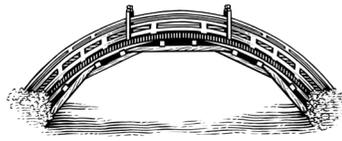


ROUNDTABLE

Indonesia After the 2019 Election



*Alexander R. Arifianto*

*Thomas Pepinsky*

*Evan A. Laksmana*

*Dewi Fortuna Anwar*

*Ann Marie Murphy*

## Introduction

Indonesia's 2019 general election and the inauguration of Joko Widodo (Jokowi) for a second term as president took place concurrent with the United States and Indonesia celebrating 70 years of diplomatic relations, making this an opportune time to assess the state of democracy in Indonesia and the role the country plays in the Indo-Pacific region. This *Asia Policy* roundtable examines the outcomes and implications of the 2019 Indonesian presidential election. It also addresses Indonesia's regional leadership role in Southeast Asia and what Jokowi's foreign policy toward Asia and the United States might look like during his second term.

In the roughly twenty years since the fall of Suharto's authoritarian New Order regime in 1998, Indonesia has made considerable progress toward becoming a fully functional democracy—no small feat in a highly heterogeneous country of over 260 million people dispersed across more than seventeen thousand islands. In April, incumbent Jokowi defeated former three-star general and member of Suharto's inner circle Prabowo Subianto in Indonesia's fourth national presidential election. The election campaigns, as well as the election's aftermath, were highly divisive due to the prevalence of religious-based identity politics and the political polarization of the candidates' supporters. Prabowo ran an ultranationalist hard-line campaign and allied with conservative Islamist groups that are seeking to expand Islam's role in public life. Jokowi campaigned on his first-term record of improving social programs and economic conditions, while also selecting the Islamic cleric Ma'ruf Amin as his running mate to boost his credentials among those who prioritize religion in their vote. Although Jokowi won with a record turnout, the election campaign period demonstrated a conservative turn in politics. As Alexander Arifianto points out, "Jokowi now faces the most serious challenges to his presidency."

Arifianto opens the roundtable with an essay recapping the election and reviewing the factors that contributed to its political division and polarization. He concludes that Jokowi now faces major challenges from two distinct groups—the Jakarta elite and conservative Islamists—and that "both groups are threatening the future of Indonesia's democracy.... How Jokowi deals with these challenges likely will define his legacy as Indonesia's seventh president."

The first of these challenges—the widening electoral divide based on religious identity—is addressed by Thomas Pepinsky. His essay presents electoral and demographic data to outline this emerging religious cleavage and provides clues about its implications going forward. Evan Laksmana

examines an important aspect of the second challenge—the disposition of civil-military relations. He points out that “the 2019 elections did not change the fact that Jokowi is a president without his own political party and that he needs the support of the broader security establishment...to execute his agenda.” Laksmana argues that in his second term, Jokowi will likely remain largely hands-off toward the military, while the military will continue to advance its organizational autonomy and political role. If not carefully handled, both challenges could have detrimental effects on the structure of Indonesia’s democracy.

Dewi Fortuna Anwar’s essay looks at Indonesia’s regional foreign policy and economic relations, with an eye on how these might play out in Jokowi’s second term. According to Anwar, Jokowi’s two key foreign policy objectives are “economic development and ensuring a peaceful, autonomous regional order.” Relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other Asian countries thus dominate Indonesia’s foreign policy and will likely continue to do so, particularly for economic reasons. Turning to U.S.-Indonesian relations, Ann Marie Murphy’s essay addresses a critical implication of the Indonesian election for the United States—the election’s outcome—as well as near-term prospects for bilateral relations in the economic, security, and political arenas. While opportunities exist to enhance the bilateral relationship, she argues that significant obstacles are also present. If these are well-managed, there is room to grow bilateral relations.

Indonesia is often considered a beacon of democracy and pluralism in Southeast Asia, and it has assumed a leadership role in ASEAN as well as developed a stable partnership with the United States. The essays presented in this roundtable offer a clear picture of cleavages and issues that must be dealt with in Indonesian politics in the years ahead for the country’s democracy to remain viable and strong. 

## What the 2019 Election Says about Indonesian Democracy

*Alexander R. Arifianto*

On April 17, 2019, Indonesia conducted its highly anticipated presidential and legislative elections—its fourth since the country completed its democratic transition. However, some observers were less than pleased with how the election had unfolded over the past year, with many considering it as one of the most divisive in Indonesia’s history. This was due to the prevalence of religious-based identity politics during the campaign and the increasing political polarization of the supporters of the two presidential candidates.<sup>1</sup> Some even argued that the government’s response to critiques from the opposition camp contributed to a growing authoritarianism in a country that many observers used to consider the most stable democracy in Southeast Asia.<sup>2</sup>

This essay reviews several factors that contributed to the political division and polarization surrounding the 2019 Indonesian election. The first is the rising influence of conservative Islamist groups in Indonesia over the past several years, eventuating in their support of Prabowo Subianto—a retired Suharto-era general who is a long-term opponent of incumbent president Joko Widodo (popularly known as Jokowi). The second is Jokowi’s response to Prabowo challenging his selection of the conservative cleric Ma’ruf Amin. Through this nomination, Jokowi intended to counter the perception that he was not a good Muslim presidential candidate. The third factor is Prabowo’s hostile response to the election results and Jokowi’s reaction to the challenges brought about by Prabowo and his supporters, which was considered heavy-handed by some.<sup>3</sup> The fourth and final factor is the post-election maneuver by Jakarta’s political elite supporting Jokowi’s re-election to propose a new series of constitutional amendments, which would have ended Indonesia’s

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<sup>1</sup> Eve Warburton, “Polarization in Indonesia: What if Perception Is Reality?” *New Mandala*, April 16, 2019 ~ <https://www.newmandala.org/how-polarised-is-indonesia>.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Power, “Jokowi’s Authoritarian Turn,” *New Mandala*, October 9, 2018 ~ <https://www.newmandala.org/jokowis-authoritarian-turn>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

direct presidential election and endangered the future of Indonesia's two-decade-old democracy.

### *Rising Islamism and Its Growing Role in Indonesian Politics*

Conservative Islamists—as represented by groups such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), and the Tarbiyah movement along with its political wing the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)—have been growing in prominence over the past two decades. Restrictions on proselytization and political activities were removed during this period, and these groups have in turn gained a huge following from the internet, social media, state universities, and small Islamic study groups (*majelis taklim*).<sup>4</sup> Their political clout came to the forefront when approximately one million protesters marched in Jakarta in November and December 2016 to demand the removal of the city's governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama—an ethnic Chinese Indonesian who is also a Christian. This stemmed from growing accusations that Purnama had committed an act of religious blasphemy. Known Aksi Bela Islam (Defending Islam Action), the rallies were successful in turning public opinion against Purnama, which led to his landslide loss in the May 2017 gubernatorial election and his subsequent trial and conviction on a religious blasphemy charge.

When the rallies were over, many activists—now aligned under the banner of the 212 Alumni movement—set themselves up to campaign for politicians who were in line with their vision of turning Indonesia into an Islamic state. Their next target was Jokowi, who they believed had failed to promote policies that integrated Islamic law into public policy. They formed an alliance with Prabowo, who once again proceeded to challenge Jokowi in the 2019 election. Unlike in the 2014 election, when the Islamists were just a small contingent of Prabowo's mainly ultranationalist coalition, the Islamists had now become an integral part of his campaign team. Subsequently, they played a leading role in staging negative attacks against Jokowi while mobilizing potential voters for Prabowo.

Activists in the 212 Alumni movement sponsored public rallies and protests which questioned Jokowi's track record in economic, social, and religious affairs and called for his defeat in the election. These rallies were held in major cities throughout Indonesia during the spring and summer of 2019, and many were organized under the banner of the #2019ChangePresident

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander R. Arifianto, "Rising Islamism and the Struggle for Islamic Authority in Post-Reformasi Indonesia," *TRaNS* (2019)  <https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2019.10>.

(#2019GantiPresiden) movement.<sup>5</sup> Even though the movement claimed that it was completely unaffiliated with the Prabowo campaign, many participants were drawn from the ranks of Islamic parties and groups. For instance, #2019ChangePresident activists in Surabaya came from the ranks of Islamist parties and groups such as PKS, the Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation, and HTI.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, activists in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, were derived from local members of Muhammadiyah, which is Indonesia's second-largest Islamic organization; the National Mandate Party (PAN), which is affiliated with Muhammadiyah; and other local Islamic groups, such as the Malay Youth Association.<sup>7</sup>

Activists from 212 Alumni also worked together with Islamic parties that aligned themselves with Prabowo—specifically PKS and PAN—to support Prabowo's candidacy. According to one activist, prospective voters “trust the information [about the candidates] from us much more so than those advanced by party-affiliated activists because they believe we do not have any political agenda.”<sup>8</sup> Due to these advantages, 212 Alumni activists were instrumental in helping Prabowo score landslide victories in a number of key provinces, such as West Java and West Sumatra, and flipped several provinces that Jokowi won in 2014, such as South Sumatra and South Sulawesi.<sup>9</sup>

### *Jokowi's Counteroffensive and Election Results*

Facing a stronger challenge from Prabowo as well as general questions regarding his Islamic credentials, Jokowi had little choice but to bolster these credentials through expressions of religious piety and endorsements from prominent Islamic clerics and politicians. This was especially important to win the support of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)—the largest

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<sup>5</sup> Dedi Dinarto, “#2019ChangePresident Movement a Game-Changer in Next Year's Indonesian Election?” Conversation, September 3, 2018 ~ <http://theconversation.com/2019change-president-movement-a-game-changer-in-next-years-indonesian-election-101587>.

<sup>6</sup> Author's confidential interviews with #2019GantiPresident activists, Surabaya, September 5 and 10, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Author's interview with Denie Amiruddin, secretary of the #2019GantiPresiden campaign, Pontianak, November 28, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Author's interview with Mira Maimunah, coordinator of the #2019GantiPresident campaign in Surabaya, who was also an Indonesian National Parliament (DPR) candidate from PAN, Surabaya, December 27, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Irman G. Lanti, Akim Ebih, and Windy Dermawan, “Examining the Growth of Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia: The Case of West Java,” S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Working Paper, no. 322, July 18, 2019 ~ <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/idss/examining-the-growth-of-islamic-conservatism-in-indonesia-the-case-of-west-java>; and Dedi Dinarto, “Indonesian Presidential Election 2019—Jokowi's Chances in Post-Kalla South Sulawesi,” RSIS, RSIS Commentary, no. 19024, February 15, 2019 ~ <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/idss/examining-the-growth-of-islamic-conservatism-in-indonesia-the-case-of-west-java>.

Indonesian Islamic organization, with approximately 60 million followers, and a crucial voting bloc for Jokowi's re-election. Jokowi nominated senior cleric Ma'ruf Amin—supreme leader of NU as well as chairman of the Indonesian Ulama Council, the nation's official body for Islamic affairs—as his vice presidential running mate. This decision attracted a lot of criticism from human rights activists and advocates for religious minorities. Amin was thought to have supported several clerical opinions (*fatwa*) that condemn Muslim minorities, such as liberal Muslims and the Ahmadis, along with the Indonesian LGBTQ community.<sup>10</sup> These fatwas were often used as justifications by hard-line groups such as FPI whenever they launched violent attacks against members of these minority groups, which has occurred frequently within the past decade.<sup>11</sup>

Despite such misgivings, Jokowi kept Amin as his running mate. Given that the majority of NU members resided in East and Central Java, with a combined voter bloc of 52 million, it was crucial for his campaign to win support in these two provinces. After Amin's vice presidential nomination was announced, NU threw its full support behind Jokowi. In particular Ansor—NU's youth wing—actively campaigned for his re-election. NU-affiliated clerics and activists attacked Prabowo for his alliance with hard-line Islamist groups, arguing that if he won, Prabowo would convert Indonesia from a secular nationalist state into a caliphate-ruled Islamic state as advocated by Islamist groups such as HTI.<sup>12</sup> These rumors also mobilized voters in provinces such as Bali, North Sulawesi, East Nusa Tenggara, and Papua, where non-Muslims constitute the majority of the population.<sup>13</sup>

Religious-based polarization conducted by both sides during their campaigns helped boost total voter turnout to 154 million—approximately 80% of the electorate. This was an 11% increase from the 2014 election.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "Indonesia's Vice Presidential Candidate Has Anti-rights Record," Human Rights Watch, August 10, 2018 ~ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/08/10/indonesia-vice-presidential-candidate-has-anti-rights-record>.

<sup>11</sup> "In Religion's Name: Abuses against Religious Minorities in Indonesia," Human Rights Watch, February 28, 2013 ~ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/02/28/religions-name/abuses-against-religious-minorities-indonesia>.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Aspinall, "Indonesia's Election and the Return of Ideological Competition," New Mandala, April 22, 2019 ~ <https://www.newmandala.org/indonesias-election-and-the-return-of-ideological-competition>.

<sup>13</sup> Ary Hermawan, "Choose Freedom over Fear: Illiberal Pluralism Is Threatening Our Democracy," *Jakarta Post*, July 4, 2019 ~ <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2019/07/04/choose-freedom-over-fear-illiberal-pluralism-is-a-threat-to-our-democracy.html>.

<sup>14</sup> "Indonesia Sees Record Turnout in Historic Election, Braces for Fallout," *Jakarta Globe*, April 17, 2019 ~ <https://jakartaglobe.id/context/indonesia-sees-record-turnout-in-historic-election-braces-for-fallout>.

In the end, Jokowi managed to beat Prabowo 55.5% to 44.5%.<sup>15</sup> The election, however, revealed a deeply divided electorate that crossed geographic, ethnic, and religious lines. Jokowi won easily in the NU-majority provinces of East Java and Central Java, as well as in non-Muslim-majority provinces. On the other hand, Prabowo scored decisive victories in provinces such as West Java, Aceh, West Sumatra, South Sumatra, and South Sulawesi, where Islamic conservatism increasingly dominates local politics.<sup>16</sup>

Instead of conceding the election when the final results were announced on May 22, Prabowo decided to legally challenge it at the Indonesian Constitutional Court. On the same day, thousands of Prabowo's supporters staged a protest in Central Jakarta, where clashes with the police resulted in the deaths of nine people and wounded hundreds more. While a report on the cause of the protest is still pending due to an ongoing investigation, credible sources alleged that the protest was instigated by children of the late Indonesian dictator Suharto and a number of retired military officers with close connections to Prabowo.<sup>17</sup> This suggests that Prabowo and his associates have little regard for democratic institutions and procedures.

Jokowi and his administration's security apparatus responded with tough measures against the alleged perpetrators of the riots. The ranks of those arrested included opposition figures close to Prabowo such as retired Major General Kivlan Zen.<sup>18</sup> Earlier in the year, security officials had charged other Jokowi critics—such as singer Ahmad Dhani and scholars Rocky Gerung and Robertus Robet—with offenses ranging from violating Indonesia's strict internet defamation law to committing religious blasphemy.<sup>19</sup> These arrests were combined with measures directed against organizations such as HTI (which was banned in 2017) and #2019ChangePresident (in which rallies were forcefully disbanded by the police). Some analysts have accused Jokowi of using strong-armed tactics to

<sup>15</sup> "It's Over: Jokowi Wins," *Jakarta Post*, May 22, 2019 ~ <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2019/05/21/its-over-jokowi-wins.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Tom Pepinsky, "Religion, Ethnicity, and Indonesia's 2019 Presidential Election," *New Mandala*, May 28, 2019 ~ <https://www.newmandala.org/religion-ethnicity-and-indonesias-2019-presidential-election>.

<sup>17</sup> "Powerful Ring Behind May Jakarta Riots," *Asia Sentinel*, June 13, 2019 ~ <https://www.asiasentinel.com/politics/powerful-ring-behind-may-jakarta-riots>.

<sup>18</sup> "Kivlan Zen Named Suspect in Treason Case," *Jakarta Post*, May 28, 2019 ~ <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2019/05/28/kivlan-zen-named-suspect-in-treason-case.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Kate Lamb, "Senior Amnesty Figure Arrested in Indonesia for Singing Famous Protest Song," *Guardian*, March 7, 2019 ~ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/07/senior-amnesty-figure-arrested-in-indonesia-for-singing-famous-protest-song>; and "Lecturer Accused of Blasphemy Grilled for Five Hours over the Word 'Fiction,'" *Jakarta Post*, February 3, 2019 ~ <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2019/02/03/lecturer-accused-of-blasphemy-grilled-for-five-hours-over-the-word-fiction.html>.

deal with criticisms against his administration—actions that in the long run could weaken and deconsolidate Indonesia’s two-decade old democracy.<sup>20</sup>

Prabowo’s legal challenge against the election was dismissed by the Constitutional Court on June 27, 2019, which effectively ended his bid to challenge the election results. In the meantime, political support for Jokowi in the People’s Representative Council of Indonesia (DPR) has significantly increased. Two-thirds of the newly elected members are controlled by parties aligned with his coalition.<sup>21</sup> This leaves little space for remaining opposition parties such as the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra), PKS, PAN, and the Democratic Party of former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to have a meaningful voice in the new parliament.

### *The Twin Threats against Indonesian Democracy*

After he lost the court battle, Prabowo decided to make another opportunistic turn. Facing the prospect of leading a cash-strapped opposition party that has lost two consecutive presidential contests, he held talks with both Jokowi and Megawati Sukarnoputri—leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), the president’s primary backer—to see whether they can include his Gerindra Party in the president’s new cabinet. Megawati reciprocated Prabowo’s move by asking Gerindra to support a series of constitutional amendments offered by her party in exchange for a number of key leadership positions in the new parliament.<sup>22</sup>

While the specific language of the amendments remains unknown at the time of writing, a key provision would restore the power of the now dormant People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR) over the president by requiring him to submit an accountability report at the conclusion of his term. If passed, this provision would abolish direct presidential election—which has been institutionalized within Indonesia’s democratic system since 2004—in

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<sup>20</sup> Tom Power, “Jokowi’s Authoritarian Turn and Indonesia’s Democratic Decline,” *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 54, no. 3 (2018): 307–38; and Marcus Mietzner, “Fighting Illiberalism with Illiberalism: Islamist Populism and Democratic Deconsolidation in Indonesia,” *Pacific Affairs* 91, no. 2 (2018): 261–82.

<sup>21</sup> Alexander R. Arifianto, “2019 Indonesian Presidential and Legislative Elections—The New Indonesian Parliament: Who Won and What It Means,” RSIS, RSIS Commentary, no. 19088, May 7, 2019 ≈ <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/2019-indonesian-presidential-and-legislative-elections-the-new-indonesian-parliament-who-won-and-what-it-means>.

<sup>22</sup> “Transaksi politik paket pimpinan MPR and amendemen UUD 1945 ala PDI-P” [Transactional Politics for MPR’s Leadership and PDI-P’s Proposal for the 1945 Indonesian Constitution Amendment], Tirta.ID, August 13, 2019 ≈ <https://tirta.id/transaksi-politik-paket-pimpinan-mpr-amandemen-uud-45-ala-pdip-egac>.

favor of the appointment of a president by the MPR, as was the case during the Sukarno and Suharto presidencies. The amendments reportedly are receiving widespread support among the parties represented in the parliament.<sup>23</sup> This is partially due to opportunistic reasons and partially due to the widespread dissatisfaction with the direct presidential election system among politicians and civil society leaders, many of whom consider it to be too divisive, too expensive, and unhelpful to improving the economic well-being of ordinary Indonesians.<sup>24</sup>

### *Conclusion and Implications*

As Indonesia concludes this election year, its two-decade-old democracy faces a serious threat from two different groups. The first threat comes from entrenched, Jakarta-based elite, who were largely aligned with Jokowi during his re-election battle but have never fully accepted him as a legitimate democratically elected leader who managed to win the hearts of tens of millions of Indonesians with his populist economic development policies.<sup>25</sup> The constitutional amendments proposed by Megawati—apparently backed by Prabowo and other senior political figures—are the latest move by this elite to undermine Indonesian democracy.

The second threat comes from the emerging identity politics and polarization that have developed within the past year between conservative Islamists on one side, and moderate Muslims and secular nationalist supporters of Jokowi on the other, which have left their mark on Indonesian democracy. Conservative Islamist leaders who are part of the 212 Alumni movement have pledged to continue their opposition to Jokowi irrespective of Prabowo's decision to reconcile with the president.<sup>26</sup> With Prabowo trying to make a political pact with Jokowi and Megawati, these Islamists currently do not have any patron within the ranks of the Jakarta elite to support their ambition to turn Indonesia into an Islamic state.

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<sup>23</sup> Giri Ahmad Taufik, "Democracy in Retreat as Push for a Fifth Amendment Gets Momentum," University of Melbourne, Indonesia at Melbourne (blog), August 27, 2019 ≈ <https://indonesiatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/democracy-in-retreat-as-push-for-fifth-amendment-gains-momentum>.

<sup>24</sup> Author's interviews with Hari Puteri Lestari, a member of the East Java provincial parliament from the PDI-P, Surabaya, September 6, 2019, and Nadjib Hamid, vice chairman of Muhammadiyah in East Java, Surabaya, August 29, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Eve Warburton, "Jokowi and the New Developmentalism," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 52, no. 3 (2016): 297–320.

<sup>26</sup> "Islamist Group PA 212 Drops Support for Prabowo after His Reconciliation Meeting with Jokowi," Coconuts Jakarta, July 15, 2019 ≈ <https://coconuts.co/jakarta/news/islamist-group-pa-212-drops-support-for-prabowo-after-his-reconciliation-meeting-with-jokowi>.

However, several experts are now predicting that some 212 Alumni activists might participate as candidates in the 2020 Indonesian provincial and regional executive elections (*pilkada*), and could even win some contests in regions dominated by conservative Islamists.<sup>27</sup> If 212 Alumni candidates perform well in these regions in 2020, they might inspire a number of presidential aspirants—such as Jakarta governor Anies Baswedan and West Java governor Ridwan Kamil—to embrace the movement as allies in their quest to be Indonesia’s next president in 2024. Of course, this assumes the constitutional amendments proposed by the PDI-P and backed by other political parties are not passed by the DPR.

Having successfully won a second—and final—presidential term, Jokowi now faces the most serious challenges to his presidency. They come from two distinct groups: the Jakarta elite who had largely supported his re-election campaign, and conservative Islamists who sought to undermine him during the campaign. As discussed above, in different ways, both groups are threatening the future of Indonesia’s democracy, once considered as a beacon for other Southeast Asian countries as well as for other Muslim-majority nations. How Jokowi deals with these challenges likely will define his legacy as Indonesia’s seventh president. Depending on the outcome, he will be remembered either as the savior of Indonesian democracy or as the person responsible for its rollback and perhaps end. ◆

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<sup>27</sup> Sandra Hamid, “The Future of Indonesian Politics: Analyzing the Outcome and Implications of the 2019 Elections” (lecture at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, July 11, 2019).

## Islam and Indonesia's 2019 Presidential Election

*Thomas Pepinsky*

Indonesia's 2019 presidential election pitted incumbent president Joko Widodo (Jokowi) against challenger Prabowo Subianto in a repeat of the 2014 presidential contest. As in 2014, both Jokowi and Prabowo campaigned on nationalist platforms that defended Indonesia's multireligious national ideology of Pancasila and sought to win votes from all Indonesians.<sup>1</sup> But even more so than in 2014, the 2019 campaign saw growing differences between Islamist and pluralist camps in Indonesian politics. Jokowi's victory is a reassuring sign for pluralists concerned about rising Islamist forces in Indonesian politics, although the selection of the influential cleric Ma'ruf Amin as his vice president signals that Islam will continue to play an important role in Jokowi's second term in office.

Digging deeper into the 2019 presidential election results reveals important trends in religion and politics in Indonesia. The most important of these has been a widening electoral cleavage based on religious identity rather than ideology. This cleavage, however, interacts with other types of political cleavages in this diverse multiethnic democracy. Electoral and demographic data from the most recent election helps reveal the contours of this emerging religious cleavage structure and provides clues about its implications going forward. Before turning to this data, I begin with a brief overview of religion, ideology, and partisanship in contemporary Indonesia.

### *Islamists, Pluralists, and Party Ideology in Contemporary Indonesia*

One central cleavage in Indonesian politics is between Islamists and non-Islamists. Terminology is important here: by "Islamist" I mean parties, organizations, or movements that explicitly seek to align national politics with Islamic principles.<sup>2</sup> Non-Islamists, then, are a broad category that includes religious Muslims who are comfortable with Indonesia's multireligious constitution, Muslims who hold a more liberal or pluralist

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<sup>1</sup> Moch Nur Ichwan, "Secularism, Islam and Pancasila: Political Debates on the Basis of the State in Indonesia," Nanzan Center for Asia-Pacific Studies, Bulletin, no. 6, June 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Pepinsky, "Voting for Islam: Ideologies, Brands, and Demographics," in *Oxford Handbook on Politics in Muslim Societies*, ed. Melani Cammett and Pauline Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming), 2.

political orientation, secular nationalists for whom religion is a private matter, non-Muslims, and others. Accordingly, discussions of the Islamist cleavage vary in their understanding of what its true “other” is: nationalism, pluralism, liberalism, secularism, or something else altogether. In truth, the opposite of Islamism in Indonesia is all these to some degree.

Plainly, not all Muslims are Islamists. Indonesia’s population is nearly 90% Muslim, yet the Indonesian constitution grants no special rights to Islam over other religions and instead embraces a multireligious ideology known as Pancasila (“Five Principles”), which explicitly endorses the belief in God without using the word “Allah.” Given Indonesia’s demographics, this is only possible because a substantial number of Muslims do not support Islamism. Instead, since democratization in 1999, the country has seen vibrant contestation over the role of Islam in society as well as in public life, with Muslims on both sides. The largest political parties in Indonesia are either multireligious parties that are holdovers from the authoritarian regime of Suharto (the Golkar Party and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) or multireligious parties that were formed after democratization as personal vehicles for aspiring presidential candidates (such as the Democratic Party and the Great Indonesia Movement Party). Although Islamist parties exist, they struggle to earn the support that the pluralist or nationalist parties win.

Nevertheless, Islamist forces played an essential role in Indonesia’s 2019 presidential elections. Both Jokowi and Prabowo ran broadly nationalist campaigns designed to appeal to all voters, at least rhetorically. Each campaign earned endorsements from key Islamist parties: the United Development Party (PPP) endorsed Jokowi, and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and the smaller Crescent Star Party (PBB) endorsed Prabowo. And yet, Islamist elites and civil society organizations sided overwhelmingly with Prabowo and against Jokowi, particularly hard-line Islamist groups like the Islamic Defenders Front. As a result, at least in popular understanding, the 2019 election pitted one candidate with a pluralist, multireligious platform and constituency against one endorsed by Islamists.

This split between Jokowi and Prabowo, with Islamists lining up primarily behind the latter, mirrors the 2014 election campaign.<sup>3</sup> Cognizant of the mobilizing potential of religious identity, Jokowi and his campaign also courted influential conservative Muslims and Islamists in the run-up

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<sup>3</sup> Marcus Mietzner, *Money, Power, and Ideology: Political Parties in Post-authoritarian Indonesia* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2013), 130.

to the 2019 election.<sup>4</sup> This culminated in the selection of Ma'ruf Amin, chairman of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and former head of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, the world's largest Muslim organization), as Jokowi's running mate. This gave the ticket unimpeachable Muslim credentials and likely inoculated Jokowi against the worst of the rumors—which had circulated widely in the run-up to the 2014 election—that he was secretly Christian or a threat to Muslims.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, Indonesian politics has historically been characterized by other cleavages besides religion. These include class, urban versus rural, religious orientation (modernist versus traditionalist Muslim), ethnicity, and Java versus outer island. Although authors such as Andreas Ufen have outlined the various ways that these kinds of cleavages have shaped partisan competition, the main story of democratic Indonesia has been a gradual process of partisan de-alignment and the rise of a more personalist, clientelist party system.<sup>6</sup> It is not surprising, then, that Jokowi and Prabowo were endorsed by both Islamist and non-Islamist parties.

### *Islam and Support for Jokowi*

To answer the question of how these broad coalitions shaped electoral behavior, I have combined electoral returns from the 2019 presidential election with demographic data from the 2010 Indonesian census provided by the Minnesota Population Center in 2018.<sup>7</sup> Ideally, this analysis would use individual-level data that records both a respondent's characteristics and vote choice, but for obvious reasons this is not possible in a democracy. However, it is still possible to investigate the aggregate correlations among various demographic variables and the average vote share for Jokowi and Prabowo, and then use these to infer how demographic factors—such as religion—shaped electoral outcomes.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas P. Power, "Jokowi's Authoritarian Turn and Indonesia's Democratic Decline," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 54, no. 3 (2018): 313–14.

<sup>5</sup> Adam Tyson and Budi Purnomo, "President Jokowi and the 2014 Obor Rakyat Controversy in Indonesia," *Critical Asian Studies* 49, no. 1 (2017): 117–36.

<sup>6</sup> Andreas Ufen, "Lipset and Rokkan in Southeast Asia: Indonesia in Comparative Perspective," in *Political Parties in Southeast Asia: Clientelism and Electoral Competition in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines*, ed. Andreas Ufen and Dirk Tomsa (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Diego Fossati, "Electoral Reform and Partisan Dealignment in Indonesia," *International Political Science Review* (2019) ~ <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512119826389>; and Mietzner, *Money, Power, and Ideology*.

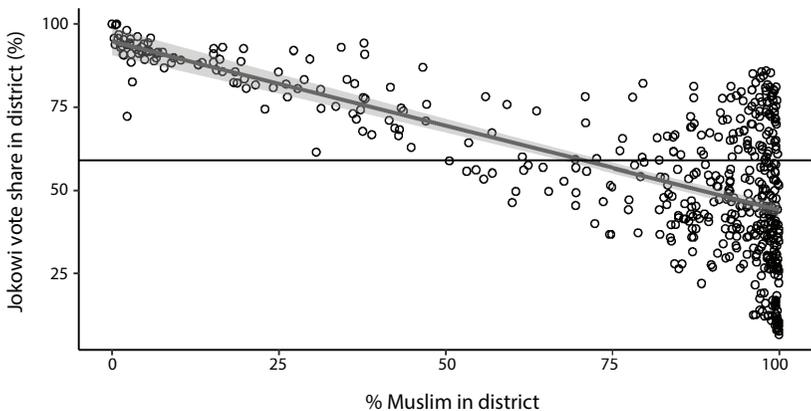
<sup>7</sup> For further information on this data, see Thomas Pepinsky, "Religion, Ethnicity, and Indonesia's 2019 Presidential Election," *New Mandala*, May 28, 2019 ~ <https://www.newmandala.org/religion-ethnicity-and-indonesias-2019-presidential-election>. I gratefully acknowledge Nick Kuipers and Seth Soderborg for collecting the electoral returns data, and Badan Pusat Statistik for making the census data available.

**Figure 1** shows the relationship between religion and support for Jokowi at the district level (roughly equivalent to a county in the United States). Each point is an administrative district, while the trend line is the line of best fit that describes the relationship between the two variables. This plot provides two critical pieces of information about religion and the 2019 presidential election. First, non-Muslims voted overwhelmingly against Prabowo. He did not win a majority of the votes in any district with more than a 50% share of non-Muslims. One cannot definitively conclude from this result that individual non-Muslims were more likely to vote against Prabowo,<sup>8</sup> but this conclusion is entirely consistent with the figure, and it is hard to invent a plausible alternative explanation for this strong pattern in the electoral results.

Second, there is extraordinarily wide variation in support for Jokowi versus Prabowo in Muslim-majority districts (which are the majority of all districts). In some Muslim-majority districts, Jokowi won more than 90% of all votes; in others, he won less than 10%. What, then, explains why some regions voted so strongly for Jokowi and others against him? **Figure 2** provides this answer by selecting only those districts with a

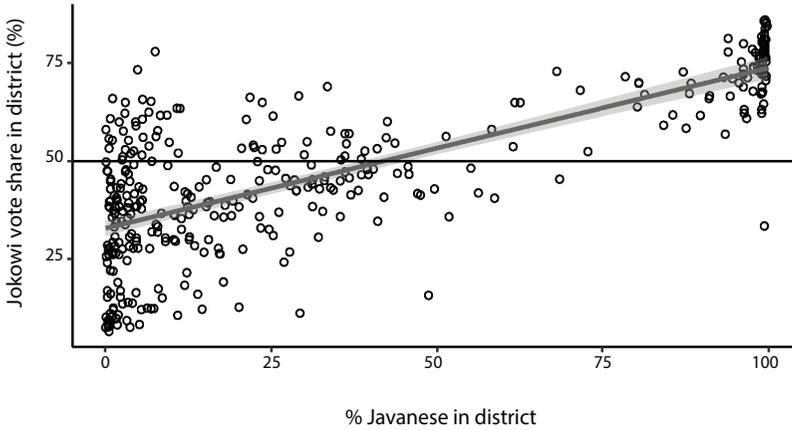
FIGURE 1

*Religion and Electoral Outcomes at the District Level*



<sup>8</sup> For an explanation of this “ecological fallacy,” see David A. Freedman, “Ecological Inference,” in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, ed. Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (Oxford: Pergamon, 2011).

FIGURE 2

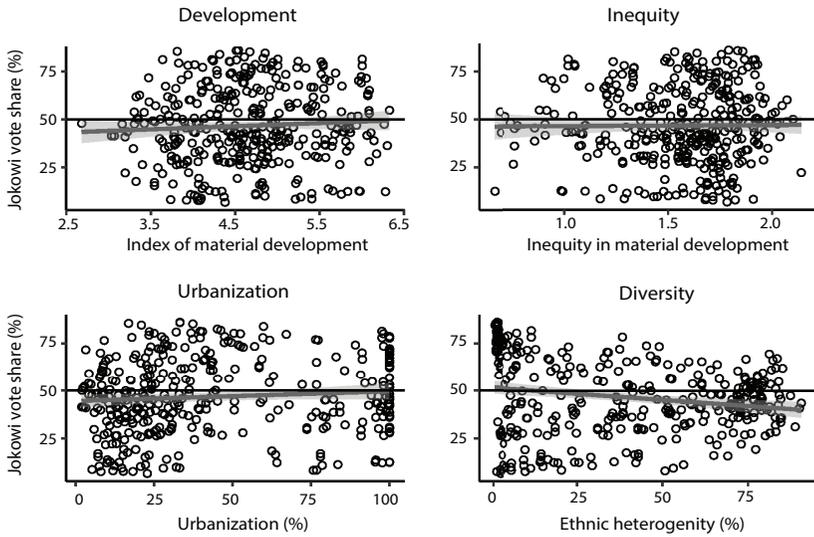
*Ethnicity and Electoral Outcomes at the District Level*

Muslim population share greater than 80%, and then comparing the ethnic Javanese population share with support for Jokowi. The pattern is clear: Javanese Muslim districts gave nearly all of their support to Jokowi, whereas non-Javanese Muslim districts, though more divided, were more likely to support Prabowo. Once again, one cannot infer that ethnic Javanese voters were more likely to vote for Jokowi, but these results are consistent with that conclusion.

Of course, there are other possible explanations for this correlation between Javanese ethnicity and support for Jokowi in majority-Muslim districts. **Figure 3** plots the relationships between four variables and Jokowi's vote share, again at the district level, and again only for districts with a Muslim population share greater than 80%. Development is calculated as the district-level average of a material development index (capturing factors such as electricity availability and sewage facilities), with higher values corresponding to higher levels of development. Inequality is calculated as the standard deviation of that material development index across households within that district, with higher values corresponding to districts with greater inequality. Urbanization is simply the average percentage of respondents who report living in an urban area per district. Diversity is an index of ethnic heterogeneity, with

FIGURE 3

*Four Variables and Electoral Outcomes at the District Level*



*Note:* The figure only includes districts that are more than 80% Muslim.

lower values indicating more homogeneous districts and higher values more heterogeneous districts.

None of these factors bear any systematic relationship to Jokowi’s vote share at the district level. The takeaway is that identity cleavages dominate: non-Muslim districts turned out strongly against Prabowo, as did Javanese-majority districts. Even though both candidates are ethnic Javanese politicians who campaigned on broad developmentalist platforms and claimed to represent Indonesians of all faiths, non-Muslims and Javanese Muslims secured Jokowi’s 2019 victory.

*Partisanship, Identity, and Electoral Cleavages: A Look Ahead*

These results raise important questions about partisan competition and religious identity in Indonesia. My earlier discussion of the politics of religious cleavages emphasizes ideology—a set of beliefs in the role that Islam ought to play in Indonesian politics and society—whereas the analysis of electoral data makes no reference to ideology and instead relies solely

on demographic characteristics. How can it be that there is such a strong relationship between identity and vote choice if this cleavage is, at root, about ideology?

A complete answer to this question is beyond the scope of this essay, but one possible interpretation of these findings is that Indonesian politics is gradually coalescing around a central cleavage structure at the national level that elides ideology and religious identity. Religion has become an increasingly potent mobilizational force in Indonesia, for both Muslims and non-Muslims, and religious elites seek to define themselves as the authoritative voice for their communities. Although religious ideology (Islamist versus religious nationalist versus secular nationalist) continues to animate debates in Indonesian politics and will prove decisive for some voters, when it comes to national elections pitting two candidates against one another, platforms coalesce around Islamist versus non-Islamist.<sup>9</sup> Under such a cleavage structure, non-Muslims will naturally vote against the Islamists, generating the religious demographic association just described.

Muslims, however, will be divided by ideology, ethnic background, religious “streams” (*aliran*), or any number of dimensions.<sup>10</sup> In the context of the 2019 election, which pitted two Javanese candidates against one another, it might be that Javanese ethnic identity functions as a proxy for a broader set of ideological concerns or identity-based claims. This explains the pattern in Figure 2, though it remains unclear exactly why this pattern exists. It could be that Javanese Muslims are on the whole more tolerant, syncretic, and inclusive than are Muslims of the outer islands.<sup>11</sup> If so, ethnicity is a proxy for ideology, broadly speaking. It could also be that ethnicity itself is the cleavage. In either case, however, the 2019 presidential election paints a picture of Indonesian national politics in which aggregate voting patterns can be ably described by two identity-based cleavages. One is transparently about religious affiliation, and the other is proxied by Javanese ethnicity but plausibly reflects a deeper ideological divide between Islamists and non-Islamists.

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<sup>9</sup> Diego Fossati and Eve Warburton, “Indonesia’s Political Parties and Minorities,” ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 37, July 9, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> For further discussion of religious streams, see Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

<sup>11</sup> See Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 12.

What are the implications for Islam and politics in Indonesia going forward? Most obviously, Vice President-elect Ma'ruf Amin brings the next Jokowi administration closer to MUI as well as to NU.<sup>12</sup> Jeremy Menchik argues that Amin and other conservative elites in NU and its more modernist counterpart Muhammadiyah are “contingent democrats” who “are also willing to ally with anti-democratic Islamists and autocrats on certain issues.”<sup>13</sup> Although he and many other observers of Islam and democracy are skeptical of the willingness (or ability) of Jokowi’s government to protect the rights of non-Muslims or other dissenting voices, a more optimistic interpretation is that by allying with a pluralist like Jokowi they are showing their willingness to work within democratic institutions. This is the most important space to watch over the coming months, as the Jokowi-Amin administration sets the tone for Indonesian democracy in an era of increasingly salient religious politics.

But what about Islam and electoral politics beyond the presidential elections? Prabowo will not be president, but most of the parties that were part of his coalition will have legislative representation. Indonesia has multimember districts in legislative elections, so voters for the People’s Representative Council (DPR) do not face the head-to-head competition characteristic of Indonesia’s presidential elections. In such elections, where the absence of first-past-the-post incentives discourages campaigns from organizing around a single cleavage, Islamist parties tend to fare worse. **Figure 4** compares district-level Muslim and Javanese population shares with the share of votes (not seats) won by the three largest Islamist parties running in legislative elections: PKS, PPP, and PBB. (Both PKS and PPP are represented in the 2019–24 DPR, but PBB failed to meet the 4% electoral threshold required for legislative parties under the 2017 election law.)

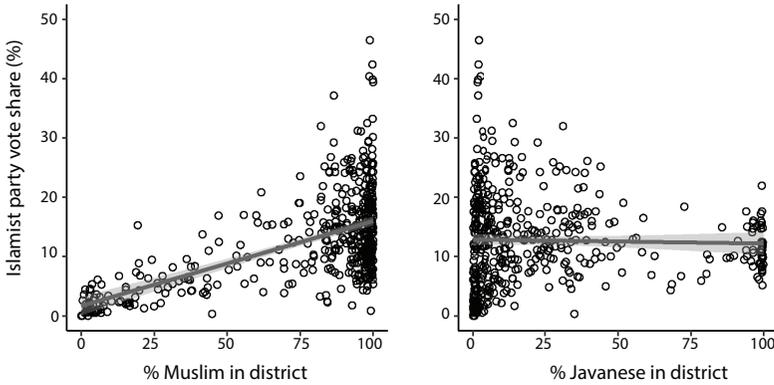
The first conclusion to draw from Figure 4 is that, unsurprisingly, Islamist parties only won a significant percentage of votes for legislative candidates in districts with large Muslim populations. More importantly, however, Islamists never won a large vote share in Javanese-majority districts, and in no case were they able to win the majority of seats in any district (recalling that the data points here correspond not to electoral districts but to administrative districts).

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<sup>12</sup> On the role of NU in Jokowi’s 2019 victory, see Naila Shofia and Thomas Pepinsky, “Measuring the ‘NU Effect’ in Indonesia’s Election,” *New Mandala*, July 1, 2019 ~ <https://www.newmandala.org/measuring-the-nu-effect-in-indonesias-election>.

<sup>13</sup> Jeremy Menchik, “Moderate Muslims and Democratic Breakdown in Indonesia,” *Asian Studies Review* 43, no. 3 (2019): 428. See also Eva Bellin, “Contingent Democrats: Industrialists, Labor and Democratization in Late-Developing Countries,” *World Politics* 52, no. 2 (2000): 175–205.

FIGURE 4

*Legislative Votes for Islamic Parties*

Altogether, these findings highlight the conundrum of Islam and Indonesian politics. There is abundant evidence of a growing Islamist cleavage in Indonesia, but little evidence that Islamist political parties are the central vehicle for Islamist political mobilization. Instead, in Indonesia's increasingly clientelist democracy, mobilization takes place through social movements and protest, strategic coalition-making, elite endorsements, and the capture of public and quasi-public institutions such as MUI.<sup>14</sup> Although Islamists are unlikely to ever win a majority of legislative seats or run a successful presidential campaign, their influence on contemporary Indonesian democracy will become increasingly evident in Jokowi's new administration. ◆

<sup>14</sup> For further discussion of Indonesia's clientelist democracy, see Edward Aspinall and Ward Berenschot, *Democracy for Sale: Elections, Clientelism, and the State in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019).

## Civil-Military Relations under Jokowi: Between Military Corporate Interests and Presidential Handholding

*Evan A. Laksmana*

This essay examines the disposition of civil-military relations under President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo. It makes three arguments. First, since assuming office in 2014, Jokowi has tended to adopt a hands-off approach in the day-to-day management of military affairs and defense policy. He has relied on a group of retired generals as his intermediary with the Indonesian military (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, or TNI). He also gave the TNI organizational autonomy and even encouraged its involvement in nonmilitary domains, from counterterrorism to food-sufficiency programs. Civil-military relations under Jokowi’s first term were basically on autopilot.

Second, Jokowi’s management of the TNI is not unique. All post-Suharto presidents have had to deal with the same dilemma: how to carefully and closely manage the military without threatening its corporate interests. I develop a typology of the responses to this dilemma to classify and compare Jokowi’s civil-military relations with other post-Suharto presidents: B.J. Habibie (1998–99), Abdurrahman Wahid (1999–2001), Megawati Sukarnoputri (2001–4), and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004–14). The typology shows that Jokowi’s passive management of the TNI, while protecting the military’s corporate interests, is similar to Sukarnoputri’s approach. The typology also serves as an analytical baseline to unpack civil-military relations under Jokowi’s first term.

Third, civil-military relations during Jokowi’s second term are unlikely to be fundamentally different from his first. As far as civil-military relations are concerned, the 2019 elections did not change the fact that Jokowi is a president without his own political party and that he needs the support of the broader security establishment—the TNI and the Indonesian National Police (POLRI)—to execute his agenda. If anything, the polarized presidential campaign against retired general Prabowo Subianto likely will push Jokowi to further rely on the TNI in governance.

The first section compares how different post-Suharto presidents managed civil-military relations. The subsequent section then examines

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civil-military relations during Jokowi's first term. The essay concludes by looking ahead to Jokowi's second term and assessing the broader implications for Indonesia's democratic trajectory in the coming years.

### *Comparing Post-Suharto Civil-Military Relations*

Two variables are helpful in classifying civil-military relations in post-authoritarian Indonesia. The first is presidential handholding: the degree to which the chief executive (i.e., the president) is involved in managing the military and formulating national defense policies.<sup>1</sup> Depending on individual traits (e.g., political support or professional background) and political authority, the president may be more or less willing and able to manage the military on a day-to-day basis. How closely the president manages the military shapes the extent to which the organization can set its own policies and how far it is willing to expand its political position.

The second variable is whether the military perceives the presidential handholding to be detrimental or beneficial to its corporate interests.<sup>2</sup> Different militaries have different corporate interests, ranging from budgetary autonomy to societal prestige. How the military defines its corporate interests—and the conditions under which they are met or challenged—determines whether civil-military relations will be stable or conflictual. If the military considers the presidential handholding to be detrimental to its corporate interests, it might play the role of political spoiler, whether through disrupting the president's agenda or, at the extreme, launching a coup. But if the military considers the presidential handholding to be beneficial, it is likely to be a partner or supporter of the president.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 1** illustrates how these variables interact to depict a descriptive typology of Indonesia's post-Suharto presidents and civil-military relations. These two variables are central to the persistent dilemma of post-authoritarian civil-military relations in Indonesia: how to closely

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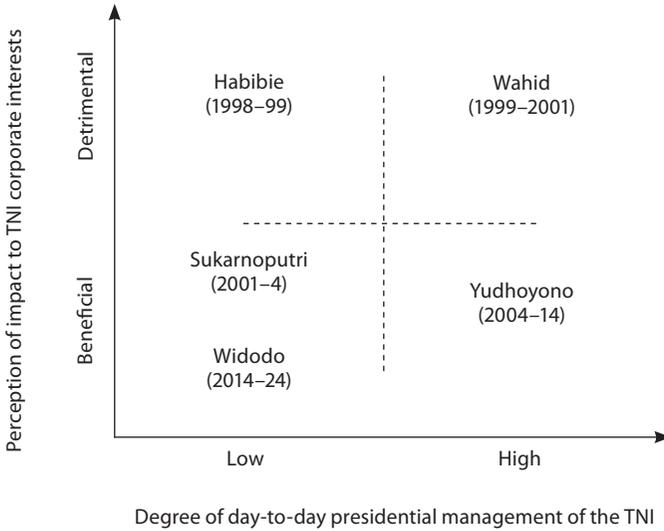
<sup>1</sup> See Risa A. Brooks, "Integrating the Civil–Military Relations Subfield," *Annual Review of Political Science* 22 (2019): 379–98; and Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> See Samuel E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002); and Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977).

<sup>3</sup> For a critique of the corporate interest argument, see Terrence Lee, "The Military's Corporate Interests: The Main Reason for Intervention in Indonesia and the Philippines?" *Armed Forces and Society* 34, no. 3 (2008): 491–502. On the modes of military support of the president, see Aurel Croissant, *Civil-Military Relations in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 5.

FIGURE 1

*Post-Suharto Presidents and Civil-Military Relations*



manage the TNI without risking political backlash. On the presidents’ side, each has a different political will and personal authority to closely manage the TNI. On the TNI’s side, its most salient corporate interests can be categorized as either internal or external. The internal interests are personnel promotion and management, operational planning, the deployment and employment of forces, organizational structure, and doctrinal development, while the external ones are its bureaucratic standing vis-à-vis the police and other coercive institutions, domestic stability, and the regional strategic environment.

In the upper-left quadrant is Habibie. During his short presidency as Suharto’s successor, he let go of East Timor, decentralized the country, amended the constitution, and laid the groundwork to depoliticize the military. His government also introduced free and fair general elections and expanded press freedom and civil liberties. While these issues were high on the list of the military’s corporate interests, Habibie struck a deal with the military under General Wiranto. The deal allowed the military to formulate its own reform policies in return for support of Habibie’s policies

and political position.<sup>4</sup> Habibie, lacking his own political base, needed the military to stabilize his rule and prevent rogue officers from undermining his policies, while the military needed the president's goodwill, given his constitutional powers and ability to distribute resources and set the political agenda.<sup>5</sup> Although some of his policies might have been detrimental to the TNI's corporate interests, the president was not directly involved in managing the TNI. Consequently, there were no major civil-military crises during Habibie's tenure.

In the upper-right quadrant is Wahid. TNI leaders considered his meddling in officer appointments, encouragement of intra-military factionalism, and use of the police to counterbalance the military as detrimental to their corporate interests.<sup>6</sup> Wahid also pushed for difficult military reform policies, such as abolishing the territorial command structure, and he excluded the TNI from the Aceh conflict's resolution. Rather than striking a grand bargain like Habibie, Wahid believed he had a strong mandate and personal authority to micromanage the military. He was, after all, the leader of Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, Nahdlatul Ulama, and the first democratically elected post-Suharto president. But as the country plunged from one political crisis to another, the TNI leaders decided that the state of civil-military relations was unsustainable and facilitated Wahid's impeachment in 2001.

In the lower-right quadrant is Yudhoyono, a retired general and the first popularly elected president. Like Wahid, he had a hands-on approach to the TNI. But Yudhoyono's personal military background and strong network within the TNI gave him an authority that Wahid did not have. He appointed his former Military Academy classmates, former aides-de-camp and subordinates, and family members to senior TNI positions. He ended the Aceh conflict in 2006 and elevated external engagement duties (from defense diplomacy to peacekeeping operations) as important professional career markers. The best graduating officers from the Military Academy and Command and General Staff Colleges, as well as those coming from the

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<sup>4</sup> See details in Yuddy Chrisnandi, *Reformasi TNI: Perspektif baru hubungan sipil-militer di Indonesia* [TNI Reform: A New Perspective of Civil-Military Relations in Indonesia] (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2005), 97.

<sup>5</sup> See Marcus Mietzner, *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Elite Conflict, Nationalism, and Institutional Resistance* (Washington, D.C.: East-West Center, 2006), 10.

<sup>6</sup> See details in Tatik S. Hafidz, *Fading Away? The Political Role of the Army in Indonesia's Transition to Democracy 1998–2001* (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2006)

army's combat-ready Strategic Reserve Command, were also promoted to key positions.<sup>7</sup>

Realizing that such an interventionist approach might backfire, Yudhoyono was careful to protect the military's broader interests. He more than doubled the defense budget, positioned hundreds of senior officers into civilian ministries and agencies, expanded the territorial command structure, and created a multi-decade modernization plan under the Minimum Essential Force blueprint. The TNI's nonmilitary roles, from counterterrorism to civic action, also expanded under Yudhoyono. Thus, even though he intervened in internal TNI policies like Wahid did, he successfully managed the military leadership because of his ability to build a strong base within the TNI and protect the organization's broader corporate interests.

Finally, in the lower-left quadrant is Sukarnoputri, Wahid's vice president and successor. As she relied on the backing of the TNI and retired senior generals within her party, the Indonesian Democratic Party for Struggle (PDI-P), she was generally hands-off in her management of the military.<sup>8</sup> As an illustration, she let military hard-liners drive policymaking in the Aceh conflict, which led to the re-imposition of martial law and the execution of the TNI's largest counterinsurgency operation. Many military reform policies, such as the abolishment of the territorial command structure, were effectively on hold during her tenure. In addition, considering her precarious relationship with the civilian elite, she granted greater concessions to the TNI by increasing its autonomy and influence in national decision-making processes.

This simple typology helps us locate Jokowi's civil-military relations within Indonesia's broader post-authoritarian context. As will be discussed in the next section, Jokowi's approach closely tracks Sukarnoputri's. However, he was more politically underwhelming in his first term, having never held a national political office nor led his own party. Jokowi therefore needed to protect the TNI's corporate interests even more than Sukarnoputri did.

### *Civil-Military Relations during Jokowi's First Term*

In 2014, Jokowi came into office without the political capital, interest, or experience to closely manage the military. A former furniture

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<sup>7</sup> For further details, see Jun Honna, "Civil-Military Relations in an Emerging State: A Perspective from Indonesia's Democratic Consolidation," in *Emerging States at Crossroads*, ed. K. Tsunekawa and Y. Todo (Singapore: Springer, 2019), 255–70.

<sup>8</sup> See Sukardi Rinakit, *The Indonesian Military after the New Order* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2005).

businessman who became the mayor of Surakarta and governor of Jakarta, Jokowi neither held a national position nor hailed from the military-backed Suharto establishment. While a member of the PDI-P, he never became its leader. Sukarnoputri and her party stalwarts called the shots.

Without his own strong political machine and network, and having to balance a fragile coalition of parties, Jokowi relied on a small group of close friends and advisers. These included prominent retired generals such as Ryamizard Ryacudu, Luhut Pandjaitan, and A.M. Hendropriyono.<sup>9</sup> The circle of retirees grew as Jokowi increasingly needed an intermediary to manage the TNI. By the end of his first term, he had appointed more retired generals: Wiranto (coordinating minister for political, legal, and security affairs), Moeldoko (chief of staff), and Agum Gumelar (to the Presidential Advisory Board). These men not only helped Jokowi manage the TNI, but they also ensured that he did not create policies that were detrimental to the TNI's interests. They believed that Jokowi should not spend political capital on controversial military reform policies when economic development and infrastructure were the centerpieces of his re-election campaign. The military, after all, was one of the most popular institutions in the country by the early 2010s and its territorial command structure parallels the civilian government down to the village level. The TNI's support is thus important for the success of Jokowi's agenda.

As Jokowi was hands-off in his management of the military, the TNI managed its own affairs and pushed the boundaries of civil-military relations. His first two commanders—Generals Moeldoko and Gatot Nurmantyo—were publicly outspoken on a wide range of issues, from criticizing the government's approach to the South China Sea to promoting fearmongering campaigns on “Communist revival” and “proxy warfare.” Many also criticized Nurmantyo for his political rhetoric and behavior, such as publicly visiting prominent Islamic clerics, making accusations against the police, and preparing a presidential exploratory committee immediately upon retirement.

Jokowi's relationship with the TNI improved only after Air Chief Marshal Hadi Tjahjanto became TNI commander in late 2017.<sup>10</sup> The president generally chose not to publicly rein in senior officers when they

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<sup>9</sup> Jokowi installed Ryacudu as defense minister and Pandjaitan as chief of staff and then as coordinating minister for maritime affairs. Hendropriyono became an informal adviser.

<sup>10</sup> Jokowi had been close with Tjahjanto since their days in Central Java, when Jokowi was the mayor of Surakarta and Tjahjanto was the commander of the local air force base.

made controversial statements or policies; instead, he protected the TNI's corporate interests. Jokowi almost doubled the defense budget from roughly \$5.7 billion in 2014 to \$8.9 billion in 2020, and allowed the TNI to expand its structure across Indonesia. He also further encouraged the TNI to expand its nonmilitary activities. Research by the Jakarta-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies shows that between 2014 and 2017, the TNI and Ministry of Defense signed 133 agreements and memoranda with ministries, social organizations, and universities on various programs ranging from basic military training to rural development projects. Finally, Jokowi issued a presidential regulation after the election that would allow active-duty officers to be assigned to various civilian agencies and ministries to accommodate hundreds of officers experiencing promotional logjams within the TNI.

Altogether, these developments suggest that civil-military relations were on autopilot without Jokowi's personal and day-to-day involvement. Meanwhile, the TNI expanded its political and bureaucratic space. Jokowi's presidential handholding, or lack thereof, has thus been beneficial to the military's corporate interests. It should be noted, however, that intra-organizational pressures—including hundreds of “jobless” officers and promotional logjams within the Army—and bureaucratic rivalries (with the police in particular) largely explain the military's regressive behavior, rather than a grand design to bring back authoritarian rule.<sup>11</sup>

### *What to Expect in Jokowi's Second Term*

Jokowi may have resoundingly defeated Prabowo this year by more than seventeen million votes, but his underwhelming political authority has not changed. He remains without a political party of his own. If anything, the expansion of his party coalition and PDI-P's victory in the legislative elections mean that he has to accommodate more interests and agendas beyond his own. The polarized political landscape surrounding the downfall of Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahja Purnama led Jokowi to protect his right flank during the campaign. He consequently relied on more retired

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<sup>11</sup> “Jobless officers” were those whose promotions were placed on temporary hold as there were no open postings or billets within the TNI structure for their qualifications or rank. On how intra-organizational pressures shape civil-military relations under Yudhoyono and Jokowi, see Evan A. Laksmana, “Reshuffling the Deck? Military Corporatism, Promotional Logjams and Post-Authoritarian Civil-Military Relations in Indonesia,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 49, no. 5 (2019): 806–36.

officers to counter Prabowo's team, which was also backed by a group of retired officers (on top of hard-line Islamists).<sup>12</sup>

In terms of policy, Jokowi will continue his developmentalist agenda. In a July 2019 speech, he declared that his second term will focus on infrastructure, human capital, foreign investment, bureaucratic reform, and budget management.<sup>13</sup> He did not mention the global maritime fulcrum doctrine that was signature to his first term. It is unlikely then that military reform will be high on Jokowi's second-term agenda.

At a more personal level, Jokowi is unlikely to suddenly be more invested in, or capable of, managing the daily operations of the TNI. While increasingly cognizant of the broader implications of letting the TNI push the boundaries of civil-military relations, he remains most invested in his domestic development agenda. More retired generals are likely to play a role as part of his inner circle and administration. Jokowi's relatively good relationship with Tjahjanto is also expected to continue, though he is set to retire in 2021. Analysts predict that current chief of staff of the Indonesian Army, General Andika Perkasa—Hendropriyono's son-in-law and Jokowi's former bodyguard—is a serious contender to replace Tjahjanto.<sup>14</sup>

Overall, Jokowi will continue to let the military formulate its own policies and rely on retired generals as his advisers and intermediaries. The military for its part will continue its current path of organizational autonomy and political expansion. From the perspective of Indonesia's democratic trajectory, such developments are not encouraging. On the one hand, the military's organizational autonomy and expansion without direct presidential supervision could be detrimental to the quality of Indonesia's democracy. Given the history of military domination in Indonesia and the sacrifices made during the democratic transition, ensuring democratic civilian control over the military should be a constant priority for any administration. On the other hand, a stable civil-military relationship—even one built on protecting the TNI's corporate interests—helps the president focus on his broader development agenda and prevents the TNI from becoming political spoilers or violently challenging the democratic system.

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<sup>12</sup> In February 2019, Jokowi's team announced that more than one thousand retired officers were backing the president's campaign. See Abba Gabrillin, "Soliditas 1.000 Purnawirawan dan Dukungan untuk Jokowi-Ma'aruf Amin" [1,000 Military Retirees Solidly Support Jokowi-Ma'aruf], *Kompas*, February 11, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> See Karina M. Tehusjarana, "We Can Be One of Strongest Countries in World: Jokowi's Full Speech," *Jakarta Post*, July 15, 2019.

<sup>14</sup> "Indonesia's Security Forces," International Institute for Strategic Studies, Strategic Comments 25, no. 7.

This contradiction underlies the persistent dilemma of managing the TNI in post-authoritarian Indonesia. A president who manages officers too closely without the right sticks and carrots, or the personal gravitas to do so, risks impeachment. If a president releases the reins too much, the military will push the boundaries of civil-military relations. Every post-Suharto president has had to balance the TNI's perception of the safety of its corporate interests and the degree of handholding military affairs. In this regard, Jokowi is no different from the presidents who came before him. ♦

## Indonesia's Regional Foreign Policy After the 2019 Election

*Dewi Fortuna Anwar*

Relations with fellow Asian countries have come to dominate Indonesia's foreign policy in the past decade and will likely continue to do so during President Joko Widodo's second term (2019–24), particularly for economic reasons. For Jokowi, as he is popularly known, close bilateral relations with a number of key Asian countries, as well as the dynamism of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) under Jakarta's informal leadership, will remain critical to Indonesia achieving its national objectives. These objectives include: first, maintaining a steady and fairly high level of economic growth by enhancing Indonesia's economic competitiveness through major infrastructure projects as well as foreign direct investment, trade, and tourism, among other factors; second, strengthening Indonesia's position as a maritime nation by becoming a global maritime fulcrum; and third, ensuring ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture of the Indo-Pacific.

Indonesia's security concerns and foreign policy outlook have long been based on a formula of concentric circles, starting with its immediate Southeast Asian neighborhood and radiating out to East Asia and beyond. The two primary objectives of its foreign policy have been to develop good relations with countries that can support its national economic development, and to ensure a peaceful and stable regional order in which the ASEAN region enjoys strategic autonomy free from domination or intervention by major external powers. For its economic needs, Indonesia focused for many decades on the Western European countries, the United States, and a few Asian countries—notably Japan, Singapore, and South Korea—as export markets as well as sources of loans and investment. In the past two decades, however, increasing economic protectionism in its traditional Western markets, coupled with the rise of emerging economies in other parts of the world, particularly in Asia, have led to more intensive economic relations between Indonesia and other Asian countries. Since the start of this century, Asia has therefore increasingly become the locus of both Indonesia's economic and security priorities.

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This essay will examine Indonesia's pursuit of its two foreign policy objectives—economic development and ensuring a peaceful, autonomous regional order—in its relations with other Asian states under the first and now second Jokowi administrations. It will begin by addressing Jokowi's emphasis on using foreign relations to support economic growth at home, then turn to assess key political and security relationships with Asian states, and conclude by discussing Indonesia's role in promoting ASEAN centrality and a peaceful, stable Indo-Pacific order.

### *A Foreign Policy Focused on Economic Development*

Under the Jokowi presidency, the emphasis on a more pragmatic and economic-oriented foreign policy has been more pronounced than any other administration since the early years of the Suharto regime. Indonesian diplomats have been exhorted to become salesmen to increase inflows of foreign investment and tourists as well as to secure markets for Indonesian exports. Toward these ends, the president has placed greater importance on strengthening bilateral relations with existing and potential economic partners than on multilateral engagements. In Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific region, however, economic and security considerations have become closely intertwined as a result of China's rise as an economic and military superpower challenging the United States, as well as the presence of several other major powers with various dyadic dynamics. Therefore, faced with many security threats and challenges that could undermine wider regional stability, the Jokowi government has also begun to pay more attention to geostrategic issues in the last couple of years. These will be discussed further below.

The intensity of Indonesia's relations with other Asian countries is clearly reflected in economic indicators and is unlikely to change in the coming years. In 2018, 72% of Indonesia's exports by value were to other Asian countries, while close to 75% of its imports were from Asia. In the same year, eleven of Indonesia's top fifteen trading partners, accounting for 81% of its exports, were in Asia.<sup>1</sup> Indonesia's trade with fellow ASEAN members has also grown significantly, making up nearly 25% of its total trade, and is no longer dominated by trade with Singapore, which has long

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<sup>1</sup> Indonesia's top fifteen trading partners were China, Japan, the United States, India, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Netherlands, Australia, Germany, and Hong Kong. Daniel Workman, "Indonesia's Trading Partners," *World's Top Exports*, March 16, 2019. <http://www.worldstopexports.com/indonesia-top-15import-partners>.

acted as an entrepôt for Indonesian exports. Asian countries have become the main source of FDI for Indonesia. Between 2013 and 2018, the top five investors in Indonesia were Singapore, Japan, China, Malaysia, and South Korea.<sup>2</sup> The United States ranked sixth, though investments in oil, gas, and financial services, in which the United States has predominated, are usually excluded from FDI figures. The majority of tourists coming to Indonesia originate from Asian countries and Australia.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, around 9 million Indonesians work abroad, the majority as domestic workers, mostly in other Asian countries and the Middle East.<sup>4</sup>

Economic development has been the top objective of successive Indonesian governments since the New Order period (1966–98). The aim is not only to improve the material capabilities of the country but also to ensure political stability and social harmony in a highly heterogeneous country of more than 260 million people that comprise more than seven hundred different ethnic groups spread across the world's largest archipelago of over seventeen thousand islands. Indonesia's economic prosperity and security are inextricably linked to regional peace and stability. Since its establishment on August 8, 1967, ASEAN has been Indonesia's foreign policy cornerstone because national resilience and regional resilience are deemed to be mutually reinforcing.

### *Key Political-Security Relationships and Partnerships in Asia*

While ASEAN has been designated as the cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy, the country's bilateral relations with other ASEAN member states vary in their breadth and depth. From the beginning, Indonesia has developed especially close relations with its two nearest ASEAN neighbors, Singapore and Malaysia, with these triangular relations serving as the linchpin of ASEAN unity. After all, one of the reasons for ASEAN's formation was to promote harmonious relations with Malaysia and Singapore in the

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<sup>2</sup> Wisnu Wijaya Soedibjo, "Indonesia Investment Updates and Japan Investment Overview," Indonesia Investment Coordinating Board, February 15, 2019 ~ [http://www.pma-japan.or.id/bundles/bsibkpm/download/Investment%20Updates%20and%20Japan%20Overview%202019%20as%20of%2015%20feb%20\(BKPM\)%20Rev\\_68.pdf](http://www.pma-japan.or.id/bundles/bsibkpm/download/Investment%20Updates%20and%20Japan%20Overview%202019%20as%20of%2015%20feb%20(BKPM)%20Rev_68.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> The top five sources of visitors to Indonesia in the past few years have been Singapore, Malaysia, China, Australia, and Japan. Tabita Diela, "2015 in Review: Indonesia's Top Five Tourists by Country of Origin," *Jakarta Globe*, December 17, 2015 ~ <https://jakartaglobe.id/context/2015-review-indonesias-top-five-tourists-country-origin>.

<sup>4</sup> The top five destination countries are Malaysia, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, and Singapore. World Bank, "Indonesia's Global Workers: Juggling Opportunities and Risks," November 2017 ~ <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/357131511778676366/Indonesias-Global-Workers-Juggling-Opportunities-Risks.pdf>.

wake of Indonesia's confrontation with Malaysia in 1963–65, which then included Singapore. With both countries, Indonesia shares borders and security concerns—traditional and nontraditional—which have led to intensive bilateral and trilateral cooperation in the defense and security realms. Of even greater significance, Singapore and Malaysia are also among Indonesia's most important economic partners. As noted above, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam are also among Indonesia's top fifteen trading partners. Indonesia and Malaysia additionally share troubled maritime borders with the Philippines, the scene of many sailor kidnappings by Mindanao-based terrorist groups. Trilateral maritime patrols in the Sulu Sea and cooperation on counterterrorism are thus important for these three countries. The development of the ASEAN Community with its three pillars—economic, political-security, and sociocultural—will undoubtedly continue to deepen Indonesia's commitment to ASEAN as a regional organization as well as strengthen Indonesia's bilateral ties with the other member states.

Indonesia has signed strategic partnerships with a small number of countries over the past one-and-a-half decades, and a few of these have been elevated to comprehensive strategic partnerships in recent years, indicating both the deepening and broadening of these bilateral relations. To date, Vietnam is the only ASEAN member state with which Indonesia has a strategic partnership, signed in June 2013 and strengthened in November 2017. It has developed comprehensive strategic partnerships with Australia, China, India, and the United States. Indonesia has also strengthened its strategic partnerships with Japan and South Korea. Whereas these two countries have been important economic partners for Indonesia since the early 1970s, Indonesia's economic relations with China and India have only grown significantly in the past decade.

Bilateral relations between Indonesia and China have had a checkered past and continue to impinge on Indonesia's domestic sensibility. Indonesia was among the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1950, but allegations that Beijing was implicated in the abortive Communist coup in Indonesia on September 30, 1965, led to the fall of President Sukarno, a close ally of Beijing. The rise of the anti-Communist New Order regime under President Suharto, who viewed China as a primary external threat, led to the freezing of diplomatic ties until the end of the Cold War. Full restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries were restored in 1990. Since the collapse of the Suharto regime in May 1998, bilateral relations

have blossomed. Under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004–14), Indonesia formed a strategic partnership with China in 2005, which was elevated to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2013. During Jokowi's first term (2014–19), Indonesia's relations with China became even closer, with China emerging as Indonesia's most important trading partner and, combined with Hong Kong, the second-most important source of FDI, overtaking Japan. Indonesia has joined China's Belt and Road Initiative and the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to finance Jokowi's ambitious infrastructure projects, including the construction of ports, railways, and industrial parks.

Yet suspicions toward China linger among the wider Indonesian public. While China was formerly feared mainly for its Communist ideology and support for the now-banned Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), concerns today mostly relate to China's perceived increasing domination of the Indonesian economy, exacerbated by the flood of cheap Chinese imports and often exaggerated reports about the influx of Chinese laborers to work on China-funded projects. Before the recent presidential election, Jokowi came under massive public criticism for his perceived closeness to China. Anti-China sentiment was also stirred by an unfounded scare about the revival of the PKI that Jokowi's political opponents drummed up. Given the importance of China to Indonesia's economic development, Jokowi's second term will likely continue to prioritize forging close bilateral economic relations. Nevertheless, the government is expected to be more mindful of domestic sensitivities to prevent a nationalist backlash, both by not becoming too dependent on China and by mitigating the sources of complaints over the management of China's investment activities in Indonesia, among others. At the same time, bilateral relations with China will be colored by China's policy and actions in asserting its claim to the disputed South China Sea, particularly near Indonesia's exclusive economic zone around the Natuna Islands, which Indonesia has renamed the North Natuna Sea.

India and Indonesia have had close cultural relations for over two millennia, and the two countries forged ties as newly independent countries in the 1950s and early 1960s. India supported Indonesia's revolutionary struggle for independence, and the two cooperated in championing the cause of the newly independent countries in Asia and Africa and became founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. Despite sharing similar outlooks, however, India and Indonesia drifted apart when Indonesia adopted a market economy under the New Order government while

India mostly pursued a socialist economy until 1990. Since then, India's emergence as a new economic powerhouse after liberalizing its economy and forming its Look East policy has led to greater interest from Indonesia, and ASEAN in general, in engaging more closely with India. Indonesia and India formed a strategic partnership in 2005, which was elevated to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2018. India has become an important trading partner for Indonesia as the primary market for its coal and palm oil exports. The two countries have also become close maritime partners in the Indian Ocean, including establishing direct shipping links between Indonesia's Sabang and India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands as well as developing close cooperation between their navies and coast guards. Although there are no domestic political sensitivities complicating bilateral relations, the two countries still have some way to go to reach the full potential that they can offer each other. It is worth noting that Indonesia was at the forefront in bringing India into the East Asia Summit in 2005 to ensure an equilibrium between all the major Asian powers.

### *ASEAN Centrality and Regional Stability*

Indonesia's close engagement with fellow Asian countries—particularly with the three economic giants China, Japan, and India—is clearly a reflection of Asia's economic dynamism. At the same time, Indonesia has made a conscious policy of diversifying its economic linkages so as not to become unduly dependent on any one country that could weaken its leverage and that might also compromise its “free and active” foreign policy. Furthermore, there are domestic risks in allowing one economic power to become too economically dominant and visible, as clearly demonstrated in the 1974 anti-Japanese riots that took place in Indonesia and several other Southeast Asian countries. Growing disgruntlement with China's economic penetration carries even greater political and social risks due to the sizeable presence of ethnic Chinese Indonesians, who could again become victims of racial violence as has happened frequently in the past.

Indonesia's commitment to ASEAN centrality in managing relations with external powers in the Indo-Pacific's evolving regional architecture is likely to be more pronounced in Jokowi's second presidential term. When he first took office, Jokowi seemed to put less emphasis than his predecessor on ASEAN regional cooperation, which many began to argue should be a building block rather than the cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy. With the emergence of various Indo-Pacific initiatives in recent years,

however, Indonesia has again begun to assume an active leadership role in ASEAN, pushing the organization to adopt a common position on the Indo-Pacific and safeguarding its continued relevance as the primary shaper of regional architecture. Indonesia succeeded in drafting the “ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific” statement that was formally adopted at the ASEAN Summit in June 2019. In the coming years, Jakarta is expected to continue its regional activism to draft a viable work plan and make the ASEAN Outlook the new regional template accepted by non-ASEAN stakeholders as well.

Though pursuing ever closer relations with other Asian countries and the integration of Southeast Asia within an ASEAN Community, Indonesia has always been opposed to an exclusively Asian regional order. Instead, it has been a strong proponent of open and inclusive regional architectures that include non-Asian stakeholders. Toward this end, Indonesia has thrown its support behind the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and ensured that the East Asia Summit also includes Australia, the United States, Russia, and New Zealand. As China’s influence over Southeast Asia grows in the coming years, Indonesia will likely continue to hedge in multiple ways in both its economic and political-security relations through the use of bilateral, regional, and multilateral diplomacy. ◆

## Prospects for U.S.-Indonesian Relations in Jokowi's Second Term

*Ann Marie Murphy*

The inauguration of Joko Widodo (Jokowi) for a second term as president of Indonesia comes as the United States and Indonesia celebrate 70 years of diplomatic ties, providing an important milestone to assess the relationship. This essay will first address the most critical implication of the Indonesian election for the United States: the outcome. It will then assess the prospects for bilateral relations in Jokowi's second term by analyzing Indonesian foreign policy during his first term and assessing the current state of bilateral ties across the economic, security, and political arenas. The essay argues that while opportunities exist to enhance the bilateral relationship in Jokowi's second term, significant obstacles are also present.

### *Jokowi's Electoral Victory*

The most important implication of Indonesia's 2019 presidential election for the U.S.-Indonesian relationship is that the incumbent president, Jokowi, beat Prabowo Subianto. Prabowo is Suharto's former son-in-law and a former three-star general who headed Kopassus, Indonesia's Special Forces Command. He has been credibly accused of human rights abuses in East Timor and during the 1998 protests that toppled Suharto's New Order regime. Following the demise of the Suharto regime, Prabowo was stripped of his command, forced out of the military, and denied a visa to enter the United States in 2000 over his alleged human rights abuses. In a January 2019 presidential debate, Jokowi called for voter support because he had no "past burden" related to human rights.<sup>1</sup> The election of Prabowo would have certainly complicated Indonesia's ties with the United States.

Foreign policy issues played a minor role in the election. Jokowi campaigned on his record of improving social programs, such as health and education, and building infrastructure. He also portrayed himself as

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<sup>1</sup> Resty W. Yuniar, "Indonesia Election: Concerns Over Prabowo Subianto's Human Rights Record a Five-Yearly Issue, Says Sandiaga Uno," *South China Morning Post*, April 13, 2019 ~ <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3006034/indonesia-election-concerns-over-prabowo-subiantos-human>.

a defender of pluralism. Prabowo resurrected many of his 2014 campaign themes: he blamed elites for increasing income inequality, railed against foreigners for exploiting Indonesian resources, allied with conservative Islamist groups that seek to expand Islam's role in public life, and made no secret of his desire to roll back democratic reforms. Both sides ran populist, nationalist campaigns, but Prabowo adopted a nativist approach that sought to appeal to voters by identifying and condemning collective enemies. The positive implications of Jokowi's victory for Indonesia's relationship with the United States, therefore, extend well beyond Prabowo's human rights record. Even at a time when the Trump administration has lowered the priority of democracy and human rights in U.S. foreign policy, a Prabowo victory would have portended a turn toward authoritarianism and Muslim majoritarianism that would have negatively affected U.S. interests.

### *U.S.-Indonesian Relations under Jokowi*

Under Jokowi, Indonesian foreign policy has served domestic goals much more than under his predecessor. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004–14), a former general, championed Indonesia as a model for democratic transition in Muslim-majority states and facilitated rapprochement between the United States and Indonesia. The 2008 election of Barack Obama meant that, for the first time, the two countries were led by presidents with a deep understanding and affection for the other. U.S.-Indonesian relations reached their height during the Yudhoyono-Obama era.

Jokowi, a former businessman, has little interest in foreign policy, which he contends must bring concrete benefits to Indonesia. As a result, protecting Indonesian citizens abroad, promoting economic opportunities for Indonesian companies, and soliciting foreign investment have become his key foreign policy goals. Jokowi's appointment of Retno Marsudi as foreign minister in his first term, a diplomat who lacked the multilateral experience of her predecessors, has led some analysts to lament that Indonesia has lost influence in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Although Jokowi emphasized Indonesia's status as a "maritime fulcrum" in the 2014 election and early in his first term, he largely abandoned this idea in the 2019 campaign and instead emphasized Indonesia's Muslim identity.<sup>2</sup> Whether this signifies a strategic intention to deepen relations with Muslim

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<sup>2</sup> M.W. Kharisma and Shafiah F. Muhibat, "Jokowi's Second Term Needs Innovative Foreign Policy," East Asia Forum, September 4, 2019 ~ <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2019/09/04/jokowis-second-term-needs-innovative-foreign-policy>.

countries and causes, a pragmatic desire to expand Indonesia's role in the global *halal* market, or simply an attempt to appeal to pious voters remains unclear. Jokowi has yet to announce the cabinet lineup for his second term, but his choice of foreign minister will send an important signal about Indonesia's foreign policy direction.

The significant shift in Indonesian foreign policy under Jokowi in 2014 was followed by an even more profound shift in U.S. foreign policy following the inauguration of Donald Trump in January 2017, roughly halfway through Jokowi's first term. Trump's "America first" transactional approach in some ways mirrors the domestic focus of Jokowi's foreign policy. In contrast to Jokowi's pragmatism, however, Trump's disruptive approach, unpredictability, and willingness to stoke conflict, particularly with China, creates challenges for Indonesia in both the economic and security domains.

### *Economic Relations*

Economic nationalism has deep roots in Indonesia, and in the 2019 election Jokowi and Prabowo each vied to portray himself as the most committed to protecting Indonesia's economic sovereignty. To meet his goal of promoting economic prosperity, Jokowi has sought foreign investment and markets for Indonesian goods. At the same time, his administration has continued a trend toward greater protectionism. In recent years, Indonesia has passed new laws on mining, farming, and horticulture that restrict trade and increase local content rules for a range of products. This rise of resource nationalism has generated tensions since the bulk of U.S. foreign direct investment is in the oil, gas, and mining sectors.<sup>3</sup>

In 2017, the United States won a grievance against Indonesia in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and requested WTO permission to impose \$350 million in retaliatory sanctions because Indonesia had failed to comply with the ruling.<sup>4</sup> In December 2018, years of acrimonious negotiations finally resulted in a \$3.85 billion deal that transferred 51.2% of the U.S. company Freeport Indonesia's shares to an Indonesian state-owned company in exchange for a special mining license to conduct operations

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<sup>3</sup> "Partners in Prosperity: U.S. Investment in Indonesia," AmCham Indonesia, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and United States Agency for International Development Mission to Indonesia, 2013   
 ~ <http://www.aiccsa.org/IndonesiaInvestmentSurvey.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Tom Miles, "U.S. Seeks \$350 Million Annual Sanctions in Indonesia Trade Dispute," Reuters, August 6, 2018   
 ~ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-usa-wto-idUSKBN1KS0HQ>.

until 2031.<sup>5</sup> Resolution of the Freeport Indonesia case removed one irritant in the relationship, but a series of regulations that have de facto nationalized Indonesia's oil industry have created others.

Despite these issues, two-way trade increased 7% in 2018 to \$28.2 billion, with Indonesian exports to the United States of \$20.8 billion far surpassing its imports of \$8.2 billion. Indonesia is on the Trump administration's list of sixteen countries with which the United States has the largest trade deficits. During his 2017 visit to Jakarta, Vice President Mike Pence made it clear that Indonesia needed to "level the playing field" for U.S. firms.<sup>6</sup> In 2018, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative initiated a review of Indonesia's eligibility for the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), which waives tariffs on over 3,500 goods for developing countries. Indonesia is the fourth-largest beneficiary of GSP with \$2 billion of exports under the program. Reza Pahlevi, the Indonesian commercial attaché in Washington, claims that Indonesia has made progress toward a mutually beneficial solution, and some assert that Indonesia is considering major arms purchases from the United States in part to reduce the trade deficit and retain its GSP status.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, a decision to remove Indonesia from GSP would negatively affect the prospects for expanding bilateral economic ties. More broadly, rising protectionism under two domestically focused presidents who have both made economic growth a priority increases the challenges of expanding the U.S.-Indonesian economic relationship. An important sign of whether Jokowi's economic policy will tilt toward greater reform or nationalism will be the appointment of key economic cabinet ministers. Jokowi has stated that the well-respected minister of finance, Sri Mulyani, will play a major role in the new administration. If Jokowi appoints respected reformers to important positions, it will not only enhance the prospects for Indonesia's economic growth but also benefit the bilateral economic relationship.

### *Regional Order and Maritime Security*

In his first term, Jokowi's global maritime axis, designed to capitalize on the country's archipelagic status of seventeen thousand islands stretching over three thousand miles between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, had five

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<sup>5</sup> Wilda Asmarini and Agustinus B. Da Costa, "Indonesia Closes Long-Awaited \$3.85 Billion Freeport Deal," Reuters, December 21, 2018 ~ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-freeport/indonesia-closes-long-awaited-3-85-billion-freeport-deal-idUSKCN1OK0XU>.

<sup>6</sup> John McBeth, "To Pacify Trump, Indonesia Seeks American Arms," *Asia Times*, May 20, 2019 ~ <https://www.asiatimes.com/2019/05/article/to-pacify-trump-indonesia-seeks-american-arms>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

pillars: a cultural pillar to revive Indonesia's maritime identity, an economic pillar to manage sea resources, a development pillar to improve maritime infrastructure, a diplomatic pillar to promote resolution of maritime conflicts, and a maritime defense pillar. Over the course of Jokowi's first term, it became clear that his primary focus was on expanding maritime infrastructure and protecting Indonesian resources, particularly fish. Like the maritime axis, the Trump administration's "free and open Indo-Pacific" strategy focuses on linkages between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

The two sides do engage in a significant number of bilateral maritime exercises, and the United States has helped Indonesia enhance its maritime defence and maritime domain awareness capacities. Indonesia is one of five Southeast Asian states that receive funding under the five-year \$425 million Maritime Security Initiative, and at the 2018 ASEAN meetings, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pledged an additional \$300 million in funding for security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. Indonesia welcomes these initiatives because they strengthen its ability to protect national maritime resources. They also enhance Indonesia's capacity to defend its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) that encompasses the Natuna Islands, home to one of the world's largest recoverable gas fields. Part of the Natuna Island EEZ falls within China's nine-dash-line claim to virtually the entire South China Sea. In July 2017, Indonesia changed the name of waters northeast of the Natuna Islands to the North Natuna Sea as a signal of its determination to protect its maritime rights from Chinese encroachment.

Beyond maritime capacity building, however, Indonesia remains wary of the Trump administration's free and open Indo-Pacific strategy. The strategy was first publicized in the Trump administration's 2017 National Security Strategy, which labeled China as a peer competitor and called for creating a network of allies and partners to provide a counterweight.<sup>8</sup> China is Indonesia's largest trading partner, and Jokowi is seeking significant Chinese investment for infrastructure projects. Though Indonesia is determined to protect its maritime claims from China, it has no desire to become embroiled in Sino-U.S. competition. Furthermore, the free and open Indo-Pacific strategy has become conflated with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad), the U.S.-Japan-India-Australia framework for security cooperation that was revitalized in 2017. Indonesia fears that the Quad not only militarizes the Indo-Pacific but also threatens ASEAN centrality.

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<sup>8</sup> White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C., December 2017)  <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

U.S. officials, including Pence, have attempted to address these concerns by reiterating that ASEAN is at the center of the Indo-Pacific strategy, yet Indonesia fears that the strategy and rising great-power competition will reduce the autonomy of Southeast Asian states in their own region.<sup>9</sup>

In an effort to prevent outsiders from dominating Indo-Pacific discourse, Indonesia took the lead in developing the “ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific” statement. In contrast to the United States, which wants a “free and open” Indo-Pacific, Indonesia seeks an “open and inclusive” region and avoids the term “free,” which Beijing views as anti-China.<sup>10</sup> Through the outlook statement, Indonesia is attempting to play its traditional role of bridging great-power differences in its quest to protect Southeast Asian autonomy.

The United States and Indonesia both want a stable, rules-based Indo-Pacific maritime region governed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Nevertheless, divergent maritime interests, Indonesia’s commitment to an independent foreign policy stance, and its belief that rising Sino-U.S. tensions are antithetical to its interests complicate the prospect for greater maritime cooperation in Jokowi’s second term. The United States’ key interest in Southeast Asia is freedom of navigation, and the main mechanism it uses to promote this interest is freedom of navigation operations. Some Indonesian officials have voiced wariness of these operations because they raise tensions with China but appear to have no impact on its behavior. Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs Luhut Binsar Panjaitan has stated that “we don’t like any power projection,” and other government officials have urged the U.S. to “exercise restraint.”<sup>11</sup> Beyond these fears, there is a distinct divergence of interests between the two countries. The United States has an interest in freedom of navigation through Southeast Asian waters while Indonesia has a direct interest in the defense of its own waters, which U.S. freedom of navigation operations do nothing to promote.

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<sup>9</sup> Amy Searight, “The ‘Indo-Pacific’ Region Takes Center Stage at Shangri La,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 4, 2018 ~ <https://www.csis.org/analysis/indo-pacific-region-takes-center-stage-shangri-la>.

<sup>10</sup> Amitav Acharya, “Why ASEAN’s Indo-Pacific Outlook Matters,” East Asia Forum, August 11, 2019 ~ <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2019/08/11/why-aseans-indo-pacific-outlook-matters>.

<sup>11</sup> Mark J. Valencia, “ASEAN Support of FONOPs Unclear,” *Japan Times*, November 2, 2018 ~ <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2018/11/02/reader-mail/asean-support-fonops-unclear/#.XEXr59Xw%20a9Z>.

## *Defense and Military Ties*

In 2019, the two sides reached a milestone when the United States removed the last restrictions on military-to-military ties with Kopassus. The United States restored most military ties with Indonesia in 2005, and today the two sides participate in over two hundred joint exercises each year and cooperate extensively on counterterrorism.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the remaining restrictions on ties with Kopassus had been a long-standing irritant for Indonesia.

Indonesia has purchased U.S. military equipment since the embargo was lifted. In February 2018, the Indonesian Air Force took delivery of 24 F-16 fighter jets—the largest arms deal between the two countries ever—and the two sides have discussed additional F-16 sales.<sup>13</sup> In early 2018, Indonesia also signed a \$1.1 billion contract for 11 Russian Sukhoi Su-35s to complement earlier purchases of Su-27s and Su-30s.

Restoration of full ties with Kopassus may have removed one thorn in the defense relationship, but the 2017 Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) has added another. CAATSA requires sanctions on countries that maintain significant defense or intelligence relationships with Russia. It was reported that waivers would be granted for Indonesia, India, and Vietnam, but the final legislation failed to include them.<sup>14</sup> Whether Indonesia's planned purchase of Sukhoi Su-35s will generate sanctions has been the topic of extensive bilateral discussions.<sup>15</sup> An ominous sign for Indonesia was Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's Senate testimony in which he stated that the United States had made it clear to Egypt that a planned purchase of Su-35s would entail sanctions.<sup>16</sup> According to one authority, Indonesia has backed away from its plans to buy the Sukhoi Su-35s, but whether the purchase has been abandoned or simply delayed

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<sup>12</sup> "U.S. Embassy Celebrates 70 Years of U.S.-Indonesia Relations in Manado," U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Indonesia, June 21, 2019 [~ https://id.usembassy.gov/u-s-embassy-celebrates-70-years-of-u-s-indonesia-relations-in-manado](https://id.usembassy.gov/u-s-embassy-celebrates-70-years-of-u-s-indonesia-relations-in-manado).

<sup>13</sup> Prashanth Parameswaran, "U.S.-Indonesia Defense Relations in the Spotlight with F-16 Fighter Jet Ceremony," *Diplomat*, March 7, 2018 [~ https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/us-indonesia-defense-relations-in-the-spotlight-with-f-16-fighter-jet-ceremony](https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/us-indonesia-defense-relations-in-the-spotlight-with-f-16-fighter-jet-ceremony).

<sup>14</sup> Paul McLeary, "Mattis Makes New Plea to HASC for Russian Sanctions Relief," *Breaking Defense*, July 25, 2018 [~ https://breakingdefense.com/2018/07/mattis-makes-new-plea-to-hasc-for-russian-sanctions-relief](https://breakingdefense.com/2018/07/mattis-makes-new-plea-to-hasc-for-russian-sanctions-relief); and "U.S. to Exempt India, Indonesia and Vietnam from CAATSA Sanctions," *Defense World*, July 24, 2018 [~ https://www.defenseworld.net/news/23031/US\\_to\\_Exempt\\_India\\_Indonesia\\_and\\_Vietnam\\_from\\_CAATSA\\_Sanctions#.XYKfEzKkUk](https://www.defenseworld.net/news/23031/US_to_Exempt_India_Indonesia_and_Vietnam_from_CAATSA_Sanctions#.XYKfEzKkUk).

<sup>15</sup> McBeth, "To Pacify Trump."

<sup>16</sup> Donald Greenlees, "Russia Sanctions Putting Strain on U.S. Relationship with Indonesia," Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Strategist, June 17, 2019 [~ https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/russia-sanctions-putting-strain-on-us-relationship-with-indonesia](https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/russia-sanctions-putting-strain-on-us-relationship-with-indonesia).

is unclear.<sup>17</sup> Minister of Defense Ryamizard Ryacudu believes the fate of the purchase will be “solved this year.”<sup>18</sup>

Indonesia also signed a deal in April 2019 to purchase 43 Russian amphibious armored personnel vehicles, worth \$170 million, but it is unclear whether this sale is a CAATSA trigger. Though Ambassador Joseph Donovan has stated that the goal is to change Russian behavior and not to punish U.S. partners, the issue rankles Indonesia. Indonesia is also discussing with the United States the purchase of 32 new F-16 Viper jets and 6 C-130J cargo aircraft. Beyond its military significance, such a purchase would also be aimed at shielding Indonesia from CAATSA sanctions and reducing the U.S. trade deficit to retain GSP.<sup>19</sup>

### *Political Engagement*

Jokowi made a state visit to Washington in 2015, during which the two sides elevated the bilateral comprehensive partnership to a strategic partnership. The annual meetings called for in a strategic partnership, however, have not occurred recently. Jokowi and Trump have both skipped multilateral summits that provide opportunities for bilateral consultations on the sidelines. Some expected that Indonesia’s election to the UN Security Council for the 2019–20 term would bring Jokowi to the United States, but Indonesia in Jokowi’s first term was represented by Vice President Jusuf Kalla. Trump, for his part, skipped the 2018 ASEAN summit. Asian officials, including those in Indonesia, interpret presidential absences at regional summits as an indication of a lack of U.S. commitment to Southeast Asia.

Treatment of global Muslim issues has resurfaced as a matter of political contention. Indonesia’s strong support for the Palestinians has long been at odds with staunch U.S. support for Israel. The Trump administration’s decision to move the U.S. embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, therefore, generated outrage in Indonesia. Thousands of Indonesians protested in front of the U.S. embassy in Jakarta, and Foreign Minister Marsudi traveled to Jordan to demonstrate Indonesian support for the Palestinians.<sup>20</sup> The rising salience of political Islam in Indonesia, combined with the Trump administration’s ban

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<sup>17</sup> Greenlees, “Russia Sanctions Putting Strain.”

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> McBeth, “To Pacify Trump.”

<sup>20</sup> Fergus Jensen, “Thousands of Indonesians Again Protest Trump’s Jerusalem Move,” Reuters, December 9, 2017. ~ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-israel-indonesia-idUSKBN1E405Y>.

on Muslim immigration and other actions that are perceived in Indonesia as anti-Islamic, could have adverse effects on relations.

By contrast, the recent appointment of Mahendra Siregar, a highly respected diplomat with extensive economic experience, as ambassador to the United States bodes well for bilateral ties. Ambassador Siregar previously served as chairman of the Investment Coordinating Board, vice minister of finance, vice minister of trade, and chairman and chief executive officer of Indonesia Eximbank. He is therefore extremely well-placed not only to deliver on Jokowi's demand that diplomacy bring concrete benefits to Indonesia but also to help manage economic issues in the relationship.

### *Conclusion*

As the United States and Indonesia celebrate 70 years of diplomatic relations, the relationship is stable and cordial. Nevertheless, the two sides find themselves at odds across a range of economic, security, and political issues such as the GSP review, the Indo-Pacific concept, the threat of CAATSA sanctions, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indonesia has always resented conditionality, and finding itself a potential target for both trade and military sanctions only reinforces long-standing perceptions of the United States as a unilateral power, a sentiment that has bedeviled relations in the past. Many in both the United States and Indonesia believe that significant scope exists to expand bilateral ties. Whether the two sides can manage the tensions in the relationship in a way that enhances the prospects to expand U.S.-Indonesian cooperation remains to be seen. 

