Asia-Pacific region.

During Suharto's later reign from 1989 to 1998, the Cold War dynamics no longer applied. In response to the changing circumstances in the Asia-Pacific region, Indonesia adjusted its foreign policy. This involved a slight decrease in its pro-United States stance and a greater reliance on ASEAN as a foundation for actively pursuing a diplomacy of balancing the interests of major powers. One approach is to minimise conflict, enhance and cultivate ties with the Eastern bloc, engage in diplomatic efforts to resolve the Cambodian problem, contribute to the rebuilding of Cambodia, and proactively pursue opportunities to restore diplomatic relations with China. Another objective is to navigate diplomatic relations with key regional and international players, including the United States, China, and Japan, with the aim of positioning ASEAN as a significant force in the Asia-Pacific region

and potentially on a global scale. In addition, it is actively engaging in multilateral diplomacy and utilising various platforms and channels, such as the Non-Aligned Movement, to exert its influence in global affairs.

Habibie, Wahid, Megawati period (1998-2004)

Following Suharto's resignation, Indonesia underwent a transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic government with three consecutive presidents: Habibie, Wahid, and Megawati. As a result of the financial crisis that greatly impacted Indonesia's economy and caused political instability, these three presidents primarily focused on domestic matters, allocating limited resources to diplomacy and achieving few notable accomplishments.

The administration of Habibie, which lasted from 1998 to 1999, Habibie served as president during a period of political unrest in Indonesia. His main priority was implementing domestic reforms while also maintaining the diplomatic approach established during the Suharto era. Habibie fostered positive relationships with the United States and Western nations to address Indonesia's economic challenges. These initiatives had limitations and did not achieve significant progress.

The Wahid Administration, which served from 1999 to 2001, Under Wahid's presidency, Indonesia maintained its commitment to democratic transition while facing ongoing pressure from the U.S. and the West. As a result, Wahid made changes to his foreign policy by redirecting his diplomatic focus towards Asia. He no longer depended on the United States and Europe, instead promoting the idea of Indonesia collaborating with China and India to form a strategic cooperative relationship. This can not only alleviate the burden on the U.S. and the West but also contribute to the oversight and equilibrium of their actions while striving to secure additional support from the West.

The administration of Megawati ran from 2001 to 2004. Megawati prioritised ASEAN as a key component of her diplomatic efforts after assuming office. She adopted a strategy of maintaining balanced relations with major powers, including the U.S., Japan, and Western countries, while also enhancing cooperation with China and other Asian nations. This approach aimed to revive Indonesia's political and economic growth and regain its former status as a trusted ally within ASEAN. The initiatives have, to some degree, enhanced Indonesia's domestic political and economic situation and reinstated its regional and international reputation.

Susilo's first term (2004-2009)

In 2004, Susilo became the inaugural president of Indonesia through a

democratic election, marking a significant milestone in the country's history. During Susilo's inauguration, Indonesia experienced positive economic growth, a decrease in ethno-religious conflicts, progress in political democratisation, and an increase in diplomatic efforts. In his initial term as president, Susilo focused on maintaining stability within Indonesia, revitalising the economy, and improving the country's global reputation. He followed Megawati's foreign policy, which involved pursuing a balanced approach to diplomacy with major powers and enhancing cooperative relationships in different areas.

Susilo also prioritised maintaining and strengthening friendly ties with China while actively working towards the development of Indonesia's economy; aspired to assume leadership in ASEAN and played a proactive role in fostering regional cooperation in East Asia, particularly in advancing the development of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA); this approach considers both domestic and foreign factors, enhances efforts to combat domestic terrorism, fosters collaboration with the international community on counter-terrorism, and effectively addresses the challenges posed by Muslims and the United States. Susilo was instrumental in founding the Bali Democracy Forum, aimed at fostering connections between the West, developing nations, and the Islamic world. The forum leverages the strengths of the world's foremost democracy and the country with the largest Muslim population. Indonesia has a distinct role in various multilateral diplomatic platforms, including the Asia-Africa Conference, APEC, the G20, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the United Nations. These engagements aim to strengthen Indonesia's influence in the international community.

Characteristics of Indonesia's Balanced Diplomatic Strategy of Great Powers

Indonesia is situated amidst powerful nations that engage in both competition and cooperation within their borders. This dynamic environment allows Indonesia to effectively practice a balanced diplomacy with these great powers. Over time, Indonesia has developed its own distinct characteristics in its approach to great-power balanced diplomacy. The tenure of Susilo is a prime example of this, as depicted in Figure 4.

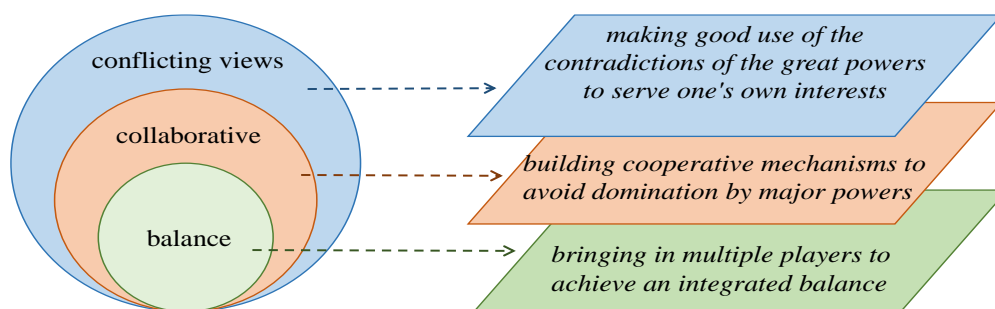


Figure 4. Characteristics of Indonesia's Great Power Balance Diplomatic Strategy

I. Bringing in Multiple Forces to Achieve Comprehensive Balance.

Indonesia has forged alliances with significant global players to effectively execute a strategy of maintaining diplomatic equilibrium among major powers. In 2010, Indonesia and the United States established a comprehensive partnership and implemented an institutionalised high-level dialogue mechanism. In 2013, Indonesia and China enhanced their strategic partnership to a comprehensive strategic partnership, aiming to bolster the overall framework of their bilateral relationship. In 2011, Indonesia and Japan reached an agreement to establish regular ministerial-level meetings between the two nations. These meetings would cover a range of important topics, including foreign affairs, defence, and the economy.

In 2009, Indonesia and the European Union signed a framework agreement to enhance their comprehensive partnership and cooperation. In 2009, Indonesia entered into a framework agreement with the European Union to enhance comprehensive partnership and cooperation. Additionally, in 2005, Indonesia and India declared the formation of a new strategic partnership. Indonesia has been actively pursuing economic and trade partnerships with major countries. Notably, in 2011 and 2013, Indonesia and China signed agreements to enhance and broaden their bilateral economic and trade cooperation. Furthermore, they established a comprehensive five-year development plan to further strengthen their economic ties. Indonesia has taken measures to enhance security dialogues and engage in joint military exercises with the United States, Japan, and other major powers. These actions aim to address the challenges posed by China's increasing influence and potential threats. Indonesia aims to maintain a favourable position by carefully balancing the influence and constraints of major powers.

II. Building Cooperation Mechanisms to Avoid Domination by Great Powers

Indonesia has established various bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks to effectively pursue its diplomatic strategy of maintaining a balance among major powers. Indonesia has established cooperation mechanisms with major powers. In 2010, Indonesia established a bilateral high-level institutionalised dialogue mechanism with the U.S. Indonesia has been engaging in high-level dialogues with China since 2006. Additionally, in 2015, Indonesia conducted its inaugural ministerial consultations on foreign affairs and defence with Japan in Tokyo. Indonesia has played a significant role in promoting multilateral cooperation within ASEAN. In 1994, ASEAN countries collaborated to establish the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), a regional security forum. Subsequently, in 1997, ASEAN took the lead in initiating the Leaders' Meeting (LM) mechanism with China, Japan, and South Korea (CJK).

Furthermore, in 2005, ASEAN spearheaded the launch of the East Asia Summit (EAS) mechanism, which expanded upon the ASEAN-China-Japan-South Korea (ACJSK) framework. Indonesia's Ministry of Defence has been organising the Jakarta International Defence Dialogue (JIDD) sessions since 2011. These sessions aim to foster dialogue in defence and security and promote peace and stability in the region. By engaging in various multilateral mechanisms, Indonesia has effectively prevented the excessive influence of a major power in the region. It has also avoided monopolising Southeast Asian regional affairs and instead focused on maintaining a balance of power among the major players in Southeast Asia.

III. making good use of the contradictions among major powers to serve its interests.

Indonesia's diplomatic strategy focuses on implementing a balance of powers by skilfully navigating the complex relationships between major global players. Specifically, Indonesia leverages the military power of the United States, the political influence of China, and the economic strength of Japan. As an example, Indonesia has actively pursued the inclusion of additional countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and India in the East Asia Summit. This effort aims to uphold ASEAN's position of influence, ensure a balanced regional dynamic, and prevent any single country from exerting undue dominance, particularly China. In 2005, the inaugural East Asia Summit solidified ASEAN's leadership and the inclusive nature of the forum. Indonesia has successfully achieved its predetermined strategic objectives.

Once more, to avoid excessive dependence on the United States and China in political matters, Indonesia has placed a strong emphasis on increased collaboration with external forces, particularly Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and Russia. Indonesia has prioritised enhancing economic cooperation with Asian nations, such as China, South Korea, and India, to reduce dependence on the United States and Japan. Additionally, Indonesia aims to address potential geopolitical security challenges that may arise from China's increasing influence, Indonesia has initiated military collaboration with the United States and India. Indonesia's strategic positioning allows it to leverage the conflicting interests of major powers to its advantage, thanks to its robust system of checks and balances.

Challenges and Opportunities of Indonesian Diplomacy in the International Environment

Analysis of the international political and economic environment

Multiploidization pattern

The current state of international politics and economics indicates a shift

towards multipolarity. This is evident in the emergence of major powers such as the United States, China, and Europe, which are all gaining influence in a relatively balanced manner. The United States, as a long-standing global power, continues to uphold its leadership on the world stage. However, the emergence of China has posed a significant challenge to its position. The European Union is actively promoting its integration process and expanding its influence in international affairs. The current multipolar pattern of power distribution in the international arena necessitates Indonesia adapting and effectively leveraging its international influence.

In the current international landscape, the United States no longer holds absolute dominance, but its overall power remains supreme among the major forces. In 2010, China emerged as the world's second-largest economy. Since then, it has made significant advancements in politics, science and technology, the military, and culture, steadily closing the gap with the United States. Despite its historically feeble economic recovery, Russia maintains significant global influence due to its formidable military capabilities, vast land area, and abundant natural resources. Despite a decline in the strength of the European Union, it remains a formidable group of countries with a significant economy, advancements in science and technology, expansive areas, a large population, and overall comprehensive power. It holds a prominent position on the global stage. After its departure from the European Union, the United Kingdom finds itself in a relatively weakened position.

However, it remains one of the five permanent members of the United Nations, alongside the United States. With its close ties to Europe and the Commonwealth, the United Kingdom becomes a significant player in the international arena, ranking below only China, Russia, and the European Union in terms of power. Japan, India, Brazil, and other countries, while not as powerful as the nations, still possess significant influence in the international arena. Currently, the multi-polar pattern has yet to establish a stable structure, instead resulting in a loosely defined multi-polar situation that is "going to the centre of the U.S. hegemony."

As the strength of other major powers grows, these nations will reshape the system and rules of power distribution. In the future, the most highly ranked countries will continue to engage in a competitive and strategic environment. The emergence of a multi-polar pattern in the international order will inevitably lead to a new phase of competition and power distribution. This development differs from any other power distribution observed in recent history. Currently, Western countries concentrate the power distribution in the traditional international order. Recent changes in the international landscape suggest that non-Western countries are poised to significantly influence power distribution. From this perspective, it is

evident that the world today is experiencing a significant period of transformation.

Globalized Economy

The current situation is characterised by the prominent presence of the globalised economy, which is marked by the growing frequency and convenience of international trade, capital flows, and the dissemination of information. Transnational corporations are increasingly expanding their operations on a global scale, establishing interconnected industrial and value chains. Indonesia must actively engage with the global economic system and prioritise the transformation and upgrading of its economy to boost its competitiveness.

Looking at the history of the human world, the development of the world economy has experienced three globalization processes, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of three globalizations (1870-2030)

	First Globalization	Second Globalization	Third Globalization (above)	Third globalization (bottom)
Time	1870-1913 (44 years)	1950-1990 (41 years)	1990-2008 (19 years)	2008-2030
Dominant Countries	Western European countries such as the United Kingdom	Northern countries such as the United States	Northern countries such as the U.S., China	China, U.S., EU, emerging countries in the South
Industrial Revolution	Second Industrial Revolution	Third Industrial Revolution (above)	Third Industrial Revolution (bottom)	Fourth Industrial Revolution
International Organizations	Sequentially through the era of imperialism, global resource plunder, and colonialism, lack of relatively well-developed and robust international organizations	United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), G7 (1976)	United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), World Trade Organization (WTO), G8 (1998)	United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization (WTO), G20 (2008)
Corporate Forms	Gradual formation and improvement of the corporate system	Overseas business expansion	The emergence of multinational corporations	Rise of global corporations and flourishing of Internet companies
World exports as a share of GDP	From 5% in 1870 to 8.7% in 1913	From 7.0% in 1950 to 15.5% in 1990	From 15.5% in 1990 to 25.8% in 2008	From 25.8% in 2008 to 21.56% in 2016

The initial phase of globalisation occurred between 1870 and 1913. In the early 19th century, global trade was at a low level. From 1820 to 1850, the average annual growth rate of global trade was approximately 2.3%. It was not until 1850–1870 that the growth rate of global trade reached 5%. The capitalist economy's continuous development led to the emergence and widespread application of scientific inventions in production after 1870, further promoting economic development. In addition to the growing material resources propelled by the inherent expansion of capital, the Second Industrial Revolution thrived with the widespread adoption of electrical appliances, ushering mankind into the era of electricity.

Simultaneously, steam power found extensive application in transportation, particularly in railroads, leading to significant enhancements in transportation infrastructure, reduced transportation costs, and improved efficiency. The reduction in transport costs has had a significant impact on international transport conditions, leading to a substantial boost in global trade. During that period, Britain played a pivotal role in driving trade globalisation. Its overseas investments and technology dissemination also played a significant role in advancing the industrialization of other nations. Industrialization led to a significant increase in the need for raw materials. To meet this demand, Britain and other Western European countries actively participated in the international market. Data from the first era of globalisation shows that the total length of railroads in 36 countries experienced notable growth over a span of 18 years.

In a span of just over four decades, the length of railroads in various countries experienced a significant increase, going from 191,000 kilometres in 1870 to almost 1 million kilometres by 1913. In addition, the implementation of the gold standard in the 1870s played a crucial role in maintaining the stability of the global payment system. By 1913, a significant number of countries and regions, totaling 155, actively participated in international trade. This resulted in a substantial surge in the volume of global trade, surpassing the average annual growth rate of world GDP during that period. During this round of globalisation, the intensity of trade has significantly increased for both developed and developing economies, leading to a notable rise in the average annual growth rate of world GDP. During the recent wave of globalisation, the proportion of exports from Latin America increased from 10 percent to 18 percent of GDP.

Similarly, in Asia, the share of exports rose from 1 percent to 5 percent. Meanwhile, Africa experienced a decline in its export levels, falling between Latin America and Asia. During that period, governments and private institutions signed a series of bilateral agreements to regulate and harmonise growing international trade. These agreements served as the

foundation for the current international trade standards and practices. The initial wave of globalisation, starting in the early 19th century and reaching its peak during the First World War, witnessed a significant level of global integration. The second period of economic globalisation occurred from 1950 to 1990. Following World War II, the world entered the era of the Cold War, characterised by the arms race between capitalist and socialist nations. Globalisation was divided into two main parts: the two major markets formed within each camp. These markets facilitated transnational divisions of labour and economic cooperation.

However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, many countries within the socialist camp, influenced by the Cold War mentality, became cautious about engaging in economic exchanges with capitalist nations. In the second round of economic globalisation, socialist countries adopted a more passive approach, resulting in their marginalisation. The most recent phase of economic globalisation was largely controlled by developed Western nations. As a result, global governance organisations primarily catered to the interests of affluent capitalist countries. From 1990 to 2008, the third round of economic globalisation took place before the global financial crisis. This period, also known as the information revolution or the third industrial revolution, was characterised by significant advancements in electronic computer technology.

These breakthroughs played a crucial role in the rapid growth of transnational corporations, which became key drivers of globalisation. Developing countries are increasingly joining the globalisation process and playing a larger role in shaping its rules. The checks and balances of various forces have strengthened, leading to a decrease in the dominance of rich countries in the game of economic globalisation. As a result, economic globalisation is shifting towards benefiting developing countries, particularly emerging countries. This shift is characterised by a growing emphasis on inclusiveness, openness, and fairness.

Multilateralism and International Cooperation

Many countries or groups often come together based on established universal principles to form multilateralism, a form of international governance. In the 1990s, Robert Keohane and John Ruggie developed a substantial body of theoretical work, focusing on multilateralism. After World War II, the theory of multilateralism primarily focused on the aftermath of the war and the need to move away from discriminatory or anti-bilateral international agreements. It follows the path of "neo-liberal institutionalism" and aims to foster cooperative consensus. Two levels primarily determine the connotation of multilateralism: the system level and the unit level. At the system level, multilateralism is primarily defined by

scholars. Keohane was the first to present a systematic definition of multilateralism, highlighting that "multilateralism is the practical activity of coordinating the policies of three or more countries ". (1) This reading of the definition of multilateralism is more inclined to formal quantitative relations. Rudger, on the other hand, emphasizes the substantive significance of multilateralism as "an institutional form of coordination of relations among three or more states based on a universal code of conduct." (2)

According to this definition, multilateralism emphasises the interaction between international actors and international regimes. It places significance on adhering to the principle of universal behaviour in all aspects of multilateral practice. This means that from establishing norms to determining their scope and implementing them, the principle of universal behaviour should be followed. All of this takes place within the framework of multilateral institutions, which is why multilateralism is also Based on this analysis, James Caparaso outlined four key features of multilateralism, which include indivisibility, universal norms of conduct, and diffuse reciprocity, as depicted in Figure 5.

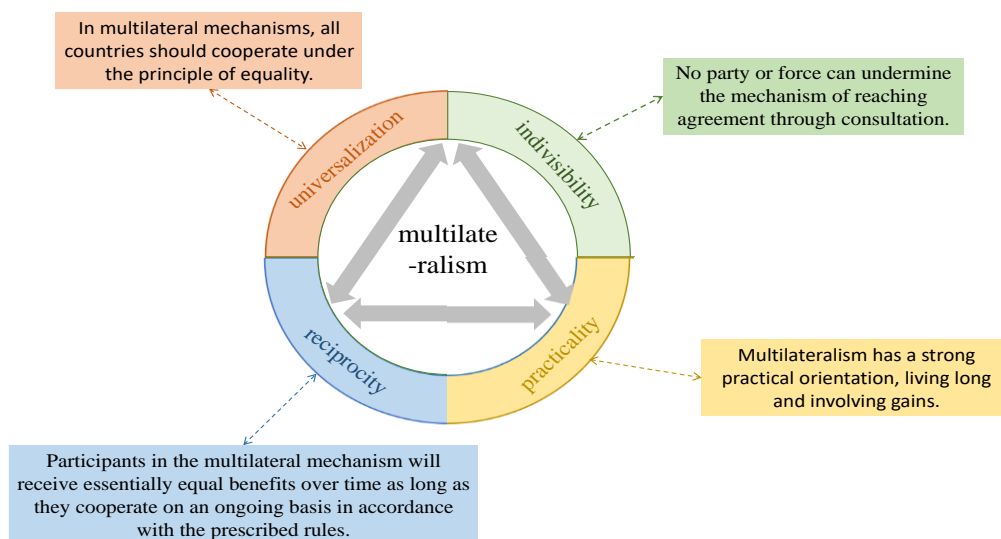


Figure 5. Four main features of multilateralism

The concept of indivisibility highlights the importance of upholding the agreed-upon principles of a multilateral mechanism, ensuring that no party or force can undermine its integrity. It is important to consider the overall interests of all participants and avoid sacrificing any individual's interests to achieve the desired outcome. Put simply, multilateralism seeks to promote cooperation by uniting willing countries or groups, engaging in negotiations on an equal basis within the multilateral framework, fostering solidarity across different areas, and emphasising the importance of risk aversion.

To ensure fairness and equality, it is essential for all nations to work together within a multilateral framework. All countries should be treated equally and

not allowed to dominate others. Instead, cooperation should be based on the principle of equality, without any discrimination or special privileges.

The concept of reciprocity in proliferation highlights the advantages of multilateralism, where participants who consistently adhere to the established rules can expect to receive equitable benefits over time. Multilateralism serves as a powerful tool for fostering solidarity and cooperation among a wide range of countries, irrespective of their internal or external disparities. These nations equally reap the rewards of collaboration, driven by shared interests. This underlying rationale fuels their unwavering commitment to pursuing multilateralism and cooperation.

Strategic Effects of Great Power Competition

Great-power rivalry has had a significant impact on the course of world history. It has shaped the world landscape and influenced the strategies employed by countries. These strategies often serve as a clear indicator of a country's rise or decline. When interactive behaviour and strategic state reach a certain stage, they can have both positive and negative effects simultaneously. It is important to view and evaluate them in a dialectical manner. Competition among major powers has dual implications. On one hand, it can potentially result in conflict, confrontation, and even war. On the other hand, it can also serve as a catalyst for progress and development within the international community.

The competition among major powers has a significant impact on the evolution of the international landscape, the power structure, and the shaping of the international system. The competition among major powers has resulted in the development of the international landscape towards a state of competitive multipolarity. This has led to an unstable state of hegemony. With the rise of countries in Europe and East Asia, it is becoming increasingly clear that competition among major powers will make it difficult for the United States to maintain its unipolar status.

As a result, a multipolar world may once again become a reality. The international order is a direct reflection of the balance of power, as no single major power possesses the ability to unilaterally establish and enforce all the rules governing the international order. Robert Ross argues that China's increasing power will result in a competitive dynamic between the United States and China. Experts anticipate that this competition will reshape the power dynamics in Asia, potentially reducing U.S. influence in the region and bolstering China's role in the global order. In the past, major powers have typically established the international power system through competition. However, with the rise of economic globalisation, political multipolarity, the exchange and integration of different civilizations, and

the growing importance of non-traditional security threats, the limitations of the competitive international power system have become more apparent. It is now crucial to prioritise cooperation and power-sharing, actively taking on the responsibility for the development of our changing world in accordance with the new principles of international power distribution. The competition among major powers is not only a result of power shifts, but also a significant factor in shaping the international system.

Secondly, the occurrence of international conflicts and wars is closely linked to the competition between major Powers, which presents a significant challenge to the stability of the international system. Historical evidence demonstrates that competitive relationships often result in escalating conflicts. Great power competition tends to progress from minor confrontations to full-scale wars between rivals or regional blocs. It is widely recognised that great power competition was not only the underlying cause of World War I, but also a key factor in triggering World War II and the Cold War. According to James Lacey's research on international wars, a significant majority of conflicts since 1816 occurred between long-standing strategic rivals. In contrast, less than one-fifth of the wars involved countries that lacked a clear competitive relationship. States' strategic rivalries closely tie to the origins of war.

In addition, long-lasting rivalries among major powers do not arise abruptly; they are the outcome of a sequence of previous interactions between states that anticipate and solidify the future conduct of these major powers. Conflicts and wars often arise between states engaged in ongoing competition. While competition is not always a prerequisite for conflict, the presence of competition tends to amplify the historical and psychological burdens associated with conflict. The competition between major powers can also result in conflicts in other nations or regions, as demonstrated by the war in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989, which was a direct consequence of the rivalry between superpowers. As the scope and complexity of great power competition expand, along with the increasing diversity of interests involved, the competing parties are more likely to perceive each other as "enemies." This perception intensifies the sense of competition and raises the risk of conflict. Nevertheless, the constraints on high-intensity great-power rivalry have significantly increased due to the evolution of international politics and advancements in military science and technology, particularly in the realm of nuclear weapons.

Competition among major powers has also indirectly had positive effects on small and medium-sized countries. Despite the absence of strong mutual trust among competing powers, the positive competition between major nations presents an advantageous opening for collaboration between smaller and larger countries. This allows smaller and medium-

sized nations to have greater flexibility in their policy decisions and enables the big powers to adapt their approaches to regional institutions and arrangements. Due to the competitive relationship between China and the United States, regional countries have increased policy flexibility and access to security and economic benefits. Increased competition among major powers on certain security matters will create opportunities for middle-ranking countries in the region that have strong connections with them. These countries are often quick to seize the advantages of a more relaxed international environment to pursue a balance of power.

The current strategic competition between the United States and China has significant implications for the international landscape, the evolving relationship between the two nations, and the strategic decisions of other countries, making it impossible to overlook. The U.S. competition strategy with China extends beyond bilateral relations to encompass major powers and key regions. It is a comprehensive strategy that incorporates bilateral, regional, and global dimensions. The growing number of competing actors will contribute to the complexity of the U.S.-China competition game. This will have negative consequences for U.S.-China bilateral relations, regional peace and prosperity, and potentially even global stability.

It is important to consider the potential impact on shaping a positive regional order and global pattern. Simultaneously, the competition between the United States and China is shaping a fresh international dynamic that has the potential to establish a novel geo-economic framework. There is growing concern among scholars about the potential for the strategic competition between China and the United States to escalate into a global conflict. This would have significant implications for the economy, military, and security, leading many to ponder the possibility of a "new Cold War" between the two countries. However, the competition between the United States and China occurs within a framework of various internal and external limitations. Even if competition becomes the prevailing approach in relations between major powers, it does not automatically result in confrontation among them.

While the competition between China and the United States extends beyond their borders and has significant implications for global affairs, influencing the trajectory of international issues and regional conflicts. Considering the intense competition between China and the United States, other nations find themselves caught in the middle, resulting in a reshuffling of global power dynamics and fostering more competitive interactions among various international actors. The shifting power dynamics between China and the United States have implications for Asia-Pacific countries, prompting them to seek balance and align with a strategic direction.

However, the intensifying competition between the two nations may lead

these countries to adopt a cautious approach, resulting in a difficult decision-making process. This dilemma has the potential to heighten competition among major powers and impact regional dynamics. This will add complexity to the relationships between major powers, as well as between them and other countries and the regional situation. Philomena Murray argues that great power competition will dominate the Asia-Pacific region, significantly impacting ASEAN's regional policy decisions. Furthermore, the presence of differentiated competition will compel the two powers to fully utilise their comparative advantages, resulting in smaller countries benefiting from enhanced "services" provided by these powers.

Indonesia's Diplomatic Interests and Challenges

As one of the largest countries in Southeast Asia, Indonesia's foreign policy is intricately connected to crucial factors such as national interests, regional stability, and international security. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of Indonesia's diplomatic interests in the international arena and the challenges it currently faces. Examining the country's foreign policy orientation and development direction can provide a better understanding. Table 2 and Table 3 present the findings.

Table 2: Indonesia's diplomatic interests

Diplomatic interests	Characteristics
Regional Security and Stability	The primary diplomatic interest pursued by Indonesia is regional security and stability. As a major power in Southeast Asia, Indonesia's security and stability directly affect the peace of the entire region. Indonesia actively participates in regional cooperation mechanisms and promotes friendly relations among neighbouring countries through diplomatic means to maintain regional peace and stability.
Economic Development and Trade Interests	As an important global exporter of natural resources, Indonesia's foreign policy focuses on safeguarding its economic development and trade interests. By actively participating in international trade and strengthening regional trade cooperation, Indonesia promotes the flow of its exports and the development of its domestic economy.
Enhancing international status and image	Indonesia actively pursues the diplomatic interests of enhancing its international status and creating a favourable image. Initiatives such as participating in international affairs, organizing international conferences, and maintaining international peace and security not only help to build Indonesia's international image, but also help to increase its influence in international affairs.

Table 3: Indonesia's diplomatic challenges

Diplomatic challenges	Characteristics
Geopolitical complexity	Indonesia is situated in a relatively complex geopolitical environment, with political instability, terrorism, and maritime disputes in the surrounding region. These factors make it challenging for Indonesia to formulate and practice foreign policy and require a careful response to safeguard national security and stability.
Economic imbalances and development gaps	There are serious economic imbalances and development gaps within Indonesia, which pose challenges to foreign policy formulation and practice. How to harmonize internal and external interests, promote domestic development and speak out in the international arena is a difficult task facing Indonesian diplomacy.
Influence and balance of major powers such as China and the US	The increasingly prominent role and influence of major powers such as China and the United States in international affairs pose an important challenge to Indonesia's foreign policy. Indonesia needs to carefully balance its relations with these major powers to avoid falling into the dilemma of over-dependence or over-resistance and to ensure national independence and autonomy.

Constructing a Balanced Relationship with China and the U.S.

Indonesia's Positioning and Strategies in U.S.-China Relations

Indonesia has partnered with China in its pursuit of economic progress in the economic domain. Indonesia, being the fourth-most populous country globally, is currently undergoing significant development challenges as a developing nation. Indonesia has successfully achieved rapid economic development, positioning itself as a dynamic emerging country in Asia and the largest economy in Southeast Asia. The country's focus now is to sustain this rapid and stable economic growth. Indonesia's distinct resource endowment has provided it with a strong motivation for economic cooperation, leading to a greater willingness to improve its economic status through development. According to a report by the World Bank, Indonesia is projected to reach a gross domestic product (GDP) of approximately 1.0584 trillion U.S. dollars in 2020, making it the only Southeast Asian country to surpass the 1 trillion U.S. dollar mark.

Additionally, Indonesia boasts a sizable population and a plentiful labour force, providing ample opportunity for further infrastructure growth.

Indonesia possesses abundant marine resources due to its vast number of islands, which provide ample opportunities for marine fisheries and mineral extraction. Indonesia finds itself positioned at the lower end of the global industrial chain, primarily exporting raw materials while importing manufactured goods. This places the country at a disadvantage when it comes to competing with economic powerhouses like China, Japan, and Singapore in the high-end industrial sector. As a result, Indonesia strongly motivates itself to focus on developing its economy.

China has emerged as a dependable partner for Indonesia's economic progress, owing to its significant influence in the economic sector. China is currently Indonesia's largest trading partner and the second-largest investor. Between January and November 2021, Chinese enterprises made significant non-financial direct investments in 57 countries along the Belt and Road, totalling over \$200.8 billion. Notably, Indonesia secured the 8th position in terms of investment, as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4: Top 10 regions in China's outward FDI stock

Rankings	Country (Region)	Stock Amount (billions of dollars)
1	Hong Kong, China	15496.6
2	British Virgin Islands	4474.8
3	Cayman Islands	2295.3
4	USA	771.7
5	Singapore	672
6	Australia	344.3
7	Netherlands	284.9
8	Indonesia	200.8
9	England	190.1
10	Luxemburg	181.3

As part of the Belt and Road Initiative, Indonesia is currently building several investment projects, including the Yavan High-Speed Railway. In contrast to Susilo's approach of focusing on external development, Joko highlights the importance of a strong national power as a requirement for Indonesia to achieve leadership in regional affairs. Since assuming power in 2014, Indonesia's "Indo-Pacific Policy" has shifted from a strategy of cultivating numerous friendships and avoiding conflicts to a policy centred around maritime interests. The Indonesian government, under Joko's leadership, must enhance the nation's capabilities to effectively tackle the obstacles hindering its pursuit of becoming a prominent global maritime power. It is crucial to raise public awareness and prioritise maritime security concerns that pose a risk to the country's sovereignty and stability. The maritime identity of the Joko government's "Global Ocean Pivot" has set forth a range of normative limitations for Indonesia's maritime progress, encompassing maritime politics, maritime economy, and maritime culture,

etc. These maritime rules not only highlight the importance of maritime sovereignty and security but also prioritise the development of the maritime economy, cooperation, and culture.

It is evident that most of the five pillars place great importance on the maritime economy, maritime cooperation, and maritime culture. Indonesia's maritime identity has undergone a significant transformation. Previously, the focus was on internal maritime political matters, like asserting territorial sovereignty. However, the country has now shifted its attention to external maritime development issues, such as fostering regional economic and cultural collaboration. Change the policy to an "ocean pivot" policy. Under Joko's leadership, Indonesia forged closer connections with China to bolster its domestic infrastructure initiatives. Indonesia's strong focus on infrastructure development is driven by its internal push to boost the country's economy.

Considering Indonesia's aspiration to become a dominant force in the maritime industry as an example, the Joko administration's planning focuses on a "highway to the sea" strategy - "to develop maritime connectivity and interconnectivity, and to drive the development of infrastructure such as air, land, sea, and communications" - and plans to build a nationwide infrastructure program across the country. The Joko administration has prioritised the implementation of the "Maritime Highway" strategy. This strategy entails the enhancement of maritime connectivity, the improvement of air, land, and sea infrastructure, and the construction and upgrading of ports, airports, railroads, highways, and other significant infrastructure projects across the nation. The objective is to promote economic growth in both the central and underdeveloped western regions of Indonesia by swiftly lowering logistics expenses. The government's initiatives to enhance domestic infrastructure development for economic and social progress align with the investments in the Belt and Road Initiative. China and Indonesia have seen a significant expansion in their economic and trade cooperation due to the successful implementation of the "Belt and Road" cooperation projects.

Under China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative, "a large number of Chinese enterprises, the Chinese capital, and Chinese brands have extensively participated in Indonesia's economic construction activities". This will contribute to the advancement of Indonesia's domestic economy, thereby establishing a solid foundation for Indonesia's pursuit of status. Scholars have noted that Indonesia has expressed concerns about China's military strategy. However, President Joko is determined to enhance economic cooperation with China through a comprehensive strategic partnership. This aligns with President Joko's goal of prioritising Indonesia's economy and strategy.

Indonesia has collaborated with the United States in the field of security to enhance military capabilities. Indonesia's military expenditure has been increasing since 2016 but remains below US\$10 billion per year (in 2021-dollar parity), as stated in the Stockholm Peace Research Institute's Global Military Expenditure Report 2022. Additionally, Indonesia's maritime security patrols face challenges such as limited personnel, funding shortages, and inadequate law enforcement equipment. These limitations are not comparable to those of major powers like the United States, China, and Japan and are even lower than Singapore's, as depicted in Figure 6.

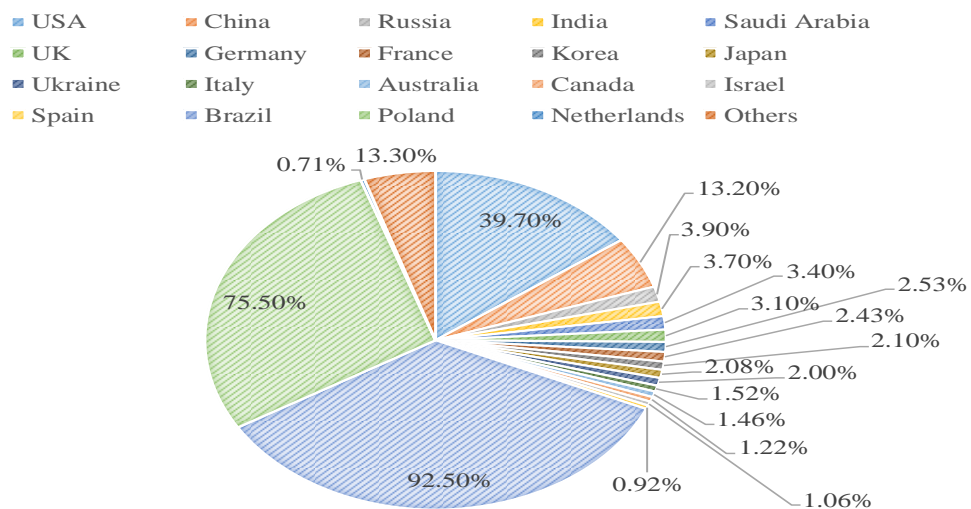


Figure 6. Distribution of military expenditures by country (2022)

At the same time, Indonesia has demonstrated a firm stance against excessive reliance on China and the United States, as it values its independence and autonomy. Indonesia is highly cautious about various forms of "economic invasion," "economic coercion," and "overdependence. Anwar asserts that the excessive influence of foreign economic power in Indonesia has the potential to cause political instability. This was evident in the 1970s, when Japanese capital dominated the Indonesian economy, and similar consequences have been observed in other Southeast Asian nations. Indonesia has implemented regulations that restrict foreign companies from acquiring Indonesian assets. These laws mandate that every joint venture must have at least 50 percent Indonesian ownership. This requirement applies not only to Chinese companies but also to Western oil and mining companies that have a longstanding history of collaboration.

Additionally, when it comes to military security, Indonesia is cautious about becoming overly reliant on any single country, including the U.S., despite their close cooperation. Ever since Biden assumed office, there has been a noticeable resurgence of coalition politics in the Indo-Pacific region. This

development poses a challenge to Indonesia's longstanding commitment to liberal and proactive policies. Indonesia has recognised the growing security challenges it faces and the limitations of its defence forces in addressing them. As a result, Indonesia has opted to form a strategic partnership with the United States to enhance its security capabilities. Although alliances come with the potential risk of being abandoned or constrained, they can also undermine Indonesia's pursuit of status. On the other hand, strategic partnerships can leverage the political and military advantages of alliances while bolstering Indonesia's diplomatic influence and international standing. For instance, strategic partnerships can leverage the political and military advantages of alliances while bolstering Indonesia's diplomatic influence and international standing in significant maritime regions like the Sulu Sea and the Malacca Straits.

Indonesia avoids entering into long-term agreements to prevent them from being misconstrued as alliance cooperation, which may not align with the intended form of collaboration. In the current geopolitical landscape, as the United States seeks support from its Southeast Asian allies to exert influence in the Asia-Pacific region, Indonesia has made it clear that it opposes the establishment of foreign military bases within its borders. In 2020, Indonesia declined the U.S. Navy P-8 "Poseidon" maritime anti-submarine patrol aircraft landing applications and ground logistical assistance on four separate occasions. Indonesia also denied the existence of any agreement between the two countries to establish U.S. military bases in the Natuna Islands region, dismissing such claims.

Due to the U.S.-China dynamics in the Asia-Pacific region, meeting Indonesia's economic and security needs through a straightforward alliance is not possible. Additionally, Indonesia's smaller size makes it more susceptible to shifts in the regional order, making it unwilling to accept external powers exerting direct control over Southeast Asia. Hence, rather than serving as a middleman between China and the United States, Indonesia aims to take the lead in ASEAN's response to the escalating competition between the two superpowers. Indonesia seeks to assert its independence from both China and the United States by offering intellectual guidance to ASEAN and relying on the organisation for diplomatic negotiations.

However, Indonesia's approach to cultivating balanced relationships with external powers to preserve political autonomy and achieve economic advantages aligns with the principles of liberal-active diplomacy. Scholars have observed that Indonesia maintains strong economic ties with China but lacks any defence treaties with the United States or other allies. However, the presence of common concerns and shared goals between the

two sides does not imply a lack of defence treaty. Instead, it reflects Indonesia's longstanding commitment to a liberal and proactive foreign policy. This policy encompasses both a focus on independence and non-interventionism in external competition, as well as Jakarta's decision to avoid entering formal alliances with other countries.

Constructing A Balanced Relationship Between Indonesia and The U.S.-China Relationship

In the context of China-Indonesia relations, both parties acknowledge and respect each other's identities as "developing countries" and "emerging countries." Indonesia is actively striving to enhance its position in global governance by drawing inspiration from different role models. Indonesia is effectively fulfilling the role of a "middle power" by strategically engaging in regional and global affairs, aligning with the "good international citizen." Indonesia plays a significant role as a "middle power" by strategically engaging in regional and global affairs. Indonesia joined the G20 in 2008 and will assume the presidency of the G20 in December 2021, a role it has held for several years. Indonesia has played a significant role in the international community, being recognised as a "defender of order," "spokesperson for ASEAN," "advocate for developing countries," and "mediator in regional and global conflicts.

Indonesia has consistently positioned itself as a proponent of stability, a representative of ASEAN, a champion for developing nations, a facilitator in regional and global disputes, and a trusted ally to both China and the United States in the international arena. At his succession ceremony, President Joko expressed his commitment to fostering international cooperation and actively engaging in global matters, including development, democracy, human rights, and the environment; to develop specific strategies to foster worldwide economic recovery and enhance our resilience. Joko highlighted Indonesia's commitment to championing the aspirations and interests of developing nations and advocating for "a more just world order." Joko said, "Indonesia will continue to push the G20 countries to achieve breakthroughs and will encourage the G20 countries to strengthen their cooperation and pool their strengths to ensure that the international community can feel the positive effects of this cooperation."

Indonesia has played a significant role in global affairs through various initiatives. This includes organising the Bali Democracy Forum, actively contributing to UN peacekeeping missions, being the first Asian nation to send naval vessels to Lebanon for peacekeeping efforts and extending humanitarian aid to the Rohingya population in Myanmar. Indonesia's increasing global influence relies on its effective utilisation of the country's ethical and moral standing in international organisations, enabling its active

engagement in global affairs. Indonesia has been actively enhancing its global presence and influence amidst the strategic competition between the United States and China. The organisation aims to preserve its authentic portrayal of Southeast Asia while also broadening its scope to include developing nations. The organisation intends for this expansion to bolster its global standing and propel ASEAN towards becoming a significant regional and global force, independent of the influence of China and the United States.

To enhance social competitiveness, one must compete with other countries by improving their overall strength and achieving progress by altering their initial ranking. The strategic rivalry between China and the United States has heightened Indonesia's perception of competition for self-improvement. As a result, there has been an increased reliance on this form of competition to enhance its status. The government under Joko's leadership has made significant strides in enhancing maritime infrastructure and national defence. A key focus has been the strategic vision of establishing Indonesia as a strong and self-assured maritime power, fostering unity and prosperity. Indonesia envisions its status as a "maritime power," drawing on its abundant marine resources.

Indonesia's vast archipelago and abundant marine resources, including fisheries and offshore oil and gas, drive its ambition to become a maritime power. Indonesia plays a crucial role as a maritime hub, safeguarding important transportation routes such as the Malacca Strait, the Sunda Strait, and others connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Indonesia has recognised the growing importance of the ocean and has embraced it as a key driver of development. Joko's "global ocean pivot" strategy is a significant effort to boost Indonesia's societal competitiveness. Joko strives to establish a multi-disciplinary approach to maritime diplomacy, leveraging the benefits of the oceans. This strategy is intended to restore Indonesia's position as a prominent maritime force and promote Indonesia as a "global maritime pivot and a global hub of civilization." This vision demonstrates Indonesia's endeavour to assume the position of a significant power in influencing the maritime order in the Indo-Pacific region.

Some commentators have responded to Joko's strategic vision by suggesting that it is Indonesia's grand strategy for asserting itself as a regional leader. Indonesia's focus on development has shaped its foreign policy, which aims to foster partnerships across various areas. Effective cooperation between nations should yield advantages across various domains, such as the economy, politics, security, and defence. Indonesia has prioritised its regional influence by focusing on building trust, resolving conflicts, and fostering an ASEAN community, establishing itself as the "leader" and "manager" of ASEAN, and implicitly contributing to its image as the "leader of ASEAN" and "manager of ASEAN. Indonesia aims to assert

its influence in the region, enhance its reputation as a "leader" and "manager", and subtly encourage other countries to acknowledge its legitimate leadership within ASEAN. By doing so, Indonesia seeks to gain greater respect, acceptance, and cooperation from the countries in the region, fostering a collective approach to decision-making.

Indonesia has successfully garnered increased support and reduced opposition through a strategic approach that emphasises adaptability and minimal resistance. Furthermore, Indonesia has been actively engaging in multilateral mechanisms like ASEAN to establish norms. It has successfully incorporated its concerns into the agenda of this mechanism and strives to play a significant role in shaping ASEAN's rules and institutions. Simultaneously, Indonesia seeks to establish its regional legitimacy to prevent excessive interference from external powers. By utilising "ASEAN" as a platform for engagement with major powers like China and the United States, Indonesia aims to capture their attention and foster stronger relationships. As Asia becomes a potential new battleground for global competition, its core will undoubtedly intertwine with global issues. Therefore, although Indonesia may not have a global presence, it does hold a significant position in Asia that others may recognise as a valid contender for a role among the influential powers in this group.

To effectively enhance its status, Indonesia must adhere to the social logic of gaining international recognition. Indonesia must solidify its position as a prominent leader in Southeast Asia and consistently demonstrate its ability to tackle the various challenges that ASEAN is confronted with to achieve its desired status. Indonesia aims to showcase its commitment to global responsibility by actively engaging in various international matters. It seeks to have a positive impact on important global issues by implementing innovative strategies that promote social mobility and creativity.

Additionally, Indonesia seeks to gain greater recognition for its efforts to maintain regional stability, and to receive acknowledgement for its contributions from others, with the Southeast Asian region being the primary platform for this recognition. Indonesia must enhance its autonomy to establish a strong sense of "social recognition" in the global arena. Therefore, maintaining an independent diplomatic stance between China and the United States becomes essential for cultivating a positive reputation and garnering recognition from ASEAN countries and major global players. A nation that lacks self-sufficiency will struggle to earn global acknowledgement of its elevated position.

Conclusion

This paper offers a comprehensive examination of Indonesia's diplomatic interests and challenges, shedding light on Indonesia's significant role and

influence in the global political landscape. Indonesia, being a significant country in Southeast Asia, places great importance on regional security, economic development, and its international image when formulating its foreign policy. However, it encounters numerous obstacles, like the intricate and unpredictable geopolitical landscape, economic imbalances both within and outside the organisation, and the dynamics of major global powers. The article provides an overview of the historical background of Indonesia's foreign relations development and delves into the concept of "great power balance" and its importance in shaping Indonesia's diplomacy.

The analysis focuses on the international environment that Indonesia is currently facing and the strategic implications of the rivalry between major powers. It sheds light on the reasons behind Indonesia's efforts to maintain a delicate balance between these powers. The article explores the implementation of a balancing strategy by Indonesia at the diplomatic level. It delves into Indonesia's positioning and strategy in China-United States relations, as well as the construction of a balance in its relations with both countries. Indonesia holds considerable international influence, making the formulation and implementation of its foreign policy vital for regional and global peace, stability, and development.

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