



CENTRE FOR
STRATEGIC AND
INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES



RECALIBRATING INDONESIA'S FOREIGN POLICY:

*Internal Reform and
Strategic Realignment
in a Changing World Order*



RECALIBRATING INDONESIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: INTERNAL REFORM AND STRATEGIC REALIGNMENT IN A CHANGING WORLD ORDER



CENTRE FOR
STRATEGIC AND
INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES

A Monograph by CSIS Indonesia

Lina A. Alexandra
Andrew W. Mantong
M. Waffaa Kharisma
M. Habib A. Dzakwan
Pieter A. Pandie
Farhan Julianto
Hanna A. Paramastuti
Anastasia A. Widyautami

© 2025 CSIS Indonesia
All rights reserved

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
International System and Indonesia's Response to Its Dynamics	3
The Changing Nature of Great Power Rivalry: Key Differences between the Cold War and Contemporary US-China Rivalry	5
The Decline of Multilateralism and Its Consequences	8
Indonesia's Enduring Foreign Policy Framework: The "Free and Active" Principle and ASEAN Centrality	12
Foreign Policy Formulation: Actors, Tools, and Process	16
Key Actors in Indonesian Foreign Policy	17
Foreign Policy Tools: Military, Diplomacy, Economic, and Identity	27
Challenges in the Current Foreign Policy Process	42
Assessing Policy Outcomes: Illustrative Episodes in Security, Economy, and Identity	47
Conclusion and Policy Recommendations	62

Recalibrating Indonesia's Foreign Policy: Internal Reform and Strategic Realignment in a Changing World Order

As Indonesia continues to assert itself as a prominent global player—driven by its economic scale and geopolitical influence—international spectators are closely monitoring the direction of its foreign policy. To date, Indonesia has actively participated in numerous prestigious international organisations and has positioned itself as a *primus inter pares* in ASEAN, one of the oldest regional organisations. Indonesia now seeks to enhance its contribution to international peace and security as mandated by its Constitution.

As an aspiring middle power, Indonesia is expected to contribute to the maintenance of global order, particularly at a time when intensified rivalry among major powers threatens the stability of international norms and principles that have underpinned peace and security. In a global environment where developing powers gain prominence through rapid economic growth and commitment to reform outdated elements of existing international order, expectations are high for these countries to articulate a coherent and constructive foreign policy.

In Indonesia's case, there is genuine concern regarding the extent to which it comprehends the dynamics of great powers rivalry and anticipates its impact on its foreign policy trajectory. Escalating tensions among major powers have created a vortex pulling countries in different directions, pressuring them to align with one side regardless of whether doing so serves their national interests. It is therefore essential to evaluate how a state can build resilience against such external pressure. More importantly, a country must have a clear vision of how to navigate these challenges—not only to mitigate risks but also to seize opportunities that maximise its strategic interests.

This monograph explores how Indonesia's foreign policy can be recalibrated to align more with its aspirations as a middle power. It draws upon comprehensive research and extensive consultations with foreign policy think-tanks across the region and globally within the period of 2023-2024, focusing on external perceptions of Indonesia's foreign policy conduct. Additionally, the study incorporates a broad range of discussions with domestic stakeholders—including government officials, academics, and experts—to triangulate these perspectives and formulate concrete policy recommendations for the Indonesian government.

Foreign policy, as discussed in this monograph, refers to the strategic and institutionalised choices a state makes to advance its national interests, protect its sovereignty, and pursue its values in the international system. It is a distinct realm of public policy, concerned with vital interests and long-term priorities, rather than reactive postures or routine diplomacy. In the Indonesian context, this distinction is crucial. While Law No. 37/1999 on Foreign Relations (*Undang-Undang Hubungan Luar Negeri*) defines foreign politics (*politik luar negeri*) as “bebas dan aktif,” it provides limited guidance on the broader policy architecture—including agenda-setting, strategic coordination, and institutional alignment—required to formulate foreign policy in a complex, multipolar world.

A clear conceptual understanding is necessary to move beyond equating foreign policy solely with diplomacy or *hubungan luar negeri*, toward viewing it as a whole-of-government enterprise grounded in national planning and strategic foresight.

This understanding necessitates examining not just Indonesia's outward messages or diplomatic channels, but the full spectrum of foreign policy actors, the processes and tools they employ, and the systemic and domestic factors shaping implementation. Accordingly, the subsequent sections of this monograph will unpack these dimensions in depth.

This monograph is structured into several key sections, each addressing a critical dimension of Indonesia's foreign policy. It begins with an overview of the international system and Indonesia's response to its dynamics, including the changing nature of great power rivalry—highlighting the differences between the Cold War and the contemporary US-China competition—the decline of multilateralism and its impact on Indonesia. It also examines the foundations of Indonesia's foreign policy, with particular attention to the free and active principle and the continued relevance of ASEAN Centrality.

The second section explores Indonesia's foreign policy-making process, identifying the main actors involved, institutional challenges, and the instruments available—from military and economic tools to diplomacy and identity. This is followed by a policy analysis that integrates both systemic and unit-level perspectives to assess Indonesia's global, regional, minilateral, and bilateral engagements. The penultimate section offers concrete policy recommendations, including the need to strengthen strategic leadership and coordination, reinvigorate ASEAN and regional engagement, develop and engage in effective minilateral platforms, adapt bilateral diplomacy for strategic gains, promote global engagement and advocate for multilateral reform, and expand Indonesia's diplomatic capacity and budget. The final section offers concluding reflections on how Indonesia can recalibrate its foreign policy to respond more effectively to external challenges and domestic priorities.

International System and Indonesia's Response to Its Dynamics

Indonesia stands at a critical juncture of an evolving international order, shaped by the intensifying competition—now verging on rivalry—between the United States and China. This competition differs from the bipolar ideological clash of the Cold War. It now spans multiple dimensions (economic, technological, military, and other emerging domains) and is more complex to navigate than the relatively straightforward dynamics of the Cold War era. Indonesia must recognise this multidimensional competition, as the impacts disrupt global governance, regional stability, and adherence to international norms.

The international system, in this context, refers to the overarching structure of relations among states, institutions, and global actors, shaped by the distribution of power, prevailing norms, and mechanisms for cooperation or conflict. It includes both material dimensions—such as military and economic power—and ideational dimensions, including international law, diplomatic institutions, and shared values. Changes in the international system may result from shifts in power (e.g., the rise of China), disruptions in institutions (e.g., paralysis in the United Nations), or crises that reorder global priorities (e.g., pandemics or climate change).

For a country like Indonesia, understanding these systemic changes is not merely an academic exercise but a strategic necessity. Foreign policy must be formulated with careful consideration of structural constraints and emerging opportunities, particularly as intensified great power rivalry, institutional fragmentation, and normative volatility threaten to limit the policy space available for middle powers.

In contrast to the relatively binary division of the Cold War, today's great-power rivalry is deeply intertwined with global economic interdependence, integrated supply chains, and transnational issues such as climate change as well as technological and digital governance. The US-China rivalry has a direct impact on Indonesia's regional environment, especially as both powers employ tools such as economic coercion—such as tariff and sanctions—and technological restrictions, compelling middle and smaller states to adopt more strategic positioning, lest they be drawn into one camp or find themselves in a precarious in-between.

This rivalry coincides with a broader transformation in the international system. The return of great power politics is unfolding in a landscape no longer guaranteed by stable bipolar deterrence, yet not fully integrated into a multipolar consensus. Indonesia finds itself navigating between the reassertion of hard power and the weakening of multilateral norms. Unlike the Cold War, the current competition does not create clear alliances or ideological blocs; rather, it generates a fluid and dynamic environment where alignment is increasingly transactional and issue-specific, across nearly every domain.

This fluidity complicates Indonesia's strategic calculus. The country must safeguard its autonomy while ensuring that its developmental goals, economic partnerships, and political values are not unduly constrained by external pressures. Accordingly, Indonesia's foreign policy must evolve beyond neutrality and traditional non-alignment to embrace strategic flexibility, technological adaptation, and resilience to systemic shocks. Amidst intensifying rivalry, Indonesia may actually find openings to assert its interests, selectively engage with competing powers, and shape regional initiatives.

1. The Changing Nature of Great Power Rivalry:

Key Differences between the Cold War and Contemporary US-China Rivalry

While comparisons between the current US-China rivalry and the Cold War is common, the contemporary geopolitical landscape presents fundamentally different structural and operational dynamics. The Cold War was largely bipolar and driven by rigid ideological confrontation. In contrast, today's rivalry is more complex, fluid, and enmeshed with global interdependence. Understanding these differences is crucial for Indonesia as it attempts to navigate the evolving order without being pulled into binary alignment. Four key distinctions are particularly salient.

1. Economic Interdependence. Unlike the Cold War, where the two blocs operated in relatively isolated economic spheres, the US and China are economically interdependent. Their competition manifests in trade wars, technological decoupling, and rival infrastructure initiatives such as China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) versus the US-backed Build Back Better World (B3W), and Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII). For Indonesia, this interdependence creates acute vulnerability. Any disruption—whether through tariffs, sanctions, technological embargoes, or supply chain shifts—has immediate repercussions for an economy reliant on both Chinese manufacturing and American finance, investment, and digital services. Strategic hedging becomes particularly difficult, and even more so in sectors such as critical minerals and green technology. Indonesia's nickel and critical mineral sectors, for instance, are crucial to both Chinese battery supply chains and US' push for green energy. Economic policies, including export bans, downstream industrial policy, and foreign ownership regulations are increasingly interpreted through a geopolitical lens. What once facilitated Indonesia's rise now complicates its economic policy-amid intensifying systemic rivalry.

2. Technological and Digital Competition. Whereas Cold War rivalry was centred on military might—most notably nuclear deterrence—today's US-China competition is significantly shaped by technological dominance in areas like 5G, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. This domain is especially consequential for Indonesia's digital modernisation and industrial upgrading. While the US pressures its allies and partners to avoid Chinese technology, China's investments in digital infrastructure through initiatives like the Digital Silk Road offer attractive alternatives. Navigating this technological rivalry will require Indonesia to balance its needs for innovation and development with concerns about data security and sovereignty. In recent years, Indonesia has worked with both Chinese and Western tech firms, underscoring the difficulty of choosing sides when neither offers a complete solution in terms of affordability, reliability, and strategic alignment. Meanwhile, the discourse around the digital economy pushes Indonesia to develop domestic capabilities, such as launching its national data centres and promoting local fintech platforms, even as it seeks foreign investment.

This presents a dilemma: openness could invite vulnerability to external pressure, while techno-nationalism could lead to inefficiency or isolation. For Indonesia, the middle path of strategic dual engagement will require careful management of legal frameworks, cybersecurity architecture, and investment flows.

3. Geopolitical and Regional Alliances. During the Cold War, alliance structures were relatively fixed and ideologically cohesive. Countries like Indonesia maintained neutrality through the Non-Aligned Movement. Today, alliances are more fluid and issue-specific, with both the US and China forming ad-hoc partnerships based on shared interests. US-led security arrangements like the trilateral security initiative Australia, United Kingdom, and the United States (AUKUS) and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) reflect growing military alignments to counterbalance China's influence in the Indo-Pacific. China, in turn, has expanded ties with regional partners beyond economics, such as through joint military exercises, security dialogues, and port visits. Indonesia, while formally maintaining its non-aligned status, must carefully navigate these shifting alliances to avoid alienating one power while engaging the other. It must also be able to seize opportunities and shape engagements in a way that contributes to regional security. Indonesia's participation in forums like the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) allows it to remain engaged without formal alignment. Simultaneously, it has hosted or participated in military exercises with both US and Chinese counterparts, often in close succession, signalling its commitment to strategic balance. However, the fluidity of these alliances can also create instability. For instance, should ASEAN partners like the Philippines or Vietnam deepen defence cooperation with the US, Indonesia may face growing pressure to clarify its own security commitments. At the same time, Chinese military activity near the Natuna waters within Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) continues to test Indonesia's strategic ambiguity.

4. Populism and Democratic Decline. Unlike the ideologically polarised Cold War, today's competition unfolds amidst a broader erosion of democratic norms and a trend toward economic protectionism. Big powers, including those with open economies, are increasingly focused on national power and resource mobilisation for strategic competition. The rise of populism and right-wing politics has contributed to this shift. For instance, the Trump administration's attacks on USAID and other international aid agencies signalled a departure, from the promotion of democracy, human rights, and open markets abroad. Similarly, the US-China trade war saw demonstrated a mutual retreat from free trade principles, generating uncertainty about the future of the rulesbased international order. For Indonesia, this presents serious challenge. As the world's largest Muslim-majority democracy, Indonesia has built a reputation as a champion of pluralism and electoral democracy—key elements of its soft power. The weakening of global support for these values diminishes Indonesia's influence and limits its ability to promote democratic governance at home and abroad.

When major powers no longer treat democracy or human rights as shared principles, Indonesia's capacity to act as a bridge between political and economic systems may be at risk, potentially undermining its standing in the evolving international order. Its ability to shape norms and values in multilateral forums is weakened as major powers no longer prioritise democracy or human rights as shared principles. The instrumentalization of democracy, seen in platforms like the Summit for Democracy, further erodes the inclusive norm-building environment where Indonesia previously thrived. This also limits Indonesia's ability to advocate for an equitable international economic system, as calls for developmental space, fairer trade rules, or global financial governance reforms are sidelined by major powers focused on zero-sum competition rather than institutional reform.

These four factors highlight that today's rivalry is not just more multidimensional than the Cold War, but also more intrusive and volatile. For Indonesia, this translates into narrower margins of manoeuvre, greater diplomatic pressure, and more frequent economic and technological disruptions. The demands greater strategic resilience, requiring an understanding of systemic shifts and sharper foreign policy tools to defend national interests and assert autonomy.

It also compels a deeper national conversation, focusing not just how to respond to external rivalry, but on building domestic coherence across foreign policy, economic planning, technological development, and normative messaging. In this context, resilience means institution-building, strategic patience, and smarter use of Indonesia's comparative advantages as a non-aligned democracy with global legitimacy and regional influence.

2. The Decline of Multilateralism and Its Consequences

Predictability in navigating systemic constraints for middle power like Indonesia is significantly easier within a stable international order, characterised by a consistent distribution of power and institutionalised rules and norms within a robust multilateral system. One of the most concerning trends in the current international system, however, is the erosion of multilateralism, particularly the weakening role of multilateral institutions established in the post-World War II order (such as the United Nations (UN) and the Bretton Woods institutions consisted of World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organisation). These institutions once provided a stable framework for international cooperation, but are increasingly seen as less effective in addressing today's global challenges.

This institutional decay reflects not only structural shifts in global power but also a growing normative divergence among key states. The foundational assumptions of these institutions—that major powers would adhere to rules, that liberal democracy would gradually expand, and that economic interdependence would mitigate conflict—are increasingly contested. Emerging powers demand a greater representation, while established powers frequently circumvent or undermine these institutions when their preferences are not met. This erosion of legitimacy and effectiveness is reshaping global states engagement and presents particularly stark trade-offs for middle powers like Indonesia, which rely on multilateral forums to amplify their voice and protect their autonomy.

1. Worsening Paralysis of the UN in Security and Governance. The UN, established to prevent great-power conflicts and maintain international peace, has struggled to remain effective. While the Security Council has long faced paralysis due to the veto power and clashing interests of its permanent members, recent multi-dimensional crises (e.g., in Ukraine and the Middle East) have rendered this paralysis even more consequential. The abuse of vetoes and disproportionate influence of major powers in decision-making have severely constrained multilateral institutions' ability to respond effectively to threats to international security and prosperity.

For Indonesia, the declining relevance of the UN is problematic. Indonesia has traditionally relied on multilateralism to promote core foreign policy principles such as sovereignty and non-interference. Without a functioning UN, Indonesia risks losing a critical platform for advocating for international law and the peaceful resolution of disputes. Despite its proactive policy agenda initiatives, Indonesia has recently encountered frustrations at the UN. For instance, in 2020, its Security Council resolution on foreign terrorist fighters, which focused on prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration, was vetoed by the US. Indonesia deemed the US rejection, based on the absence of repatriation provisions, as “incomprehensible”, illustrating the challenges developing countries face in influencing major powers.

Similarly, repeated US vetoes of Gaza ceasefire resolutions, prioritising Israel's right to self-defence over humanitarian concerns, have deepened scepticism toward the UN's multilateral system. Such episodes underscore Indonesia's struggle to push for a more equitable international order and raise questions about the UN's true service to developing nations' interests.

Indonesia's discomfort with these dynamics has occasionally led it to pursue parallel efforts outside the UN system. For example, in response to the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, Indonesia has turned to ASEAN or its own bilateral diplomacy to seek humanitarian access and political solutions, preferring the regional crisis mechanisms to advocate for regional solutions to the problem. While this demonstrates adaptive capacity, it also reflects a troubling reality: global institutions, once a reliable point of reference, are no longer the primary venue for addressing major crises. In the past, during the 2008 Cyclone Nargis disaster, the UN provided a credible presence that could help pressure Myanmar to engage with regional mechanisms. Fast forward to post-2021 coup Myanmar, such a figure has been absent and is no longer the primary resort for addressing major crises.

Furthermore, if peacekeeping norms shift from traditional blue-helmet operations to more coercive mandates, Indonesia's identity as a principled peacekeeper may become complicated. Indonesia must now balance its peacekeeping commitments against concerns about sovereignty, impartiality, and mission creep in politically polarised environments.

2. Fragmentation of Global Trade and Economic Institutions. The Bretton Woods institutions—once the bedrock of global economic cooperation—are also facing challenges. Global trade is becoming increasingly fragmented, with regional and bilateral trade agreements gaining prominence over multilateral frameworks like the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The US has retreated from its leadership role in promoting global free trade by aggressively pursuing investment re-shoring and imposing tariffs, while China is advancing regionalism, exemplified by its participation in ASEAN-led initiatives such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). At the same time, Indonesia must tread carefully with regard to China's economic slowdown and issues of overproduction, given China's significance as a global economic powerhouse. Furthermore, the rise of alternative financial institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and New Development Bank (NDB)—which offer less stringent conditions and faster processes—tempts countries to move away from Western-led institutions like the World Bank. While these alternatives could address Indonesia's pressing infrastructure financing needs, they entail strategic implications if their terms and conditionalities are not meticulously assessed.

Indonesia's development planning now takes place within a bifurcated institutional landscape. On one side are Western-led institutions characterised by rigorous standards and slow disbursements. On the other are new alternative financial institutions offering rapid access to capital but with ambiguous transparency and geopolitical risks, noting the lack of accountability mechanisms in the decision-making and project selection processes.

To mitigate the risks, mere membership in these institutions is not sufficient. Indonesia must consistently and assertively advocate for reform agendas. For instance, while Indonesia's intention to participate in the NDB may open opportunities, Indonesia also needs to contribute to its institutional development by enhancing its transparency-related regulations and ensuring its inclusive membership.

At the WTO, Indonesia's advocacy for special and differential treatment (SDT) for developing countries has come under pressure. The growing perception among developed economies that large emerging markets no longer require preferential treatment has undermined unity within the Global South, weakening Indonesia's coalition-building potential in trade negotiations. Additionally, Indonesia must now contend with economic nationalism not only from great powers, but also from regional and domestic stakeholders who are revising unilaterally investment rules, misusing digital sovereignty narratives, or recalibrating environmental standards. This further erodes the predictability that once characterised multilateral economic engagement.

3. The Rise of Minilateralism. In response to the stalemates within larger multilateral organisations, there is a rise in “minilateral” groupings—smaller, issue-specific coalitions like the Quad or AUKUS. These allow countries to cooperate on specific issues (e.g., security, trade, technology) without the slow, consensus-driven processes inherent in larger multilateral bodies. For Indonesia, this trend represents both a challenge and an opportunity. On one hand, minilateralism could marginalise ASEAN by diverting focus and resources away from it, undermining Indonesia's longstanding efforts to promote inclusive regional cooperation. On the other hand, Indonesia could leverage minilateral forums to advance its interests, provided it remains proactive in shaping these group's agendas.

To date, Indonesia has approached minilateralism cautiously. It has expressed concerns over AUKUS, especially concerning nuclear submarine technology, while adopting a more constructive stance toward Quad initiatives on infrastructure and pandemic preparedness. This differentiated approach allows Jakarta to maintain flexibility without compromising its core principle of non-alignment.

The convergence of intensifying great power rivalry and the erosion of multilateralism have created a significantly more fragmented, volatile, and uncertain international environment. For a middle power like Indonesia, the narrowing space for non-aligned diplomacy, the paralysis of the UN, and the weakening of economic institutions present serious constraints to advancing national interests through traditional channels. The shift toward minilateral arrangements reflects the growing irrelevance of the old rules-based order, compelling Indonesia to rethink its reliance on outdated frameworks. These systemic changes demand that Indonesia not only adapt its external engagements but also reassess the core doctrines that have long guided its foreign policy—particularly its commitment to the free and active principle and its deep investment in ASEAN Centrality.

Yet adaptation alone is insufficient. Indonesia must proactively assume a shaping role in this evolving global landscape. This imperative translates into several strategic thrusts: institutional innovation, articulating clear red lines and interests in minilateral forums, and linking foreign policy more tightly with domestic economic and governance agendas. By undertaking these measures, Indonesia can avoid being merely reactive in a fragmented world and instead become a regional force capable of offering coherence where global institutions falter.

3. Indonesia's Enduring Foreign Policy Framework: The "Free and Active" Principle and ASEAN Centrality

Indonesia's foreign policy has historically been guided by "free and active" (*bebas dan aktif*) principle, a doctrine that emerged from the country's experience with Cold War geopolitics. This principle aimed to prevent Indonesia's entanglement in great power rivalries while simultaneously enabling its active promotion of peace. It proved highly effective—particularly during the heyday of the Non-Aligned Movement—enabling Jakarta to skilfully navigate the East-West divide.

For Indonesia, the "free and active" principle serves as a foundational element, inextricably linked to its sustained engagement within ASEAN across successive administrations. ASEAN, established in 1967, was conceived to insulate Southeast Asia from great power interference and foster peaceful, non-zero-sum relations among neighbours. ASEAN also served as a crucial platform for Southeast Asian countries to cultivate their international image and attract trade and investment. ASEAN's success over several decades in preventing major conflicts and fostering regional cooperation attests to the stability of that era and the efficacy of Indonesia's diplomacy.

ASEAN emerged in a period of relative predictability in the international order, when Cold War bipolarity provided a degree of stability that regional actors like Indonesia could leverage. Today, the international system is considerably less stable. The rise of China, the relative decline of US global leadership, and the propensity of major powers to bypass multilateral institutions have collectively created a more unpredictable environment. These challenges partly stem from ASEAN's design, which was tailored for an era underpinned by a robust rules-based order and a stabilising US presence. The contemporary multipolar environment, coupled with the weakening of multilateral frameworks, makes it increasingly difficult to sustain ASEAN's foundational norms of non-interference and consensus decision making.

Indonesia's free and active foreign policy, especially as expressed through ASEAN, has thus faced unprecedented challenges. Yet, the principle persists. During Megawati Sukarnoputri's administration (2001–2004), Indonesia's commitment to ASEAN-led regionalism continued to prevail, even at a time when Indonesia was emerging from post-authoritarian transition and recovering from economic crisis. Her government helped restore confidence in Indonesia's foreign policy by re-engaging ASEAN at the ministerial level and supporting the Bali Concord II (2003), which paved the way for the ASEAN Community model.

During Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY)'s tenure (2004–2014), the free and active principle gained greater institutional clarity. His administration expanded Indonesia's participation in global forums, including the G20 and the UN Human Rights Council, while strongly advocating for the 2008 ASEAN Charter.

Importantly, SBY leveraged ASEAN platforms to advance global governance initiatives, such as establishing the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF). These initiatives aimed to link domestic democratic consolidation with regional normative leadership, demonstrating an extension of Indonesia's proactive diplomacy rather than a departure from neutrality within a shifting global order.

Joko Widodo (Jokowi)'s presidency (2014–2024), while more domestically oriented, continued this trajectory. His government invoked the free and active principle to justify selective global activism. This was evident in Indonesia's leadership on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which positioned ASEAN as a convener rather than a bloc aligned with any great power. Even in Indonesia's 2022 G20 Presidency, Indonesia's brand of economic diplomacy prioritised neutrality while pursuing a pragmatic agenda of post-pandemic recovery and inclusive growth. This demonstrates how the free and active principle has evolved to signify flexible alignment, rather than passive equidistance.

Some lessons emerge from past Indonesian foreign policy practices. First, while the free and active principle has consistently served as a guiding wisdom, its interpretation has often lacked consistent definition or clear strategic alignment with national interests and resources. Too often, it has functioned as a rhetorical shield, masking a lack of substantive direction.

Second, Indonesia has been placed a profound focus on building ASEAN as a cornerstone of its foreign policy. This focus has yielded benefits—as argued throughout this monograph—and should be maintained, particularly as Indonesia has a stake in ASEAN's reform agenda. However, while important, ASEAN should not be the sole focus of Indonesia's diplomacy. Reflecting on the changing global order and Indonesia's evolving national interests, it is clear that ASEAN as a platform cannot fully accommodate all of Indonesia's interests. As such, ASEAN should be treated as one of many diplomatic channels, not as the only one.

Table 1.

Indonesia's Foreign Policy Concepts and Its Implementation

Concept/Principle	Historical Role	Empirical Examples by Administration	Contemporary Challenge	Future Direction
Free and Active <i>(Bebas dan Aktif)</i>	Avoid entanglement in great power rivalry; Promote peace & sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Megawati: Reaffirmed ASEAN diplomacy post-crisis • SBY: G20 & BDF engagement; ASEAN Charter • Jokowi: AOIP; G20 as neutrality platform 	Ambiguity in practice; sometimes rhetorical cover for lack of strategic clarity	Redefine as Strategic Autonomy with Directional Flexibility—align foreign policy with resources & national interest
ASEAN Centrality	Core regional anchor for Indonesia's diplomacy; multilateral buffer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bali Concord II • Strong support for ASEAN Charter & AOIP • Myanmar & Rohingya crises handled with ASEAN first, bilateral second 	ASEAN's institutional fatigue & limited capacity in great power context	Maintain leadership within ASEAN while also building complementary minilateral & global channels
Operational Logic	Default to ASEAN for diplomacy; project neutrality	Consistent invocation across eras to justify selective global activism	ASEAN increasingly bypassed by minilateral forums	Use ASEAN as platform plus: forge selective issue-based coalitions (e.g., MIKTA, Quad+)

Indonesia's tendency to default to ASEAN in all regional matters has sometimes limited its ability to lead or innovate. For example, during the 2015–2017 Rohingya crisis, ASEAN's inability to act decisively forced Indonesia to pursue bilateral diplomacy with Myanmar and Bangladesh, including humanitarian missions led by Vice President Jusuf Kalla. While the actions were commendable, they were framed narrowly as 'complementary' to ASEAN rather than through the use of an ASEAN mechanism, thereby missing an opportunity to redefine Indonesia's leadership role outside of ASEAN's consensus constraints.

Given this context, the application of the free and active principle needs a rethink, as it cannot merely mean neutrality or passive engagement. Indeed, Indonesia's most robust periods of diplomatic creativity have emerged when it balanced ASEAN engagement with broader initiatives. The creation of the Bali Democracy Forum, Indonesia's independent bid to host G20 and Islamic summits, and its simultaneous involvement in OIC and Non-Aligned Movement demonstrate this dual-track approach. Moving forward, Indonesia should institutionalise such efforts and ensure they are not dependent on individual leaders or crisis moments.

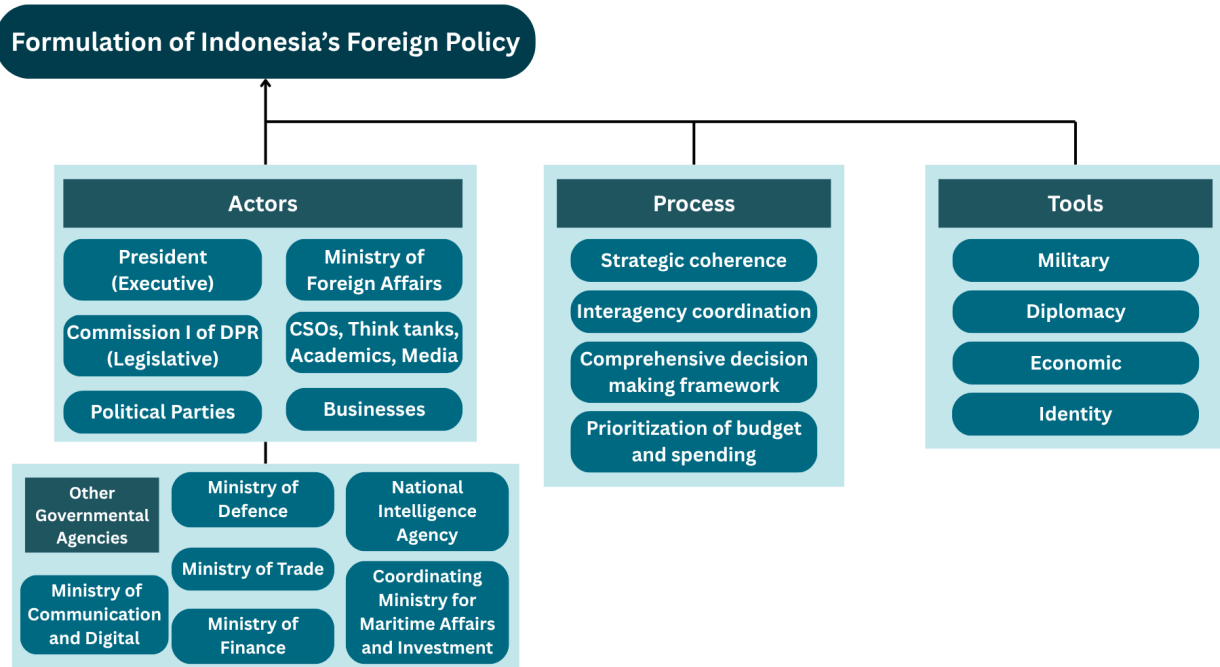
In conclusion, while the changing international system presents significant challenges, it also offers opportunities for Indonesia. By navigating the US-China rivalry with strategic foresight, leveraging new platforms for cooperation, and playing a leadership role in ASEAN, Indonesia can continue to protect its sovereignty and promote a stable regional order. This, however, will require an overhaul of its domestic foreign policy machinery and a broader understanding of foreign policy's role beyond traditional diplomacy, setting the stage for the next parts of this discussion.

Foreign Policy Formulation: Actors, Tools, and Process

Indonesia's foreign policy must be grounded in the strategic assessment of its geopolitical position within the international system, its historical experiences, and its steadfast commitment to independence and non-alignment. Over decades, Indonesia has aimed to assert itself as a middle power with significant influence in Southeast Asia, particularly through ASEAN. However, the evolving global landscape—characterised by great power competition, rising populism, and challenges to multilateralism—necessitates a recalibration of Indonesia's foreign policy direction. To navigate these challenges effectively, Indonesia must reassess its foreign policy-making process by refining the roles of key actors, utilising foreign policy tools more strategically, and considering institutional reforms.

Figure 1.

Key Elements in Indonesia's Foreign Policy Making Process



1. Key Actors in Indonesian Foreign Policy

Indonesia's foreign policy is not solely formulated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kementerian Luar Negeri, Kemlu); a range of actors contribute to and shape it. These include the President, various government ministries and agencies, the legislature and political parties, as well as civil society and business interests.

A. The Role of the President and Executive Leadership

Indonesia's presidential system grants substantial power to the president in shaping foreign policy. According to Law No. 37/1999 on Foreign Relations, the president holds the highest authority in foreign affairs, making the executive a central actor in determining Indonesia's international direction. The effectiveness of this leadership, however, hinges on the president's engagement with global issues and strategic vision. Recent administrations—most notably President Joko Widodo's—often prioritised pragmatic economic development over high-profile international diplomacy, as evidenced by constant absence at UN General Assembly meetings. Nevertheless, Jokowi's attendance at the G7 Summit in Germany and his visits to Ukraine and Russia in 2022 demonstrated rare diplomatic push directly tied to economic and peacebuilding aims.

The current administration under President Prabowo Subianto has adopted a slightly different approach, marked by a greater international presence. One of Prabowo's initial moves was to signal Indonesia's interest in joining BRICS, followed by high-level visits to Beijing and Washington. However, it remains premature to determine whether his personalised approach to foreign affairs will yield more substantive foreign policy outcomes or resolve existing ambiguities both domestically and internationally.

International partners have, at times, expressed concerns about the lack of clarity in Indonesia's foreign policy, particularly as the country strives to balance relations with major powers like the US and China while reconciling the new president's global engagements with regional commitments. Domestically, departures from Kemlu's traditional stance risk causing bureaucratic confusion within the bureaucracy if not underpinned by clear, well-studied strategies. To mitigate the risks of an ambiguous foreign policy, domestic priorities must align with global trends, which requires not just vision but also institution-building (as discussed below) to support better coordination, planning, and risk management.

B. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kementerian Luar Negeri/Kemlu)

Kemlu, traditionally the primary actor in formulating and implementing Indonesia's foreign policy, plays a critical role in day-to-day diplomacy, particularly concerning ASEAN and multilateral diplomacy, and managing Indonesia's representatives abroad. While Kemlu continues to represent Indonesia's interests abroad, its effectiveness has occasionally been undermined by interagency coordination challenges and competing priorities from other ministries, such as Defence and Trade.

If the President does not prioritise foreign policy, Kemlu's established playbook often dictates the trajectory of Indonesian foreign policy in response to dynamics in the regional and international dynamics. Kemlu's advocacy for AOIP, as mentioned, showcased its regional leadership in shaping cooperative frameworks amid rising US-China tensions.

As a public policy agency, Kemlu's budget constraints have sometimes limited its capacity to execute long-term strategies effectively. Recent debates over foreign policy budgets have underscored the importance of aligning resources with strategic goals; insufficient funding can weaken Indonesia's diplomatic initiatives, particularly in multilateral forums like ASEAN and the G20. During Indonesia's 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship, Kemlu had to stretch limited resources while leading engagement on the Myanmar crisis and regional security dialogues. Better resource allocation and inter-agency collaboration are crucial to ensure Kemlu's initiatives align with Indonesia's broader foreign policy objectives. Indeed, Kemlu's diplomatic efforts—from conceptual agenda-setting to shuttle diplomacy—have demonstrably steered regional policy and upheld Indonesia's "free and active" doctrine.

C. The Role of Other Governmental Agencies

As international issues increasingly intersect with domestic policy domains—from trade and defence to digital transformation and infrastructure—various ministries and agencies have assumed roles that directly influence Indonesia's external engagement. While many state institutions maintain international linkages or participate in cross-border cooperation, several can be considered particularly influential in shaping the substance and direction of Indonesia's foreign policy due to their strategic mandates and sustained involvement in diplomacy, security, economic statecraft, and global norm-setting. The following agencies are arguably the main drivers of Indonesia's foreign policy choices:

- **The Ministry of Defence (Kementerian Pertahanan/Kemhan) and The Indonesian Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia/TNI).** Kemhan plays a pivotal role in foreign policy, primarily through defence and military diplomacy and defence procurement. Its efforts to modernise Indonesia's military capabilities have significant implications for foreign relations, especially with major arms suppliers like the US, Russia, and France. Notably, the purchase of 42 Rafale fighter jets from France and the joint military exercise "Super Garuda Shield" with the US and allies in 2022 illustrate how defence deals shape Indonesia's strategic posture and substantiate its relations with major power. By engaging in defence cooperation, joint military exercises, and arms procurement, the Defence Ministry strengthens Indonesia's ability to navigate complex regional security dynamics (including tensions in the South China Sea). The Ministry also coordinates Indonesia's contributions to international peacekeeping, enhancing the country's global image as a responsible actor committed to peace .

In addition to Kemhan's policy role, TNI play a direct operational role in shaping Indonesia's international posture. Through joint military exercises, naval patrols, and participation in UN peacekeeping missions, TNI serves as a tool of both deterrence and defence diplomacy.

Its involvement in the 2016 Natuna Sea standoff—when Chinese fishing vessels entered Indonesia's EEZ—demonstrated the use of military deployment to reinforce sovereign claims, complementing diplomatic protests issued by Kemlu. Moreover, TNI's leadership in hosting multilateral exercises such as the Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo (MNEK) showcases how Indonesia uses its military to build regional trust and promote maritime stability. While not responsible for policy formulation, the TNI's actions on the ground can carry significant foreign policy implications, particularly in signaling Indonesia's strategic intentions to external partners.

- The Ministry of Trade (Kementerian Perdagangan/Kemendag).** Economic diplomacy is critical for Indonesia's foreign policy as the country seeks deeper integration into global value chains while remaining resilient against global shocks. Kemendag plays a pivotal role in negotiating comprehensive and issue-specific economic partnership agreements, securing market access for Indonesian products and services, and boosting their competitiveness. For example, Indonesia's ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in 2022, the world's largest free trade pact, was led by Kemendag. Furthermore, the Ministry actively participates in key platforms such as ASEAN, APEC, G20, and WTO, which offer opportunities for Indonesia to shape regional and global economic policies. Kemendag has concluded trade partnership with over 30 entities and is in talks for 17 other trade deals per September 2024, often consulting domestic industries for input. The ministry's roles in increasing utilisation rate of the existing FTAs and allowing flexibility in importing required raw materials are integral to Indonesia's economic influence. When Indonesia assumed the G20 presidency in 2022, the ministry showcased economic leadership by promoting reforms in global trade rules and supply-chain resilience. Furthermore, the ministry sometimes employs trade instruments for strategic goals, such as temporarily banning exports of certain commodities (e.g., palm oil in 2022) to stabilise domestic prices, which had ripple effects on global markets.
- The Ministry of Finance (Kementerian Keuangan/Kemenkeu).** Fiscal prudence is not only vital for domestic stability, but also underpins the country's international standing. Kemenkeu plays an indispensable role in supporting foreign policy objectives amidst the rise of alternative international financial institutions, the relocation of global supply chains and multinational companies, issues of overproduction, and debt crises in the Global South. Indonesia's leadership in launching the G20 Pandemic Fund under Minister of Finance, Sri Mulyani, in 2022 demonstrated how fiscal initiatives can project Indonesia's global influence. Fiscal instruments can strengthen Indonesia's competitiveness and resilience. Within Bretton Woods institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, the Ministry facilitates international support to advance Indonesia's domestic reform agenda while advocating for reforms to the international financial architecture to align with Indonesia's development priorities. For example, it advocated for common frameworks to restructure debt for vulnerable countries in the G20 and coordinated with institutions like the IMF and Asian Development Bank to support regional economic stability.

Indonesia's finance officials have leveraged their credibility (most notably, Sri Mulyani was World Bank managing director) to voice the concerns of emerging economies, whether it calling for fairer global tax rules or climate finance for sustainable development.

Beyond direct function to foreign affairs, Kemenkeu's control over national budgeting grants it substantial influence over the scale and direction of foreign policy implementation. As the gatekeeper of fiscal allocations, the Ministry can effectively determine the operational capacity of other foreign policy actors—particularly Kemlu, whose limited budget has often constrained long-term diplomatic engagement. For instance, recent foreign policy budget cuts in early 2025 raised concerns about Indonesia's ability to sustain its international commitments and maintain diplomatic readiness, as noted in public debates during Indonesia's ASEAN chairmanship. Similarly, delayed payments in 2023 by Indonesia in the KF-21 fighter jet project with South Korea—attributed to fiscal constraints—highlighted how budgetary decisions can directly impact foreign defence cooperation. These dynamics shape interagency relations, sometimes reinforcing asymmetries in institutional influence and limiting the ability of sectoral ministries or Kemlu to respond swiftly to international developments. Consequently, resource mobilisation for diplomacy, defence cooperation, or multilateral commitments often hinges on Kemenkeu's willingness to align budget priorities with foreign policy needs.

- **The National Intelligence Agency (Badan Intelijen Negara/BIN).** Intelligence gathering and analysis are integral to the formulation Indonesia's foreign policy decisions. BIN operates discreetly to assess global threats and opportunities, providing the government with essential information that underpins diplomatic, military, and economic strategies. Effective intelligence coordination is especially vital as Indonesia navigates escalating tensions within the Indo-Pacific region. Robust intelligence input ensures that policy formulation is predicated upon a realistic appraisal of international developments. BIN's coordination in operations such as the rescue of hostages from Abu Sayyaf and in regional anti-terror intelligence initiatives, exemplified by the "Our Eyes" initiative, demonstrate its discreet yet effective role in shaping security diplomacy. Domestically, BIN's activities in Papua have also carried foreign policy implications— for instance, in 2023–24 the agency engaged with local actors and international counterparts to facilitate the release of a New Zealand pilot held by Papuan separatists.
- **Other Sectoral Ministries.** Beyond dedicated foreign policy and intelligence bodies, other sectoral ministries contribute to shaping foreign policy agenda, with their influence contingent upon the priorities of the incumbent administration. For example, when President Joko Widodo committed to actualising his Global Maritime Fulcrum vision, ministries associated with maritime affairs gained increased prominence. The Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs (Kementerian Koordinator bidang Maritim/Kemenkomar), established at the beginning of Joko Widodo's first administration, played an important role in crafting Indonesia's National Ocean Policy which encompassed various dimensions of maritime diplomacy.

Its portfolio included advancing Indonesia's agenda on combatting Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing at the regional and international fora and bolstering Indonesian diplomacy among island and archipelagic states. Certain initiatives have yielded international repercussions, exemplified by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries' policy of sinking and burning illegal fishing vessels. The policy garnered global attention and was interpreted as a robust assertion of Indonesia's maritime sovereignty.

During Joko Widodo's second administration, as the policy partially shifted from maritime emphasis, Kemenkomar was restructured to become the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs (Kementerian Koordinasi bidang Maritim dan Investasi/Kemenkomarves). Kemenkomarves assumed a pivotal role in Indonesia's resource-based diplomacy, notably by overseeing policies related to the downstreaming of critical minerals such as nickel and bauxite. The 2020 ban on nickel ore export triggered a WTO dispute with the EU while simultaneously attracting foreign investment, particularly from China, into Indonesia's smelting industry. By leveraging Indonesia's vast natural resource endowments, the ministry negotiated investment terms with foreign companies and governments to promote domestic industrialisation and enhance Indonesia's position within the global supply chains. These efforts contributed significantly to Indonesia's broader economic diplomacy, particularly concerning sustainability and green energy transition. Kemenkomarves' subsequent abolition following the commencement of President Prabowo Subianto's term likely signals a shift in the current administration's priorities toward other sectors, such as food and energy.

Consequently, ministries tackling these newly prioritised sectors may gain elevated status and assume taking on key diplomatic roles to advance the government's agenda. The Ministry of Communication and Digital (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital/Komdigi) serves as a pertinent contemporary example. In an era increasingly defined by digital diplomacy, this Ministry assumes an expanding role in managing Indonesia's international digital presence. Its responsibilities include overseeing cybersecurity, facilitating the development and interoperability of digital infrastructure, and promoting favourable regional norms for digital governance,—all while safeguarding national data sovereignty. Previously named Ministry for Communications and Information, the Ministry's 2022 regulation requiring global tech companies to register under Indonesia's new content moderation law—and the consequent temporary blocking of sites like PayPal and Steam—underscored Indonesia's resolve to assert regulatory authority over foreign digital platforms. As information and technology become increasingly critical instruments of foreign policy, the Ministry's efforts to anticipate cyber threats are integral to safeguarding Indonesia's international reputation and national security. Furthermore, amidst intensifying competition among global technology corporations for market access, control over undersea cables, and access to raw materials, the Ministry must carefully evaluate the geopolitical implications associated with selecting foreign technology partners for critical infrastructure development.

Current regulatory frameworks already empower Indonesia to conduct technology audits, issue clearances, and perform security screenings for such partnerships.

This evolving landscape of Indonesia's foreign policy exhibits a distinctly multisectoral and multidimensional character, influenced not solely by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but also by an expanding array of government ministries and agencies. In diverse domains—encompassing defence procurement and military exercises, trade negotiations and industrial policy, fiscal diplomacy, intelligence cooperation, maritime sovereignty, and digital regulation—foreign policy decisions are intrinsically linked to domestic sectoral agendas. Consequently, ministries such as Defence, Trade, Finance, Maritime Affairs, and Communication and Digital Affairs now exert direct influence on Indonesia's global posture, acting as agents of economic statecraft, security alignment, and technological governance. These developments underscore that foreign policy has transcended its traditional confines as a siloed domain, evolving into a comprehensive, whole-of-government enterprise that necessitates input and coordination across a multitude sectors.

This institutional reality, however, stretches beyond the framework delineated by Law No. 37/1999. This legislation formally vests primary authority over foreign relations in the President, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs designated as the lead implementing body. Although this legal foundation affirms executive supremacy, it inadequately addresses the complex inter-agency dynamics that characterise foreign policy practice. The law contains insufficient provisions for interministerial coordination, effective risk management, and overall policy coherence in an era where domestic measures, such as a digital regulation or trade ban, can precipitate significant geopolitical ramifications.

In the absence of effective leadership and robust institutional mechanisms for strategic coordination, this diffusion of foreign policy responsibilities risks producing a fragmented external posture. Competing ministerial priorities, entrenched bureaucratic rivalries, or unilateral actions by individual ministries could undermine Indonesia's capacity to project a coherent message to international partners. Moreover, the absence of structured coordination—especially during periods of crisis or rapid geopolitical shifts—may result in inconsistent signalling, policy contradictions, or diplomatic missteps. This situation underscores the need for institutional innovations, such as the establishment of a National Security Council or the enhancement of interagency task forces, to ensure that Indonesia's foreign policy apparatus operates as a cohesive and strategically aligned system.

D. The Role of the Legislature and Political Parties

Indonesia's legislature, particularly Commission I of the House of Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat/DPR), exercises oversight on foreign policy matters, particularly concerning defence, foreign affairs, and information. However, parliamentary debates often focus more on domestic issues, with comparatively limited engagement on substantive foreign policy matters. Similarly, political parties tend to centre their electoral campaigns on domestic economic and security concerns, often neglecting to articulate substantive foreign policy platforms.

This lack of emphasis on foreign policy within the broader political system can result in divergences between Indonesia's strategic objectives and the policies implemented. For instance, during the 2020 escalation of tensions in the Natuna Sea, several DPR members, including those from the ruling party, publicly advocated for a more assertive stance against Chinese incursions, thereby pressuring the executive branch to respond with naval deployments and diplomatic protests.

To enhance Indonesia's efficacy as a global actor, it is crucial that the legislature and political parties engage more substantively in foreign policy discourse, thereby ensuring greater alignment between the country's international posture and its domestic political realities. While foreign policy may not yet constitute a primary electoral concern for the Indonesia public, political parties possess opportunities to derive electoral advantages by formulating international economic policies conducive to attract job-creating foreign investment or facilitating export for small and medium enterprises. Certain political parties, such as Gerindra under Prabowo, particularly with the appointment of Sugiono as Foreign Minister, have advocated a more independent and assertive foreign policy posture. This orientation was reflected, for example in early engagements concerning potential BRICS membership following the commencement of the new administration.

A notable illustration of legislative and political party influence occurred during Indonesia's tenure at the UN Security Council in 2007–2008. Domestic pressure, primarily from political parties and religious organisations, compelled the government to abstain from a vote on additional sanctions against Iran, despite its initial support for an earlier resolution. This policy shift illustrated how foreign policy decisions, particularly those concerning sensitive international issues, can be significantly influenced by domestic democratic contestation and public sentiment.

E. Civil Society, Think Tanks, Academics, and the Media

Beyond state actors, civil society organisations, think tanks, academics, and the media play an increasingly important role in shaping public discourse and informing foreign policy deliberations. Think tanks contribute valuable research and policy recommendations; however, their systematic integration into formal policymaking processes has varied, often contingent upon the governance style of respective administrations. Prominent mass Islamic organisations, notably Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, have functioned as key non-state actors in Indonesia's public diplomacy. In the post-9/11 era, both organizations were instrumental in promoting Indonesia's image as a tolerant, democratic, and pluralist Muslim-majority country. Their global networks enabled active participation in interfaith dialogues, Track II diplomacy, and regional counterterrorism cooperation—especially in Southeast Asia.

Furthermore, NU and Muhammadiyah have played a significant, albeit often less visible, role in framing Indonesia's Muslim identity as a positive cultural asset.

This is achieved through various means, including humanitarian diplomacy and educational outreach programmes directed at Muslim communities abroad. Their engagement complements state-led initiatives to counter violent extremism and strengthens Indonesia's credibility in global and Islamic multilateral fora. Conversely, media coverage often gravitates towards high-profile, episodic events rather than providing sustained, in-depth analysis of long-term foreign policy objectives.

Enhanced collaboration between these diverse stakeholders and the governmental bodies has the potential to enrich Indonesia's foreign policy discourse and establish a more comprehensively informed foundation for decision-making. For example, during the Rohingya crisis in 2017, large-scale civil society demonstrations and humanitarian campaigns exerted considerable pressure on the government, compelling it to engage diplomatically with Myanmar and provide aid to refugees. This serves as an example of public opinion translating into tangible policy action. Consequently, strengthening formal and informal channels for expert input and broad public discussion is crucial to ensuring that Indonesia's foreign policy is both strategically sound and enjoys widespread domestic legitimacy.

F. Businesses

Indonesian companies engaged in export and import activities, alongside relevant business associations, are significant actors in shaping the country's foreign policy considerations. Whereas the government maintains a macroeconomic perspective, businesses offer micro-level insights regarding the economic viability of specific foreign policy choices and international economic partnerships. These commercial entities have direct stakes in the global movement of goods, capital, people, and technology. For instance, the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN) has played a leading role in shaping Indonesia's approach to the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), by organizing side forums and stakeholder consultations designed to ensure that business interests are adequately represented in negotiation processes. Consequently, Indonesian businesses function as pivotal actors whose needs for raw materials, markets, and financing necessitate careful consideration in the formulation of policy.

A notable example of this dynamic occurred in 2022 when the government abruptly imposed a ban on palm oil export to regulate domestic prices. This action elicited significant adverse reactions from industry groups and precipitated swift policy revisions, driven by concerns over potential reputational damage and the loss of international market share. Robust dialogue between governmental bodies and the business sector is crucial for ensuring that trade agreements or international partnerships yield tangible benefits. Similarly, the national strategy of downstreaming critical minerals, such as nickel, has garnered support from industry actors seeking greater value capture. Concurrently, these actors have advocated for enhanced regulatory clarity and export incentives as Indonesia moves to become a key hub in the global electric vehicle (EV) battery supply chain.

This tension between the country's nationalistic economic impulses and its outward-facing market-oriented posture is not a recent phenomenon. Scholars have observed that Indonesia has historically exhibited a pattern of contradictory policies in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and aquaculture. This involves publicly endorsing free trade principles while quietly deploying protectionist measures such as opaque licensing regimes and non-tariff barriers—often designed to shield politically influential domestic industries. In previous instances, restrictions on shrimp exports or feed imports, protectionist policies were justified on food security or development grounds but served to accommodate domestic political-business alliances. Such dynamic continues to shape the state-business interface, especially when strategic sectors like food, energy, or industrial policy are at stake. This duality, characterised by concurrent global trade engagement and selective protectionism, illustrates the complex interplay between business interests and the formulation of Indonesia's foreign policy.

Thus, as illustrated in the table below, while Indonesia's foreign policy remains formally guided by Law No. 37/1999—which vests primary authority in the hands of the president and implementation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—the realities of international engagement have evolved.

Table 2.

Actors in Indonesia' Foreign Policy Making

Actor	Main Functions	Challenges/Risks
President and Executive Leadership	President and Executive Leadership	Can be overly personalized; can be hampered by inconsistent leadership priorities and interests in foreign affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kemlu)	Implements diplomacy; leads multilateral and ASEAN engagements	Limited budget; overshadowed by stronger sectoral actors in specific issues
Ministry of Defence (Kemhan) Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI)	Formulates defence policy, Defence diplomacy, arms procurement, military cooperation Carries out operational military diplomacy through exercises, patrols, and UN Peacekeeping; reinforces sovereignty	Entanglement in rivalries; risk of sanctions; arms dependence Limited power projection; risk of misalignment with diplomatic messaging
Ministry of Trade (Kemendag)	Trade negotiations, economic diplomacy, market access	Coordination gaps; protectionist pressures

Ministry of Finance (Kemenkeu)	Fiscal diplomacy, international economic architecture engagement	Budget constraints impact diplomacy/defence; strategic prioritization
National Intelligence Agency (BIN)	Threat assessment, intelligence for diplomacy/security decisions	Opaque influence; limited democratic oversight
Other Sectoral Ministries (e.g., Kemenkomarves, Kominfo)	Issue-specific diplomacy (e.g., maritime, digital, environment)	Lack coordination; shifting roles based on president's priorities
Legislature and Political Parties (DPR, Political Elites)	Oversight, pressure points, influence through public contestation	Low engagement on foreign policy; reactive politics
Civil Society, Think Tanks, Media	Advocacy, public opinion shaping, informal policy input	Fragmented input; weak institutional link to policymaking
Businesses and Industry Groups	Influences trade policy, investment frameworks, multilateral engagement	Short-term commercial focus; lack of strategic coherence for greater national interests

Indonesia's foreign policy is shaped not by a single institution, but rather a constellation of actors, ranging from the president and Kemlu to sectoral ministries, intelligence agencies, the legislature, political parties, civil society organisations, and business communities. This complex web reflects the multidimensional nature of contemporary foreign policy, where issues of security, trade, technology, and values intersect. However, the increasingly pluralised landscape of foreign policy actors has outpaced corresponding institutional reform. Without stronger coordination mechanisms, Indonesia faces the risk of incoherent policy, fragmented implementation, and diluted international messaging. Understanding the identities of the actors represents only a partial understanding; it is equally crucial to understand the instruments they employ. As these actors navigate a dynamic global environment, the subsequent analysis will examine the foreign policy tools at their disposal—namely military, diplomatic, economic, and normative instruments—and evaluate their efficacy in advancing Indonesia's strategic interests.

2. Foreign Policy Tools: Military, Diplomacy, Economic, and Identity

Having examined the institutional and procedural challenges within Indonesia's foreign policy process, it is essential to explore the primary instruments through which Indonesia projects power, advances its national interests, and navigates the global system. Foreign policy tools not only reflect strategic intent, but also serve as a test of national capacity and coordination. Whether manifested through defence diplomacy, traditional state-to-state engagements, economic statecraft, or the deployment of soft power, these instruments must be employed with coherence and adaptability to respond to a rapidly shifting geopolitical environment. However, as this section argues, the effectiveness of Indonesia's foreign policy tools hinges not merely on their availability but critically on their alignment with national objectives and the systematic nature of their deployment across sectors and initiatives.

A. Military Power and Security

Military power and security policy are integral components of a state's foreign policy toolkit. They serve not only as instruments to deter threats, defend sovereignty, or signal resolve, but also as avenues to build international credibility, project influence, and foster strategic partnerships. For middle-income and non-aligned states like Indonesia, military tools often function as both a means to achieve foreign policy objectives—such as asserting maritime claims or contributing to regional stability—and as ends in themselves, reflecting broader national goals to strengthen internal capacity and reduce strategic vulnerability. Unlike great powers with global military reach, Indonesia's more limited force projection capabilities and geographic constraints have significantly shaped its strategic behaviour. Foreign policy, in this context, is not merely about external engagement but also about compensating for material limitations, boosting technological self-reliance, and reinforcing domestic resilience. Consequently, investments in defence infrastructure, participation in peacekeeping operations, and multilateral security cooperation are thus simultaneously outward-facing strategies and inward-facing development agendas.

Indonesia's military has traditionally been focused on territorial integrity and internal security. However, under Defence Minister Prabowo Subianto during the later years of the Joko Widodo administration, there was an increased emphasis on arms procurement, with the aim of modernising Indonesia's defence capabilities. By diversifying its arms suppliers and investing in critical defence infrastructure, Indonesia seeks to strengthen its deterrence capabilities while maintaining its non-aligned stance. This military modernisation reflects an understanding that a robust defence posture is crucial for safeguarding sovereignty and securing maritime borders, especially amidst tensions in the South China Sea. However, while a diverse set of suppliers may indeed contribute to Indonesia's non-alignment, considerations of system interoperability, overall military effectiveness, and the degree to which the domestic Indonesian defence industry can genuinely develop pose challenges arising from this strategy.

Additionally, Indonesia's participation in UN peacekeeping operations enhances its international standing and demonstrates its commitment to global peace and security. This involvement not only bolsters Indonesia's diplomatic reputation, but also serves as a form of defence diplomacy, where military-to-military ties are forged and strengthened through the deployment of Indonesian peacekeepers alongside foreign militaries.

Indonesia's increasing defence budget necessitates a careful balancing act between its military ambitions and its broader diplomatic and economic objectives. Historically, Indonesia has leveraged its military capabilities for both symbolic and strategic purposes to achieve foreign policy objectives. Despite limitations in hard power projection, the military has been instrumental in asserting sovereignty, deterring external threats, and elevating Indonesia's international status.

A notable illustration of this occurred in 2016, when President Joko Widodo convened a cabinet meeting aboard a naval vessel near the Natuna Islands. This action, coupled with increased naval patrols, effectively reaffirmed Indonesia's maritime sovereignty amidst rising Chinese incursions and demonstrated how military posturing can bolster diplomatic messaging. Similarly, Indonesia's consistent hosting of the Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo (MNEK) since 2014 showcases the use of defence diplomacy to promote regional security cooperation and improve multilateral engagement. These practices reflect a pragmatic understanding of military tools as instruments for both strategic signalling and relationship-building in regional affairs.

Indonesia's military power and policy influence its foreign policy through several key avenues:

- **Strategic Arms Procurement.** Indonesia actively pursues arms deals with diverse partners, including the US, Russia, South Korea, and France. This diversification strategy mitigates over-reliance on any single supplier. Recent procurement deals for fighter jets, submarines, and other advanced military equipment signal Indonesia's intent to bolster its deterrence capabilities. This not only aligns with efforts to assert control over Indonesia's vast territorial waters but also reflects a strategic balancing act in navigating the US and China rivalry.

In recent years, Indonesia has ordered 42 Rafale fighter jets from France, signed a letter of intent to purchase F-15EX from the US, and resumed negotiations for South Korea's KF-21 Boramae fighter jet programme. It also acquired Italian FREMM frigates, pursued new submarines from South Korea, and explored unmanned aerial and naval drone systems. These acquisitions enhance deterrence and signal strategic positioning to multiple suppliers.

- **Defence Diplomacy.** Arms procurement serves as a tool of defence diplomacy. By diversifying its arms suppliers, Indonesia strengthens bilateral relationships and maintains its status as a valued partner to both Western nations and countries like Russia and China. This approach grants Indonesia access to advanced military technology from various sources while still maintaining its non-aligned stance.

Indonesia also conducts defence diplomacy through regular bilateral and multilateral military exercises. While partners for these exercises are diverse, the US remains the most frequent collaborator. These exercises aim to gain operational experience and to forge stronger military-to-military ties with partners. This is evident in joint exercises like Super Garuda Shield with the US and allies (including Australia and Japan), as well as bilateral defence agreements with France and South Korea. Indonesia's active participation in regional security dialogues such as ADMM-Plus and Shangri-La Dialogue further exemplifies its commitment to defence diplomacy.

- **Defence Economic and Industrial Benefits.** Beyond enhancing military capabilities, Indonesia's arms procurement strategy, particularly under Prabowo Subianto both as Minister of Defence and President, emphasises the development of its domestic defence industry. By expanding its defence industrial base through partnerships and technology transfer, Indonesia not only aims for self-sufficiency but also seeks to position itself as a credible regional actor capable of contributing to collective security agendas, especially in the Indo-Pacific. Arms deal often includes technology transfer agreements designed to boost local production capabilities, creating a more self-sufficient defence sector. This aligns with Joko Widodo's broader industrialisation goal and could eventually facilitate defence exports, thereby integrating defence procurement with economic diplomacy.

State-owned firms like PT Pindad and PT PAL have expanded their capabilities in armoured vehicles, naval shipbuilding, and ammunition production through collaborations with foreign suppliers. Indonesia's push for local content and co-production—evident in projects like the KF-21 and naval construction—demonstrates an effort to ensure long-term benefits beyond procurement.

- **Counterterrorism as a Security Diplomacy Tool.** Indonesia's security apparatus has gained international recognition for its domestic and regional counterterrorism efforts. Following the 2002 Bali bombings, Indonesia developed a robust security response through coordination between TNI, the Indonesian police (Polri), and intelligence agencies. This approach has since evolved into a model for internal-external security integration. The establishment of the National Counterterrorism Agency (Badan Nasional Penganggulangan Terorisme/BNPT) and participation in joint training with countries like Australia and the US underscore how Indonesia's counterterrorism efforts support broader regional stability and serve as an entry point for security partnerships.

Indonesia leads several ASEAN initiatives on counter-radicalisation and deradicalisation, hosts regional workshops, and shares its soft approach to rehabilitation as a best practice. These efforts enhance Indonesia's security credentials while projecting responsible leadership on sensitive transnational issues.

- **Peacekeeping and Global Responsibility.** Indonesia stands as one of the top non-African troop-contributing countries to UN peacekeeping operations. Through deployments in Lebanon, Congo, and Central African Republic, TNI personnel not only provide security but also contribute to international peacebuilding. Participation in peacekeeping serves as both a practical contribution and a soft power strategy: It positions Indonesia as a responsible stakeholder in global security while providing its forces with valuable operational experience in multinational settings.
- **Maritime Security and Sovereignty Assertion.** Given Indonesia's archipelagic geography, maritime defence a strategic imperative. Naval modernisation has prioritised securing Indonesia's EEZ, particularly in the Natuna Sea, where incursions by foreign fishing fleets—often backed by coast guard vessels—have triggered security incidents. The establishment of the Natuna Joint Integrated Command (Kogabwilhan I) increased naval patrols, and symbolic demonstrations of sovereignty (e.g., deploying the navy to escort detained vessels, holding cabinet meetings at sea) illustrate of how maritime military posture contributes to foreign policy signalling.

Moreover, Indonesia's leadership in forums such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and support for UNCLOS-based maritime order underpin its commitment to lawful maritime governance. Military exercises and naval presence reinforce these claims. Within Southeast Asia, Indonesia hosted ASEAN's first joint military exercise that did not involve an external partner in 2023. While non-combat in nature, focusing on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), Search and Rescue Operations, and others, this exercise served to build trust amongst ASEAN militaries and signal ASEAN's agency in its own maritime security amidst increasing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea.

Indonesia's defence policy, as an integral component of its foreign and security policy, must also be understood within the broader context of its relatively limited power projection capabilities. Scholars have long posited that Indonesia's strategic outlook—characterised by a strong preference for regionalism and multilateralism—is, in part, a pragmatic response to the structural constraints of its military. The country's emphasis on ASEAN-led mechanisms and normative leadership in regional forums do not merely reflect a diplomatic principle; they also represent a practical strategy to manage security challenges through consensus-building rather than overt force. In this sense, military tools in Indonesia often function as both a means and an end: they support sovereignty protection and deterrence, but also serve as instruments of influence, status signalling, and regional reassurance within a rules-based framework.

Furthermore, Indonesia's arms procurement strategy is not without its inherent risks. Over-reliance on arms deals as a diplomatic tool could potentially complicate relationships with major powers, especially as US–Russia or US–China tensions escalate. For instance, Indonesia's sustained interest in Russian fighter jets has triggered concerns about potential US sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

This highlights the delicate balance Indonesia must maintain between strengthening its defence and avoiding entanglements in great power rivalries.

Another strategic concern is interoperability. As Indonesia acquires military platforms from diverse array of suppliers, operational integration becomes more complex. Issues related to maintenance, training, and logistics can be exacerbated across different systems, potentially leading to increased long-term costs and compromising readiness. Domestically, political pressures and fiscal limitations have at times delayed payments (e.g., Indonesia's arrears in the KF-21 program with South Korea). This underscores the need for better defence budgeting, accountability, and procurement transparency. Ensuring accountability and transparency should be a paramount priority for Indonesia's defence procurements moving forward. Such measure would reassure Indonesia's partners of its reliability for defence and joint arms production and help mitigate diplomatic tensions arising from arms deals. Consequently, arms procurements must be executed not only with defence policy considerations in mind, but also with keen awareness of broader foreign policy implications and the cultivation of relationships with international partners.

While Indonesia's armed forces are modernising, its doctrine remains fundamentally defensive. Indonesia does not maintain overseas military bases and rarely engages in power projection beyond its immediate region. This defensive posture is both a constitutional mandate and a strategic choice aimed at preserving its credibility as a neutral actor. Nonetheless, global trends suggest that future military strategy must effectively address grey-zone threats (e.g., illegal fishing, maritime militia), cyber vulnerabilities, and humanitarian or disaster response missions (HADR).

B. Diplomacy

In the toolkit of foreign policy, diplomacy serves as the primary instrument for negotiation, persuasion, and representation, enabling states to pursue their interests through peaceful means. Diplomacy refers specifically to the methods and actions used to advance a country's objectives in the international arena. It encompasses bilateral, multilateral, and informal channels, and can be utilised to build influence, resolve conflicts, manage crises, or shape norms. Unlike military or economic tools, diplomacy often relies on credibility, timing, and mutual perception of legitimacy. Its success is determined not only by the content of the message but by how it is delivered, who delivers it, and in what strategic context.

As global dynamics evolve, a country's diplomatic posture—the way it engages with the world—has fundamentally transformed. While Indonesia has consistently relied on diplomacy as its primary foreign policy instrument since independence, its diplomats now face an increasingly complex array of tasks. Yet, the effectiveness of Indonesia's diplomatic corps is constrained by several challenges.

- Maintaining and strengthening bilateral relations with key global actors such the US, China, Japan, and the EU is vital for trade, security, and political cooperation.

Similarly, multilateral engagements are indispensable. However, as traditional multilateralism faces gridlock and bilateral diplomacy are at times insufficient for scaling solutions, Indonesia's diplomats must also build capacity for engaging in and even initiating minilateral platforms. These flexible, smaller groupings are built around shared interests, such as critical mineral supply chains, renewable energy cooperation, or maritime law enforcement. Minilateral diplomacy involve distinct new skillsets compared to bilateral and multilateral approaches, including coalition-building, agenda-setting, and issue-specific coordination. This contrasts sharply with the consensus-driven habits prevalent in ASEAN or the protocol-heavy rhythm of traditional bilateral missions. This requires shift from passive participation toward leading and convening coalitions of like-minded middle powers on critical global challenges.

- Across all platforms—bilateral, multilateral, and minilateral—diplomats are frequently engaged in mediating disputes. The ASEAN framework is particular about this, exemplified by the active participation of Indonesian diplomats in addressing the South China Sea disputes and seeking solutions to the Myanmar crisis. Beyond regional conflicts, Indonesian diplomats are also actively involved in international counter-terrorism cooperation through forums such as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), and various ASEAN-led initiatives. Indonesia has assumed a leading role in fostering robust cooperation on counterterrorism, as well as preventing radicalisation and violent extremism. Diplomacy has enabled Indonesia to shape regional narratives on deradicalisation and promote non-coercive approaches to combat extremism.
- Beyond political and security priorities, economic diplomacy gained significant prominence at the outset of Joko Widodo's first administration. became a strong focus. Within Kemlu, a new position for expert staff on economic diplomacy was introduced. Indeed, in an era of changing global economic patterns, diplomats are crucial in promoting trade agreements, securing investments, and analysing the geopolitics of other countries' industrial and trade policies. In addition, Indonesian diplomats have also been tasked to support Indonesia's strategic economic programmes, such as mineral downstreaming and renewable energy development. Concurrently, they are increasingly engaged in digital diplomacy, tackling issues like cybersecurity, disinformation, and technology governance internationally
- A significant limiting factor for Indonesia's diplomacy is the foreign ministry budget. Effective diplomacy demands adequate resources, not solely for high-profile summits, but crucially for maintaining embassies, consulates, and missions abroad. Indonesia's foreign affairs budget has faced scrutiny, often leaving stretched thin, managing vast portfolios with limited funds and staff. A tailored approach to the foreign policy budget is therefore imperative to align national interests with Indonesia's global ambitions. Allocating more funds to diplomacy—particularly in strategic regions like the Indo-Pacific, Africa, and Latin America—would enhance Indonesia's global presence and provide the necessary support for its foreign policy goals.

- Resource constraints, both financial and human, are particularly experienced by Indonesian missions abroad. Indonesia maintains a substantial network of over 130 diplomatic posts worldwide (embassies, consulates, and permanent missions). These missions are the frontline of Indonesia's foreign policy, advancing the country's interests in trade, security, culture, and development. Many embassies and consulates operate with limited financial and human resources, hindering their overall effectiveness. Moreover, there remains questions about whether the 130 diplomatic posts are aligned with the contemporary priorities. For instance, while Indonesia actively seeks stronger ties with the Global South, it currently has relatively few missions in Africa and Latin America.

Diplomacy remains Indonesia's most relied-upon tool for projecting influence, navigating competition among major powers, and asserting its role in regional and global governance. Whether through ASEAN, bilateral ties, or emerging minilateral platforms, diplomacy enables Indonesia to shape international norms, mediate tensions, and advocate for its values. However, as global dynamics grow more fragmented and issue-specific, diplomatic strategy must evolve to include new formats, new skill sets, and more strategic prioritization, and must be supported by the effective use of other tools such as economic tools, which will be discussed in the following part.

C. Economic Tools

Economic tools represent one of Indonesia's most important and flexible instruments of foreign policy. Unlike military tools that rely on coercive power, or diplomacy that operates through persuasion and norms, economic instruments work via incentives, partnerships, and structural leverage. They fulfil a dual role: not only can they advance broader foreign policy objectives, such as fostering strategic partnerships, enhancing influence, or building resilience, but economic development and prosperity are also inherent foreign policy goals. For Indonesia, a resource-rich, emerging economy with significant demographic and market strength, economic tools are fundamental to both asserting strategic relevance and safeguarding national welfare.

Indonesia's economic diplomacy is profoundly shaped by its natural resources, substantial market size, and outward-looking policies. Under Widodo's administration, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi conceptualised "economic diplomacy" as a means to attract foreign investment, secure infrastructure financing, and diversify markets for Indonesian exports. While these efforts contributed to national development goals, they often lacked a deeper strategic orientation. Economic diplomacy was often perceived more as a promotional campaign than a long-term instrument to shape Indonesia's position within global trade architecture or to cultivate structural resilience. This resulted in a technocratic approach that often overlooked geopolitical calculations, strategic negotiation planning, or integration with other foreign policy tools, such as regional leadership, security cooperation, or industrial strategy.

The following are some of the key pillars of Indonesia's economic leverage.

- **Market Size and Economic Growth Prospects**

Indonesia's population of over 270 million—the 4th largest in the world—underpins the biggest economy in Southeast Asia. Its expanding middle class and consumer base render Indonesia highly attractive for foreign direct investment (FDI) across sectors including e-commerce, infrastructure, and manufacturing.

- *Market Size as Leverage:* Indonesia's substantial domestic market serves as a potent bargaining chip in trade negotiations. Global companies are keen to access this vast consumer base, enabling Indonesia to leverage market access to secure favourable trade and investment deals. For instance, multinational tech companies such as Google, Amazon, and Alibaba have significantly invested in Indonesia's digital economy. By prudently utilising its market access—for example, by stipulating technology transfer or local partnerships—Indonesia can negotiate improved terms regarding technology, labour standards, and investment protection. However, this leverage must be exercised judiciously to avoid deterring potential investor.
- *Economic Growth Prospects:* Despite disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia's long-term growth trajectory remains promising. It is projected to become one of the world's top economies by 2045, propelled by its demographic dividend, sustained industrialisation, and economic diversification. These bright prospects augment Indonesia's leverage, as international partners recognise its burgeoning importance in shaping the future of the Indo-Pacific.

- **Critical Minerals**

Indonesia possesses some of the world's largest reserves of critical minerals, including nickel, copper, tin, and bauxite, which are essential for global industries such as electric vehicle (EVs), renewable energy technologies, and batteries. Notably, Indonesia is the world's largest nickel producer, a key component for lithium-ion batteries in EVs. However, possessing these resources represents a time-sensitive comparative advantage, as this leverage diminishes once the resources are depleted or if new technologies introduce substitutes. Moreover, Indonesia is not the only country with these minerals, necessitating investment in recycling capabilities and a comprehensive understanding the full lifecycle of these resources.

- *Downstreaming of Critical Minerals:* Indonesia has banned the export of unprocessed nickel ore to compel local processing and encourage the production of value-added products like EV batteries. By controlling the supply of critical minerals and building domestic processing capacity, Indonesia seeks to enhance its bargaining power in trade talks and positions itself as a key player in global supply chains. A key case is Indonesia's 2020 nickel export ban. It was not only a domestic industrialisation policy but also a calculated signal of Indonesia's

intention to move up the global value chain. The ban prompted a formal WTO complaint by the European Union, but at the same time accelerated investment interest from countries such as China and South Korea in Indonesia's battery and EV sectors. This illustrates how assertive economic policies can serve foreign policy aims.

- **Leverage in Global Energy Transition and Digitalisation Trends:** The global shift towards renewable energy and high-technology industries further amplifies the importance of Indonesia's critical minerals. As countries like the US, China, and those within the EU seek to secure stable supplies of nickel and other minerals for their green energy transitions and digitalisation agendas, Indonesia's resources give it significant leverage. By continuing to develop its domestic refining and manufacturing capabilities, Indonesia can not only secure foreign investment but also negotiate improved terms in areas like technology transfer, environmental standards, and industrial partnerships.

• **Outward-Looking Policies**

Indonesia's current outward-looking policies are instrumental in harnessing play a critical role in capturing the benefits from the global economy while bolstering the country's resilience to external shocks through diversification. Indonesia cannot afford to depend solely on a single partner for its export market, supplier of imported products, and sources of foreign direct investment, especially in dual-use or public-facing sectors such as food, energy, health, telecommunication, and defence. Nor can the country rely on its current export structure. Yet, these outward looking policies remain under-leveraged as foreign policy instruments due to a fragmented governance and the absence of a strategic mindset across successive administrations. The authority and resources to deploy these tools often reside with stakeholders who are inward-looking and geopolitically-agnostic. Those with strategic awareness tend to lack the domestic political leverage necessary to mobilize them effectively. Hence, the successful implementation of domestic reforms and their alignment with international standards form a key foundation for these policies.

Key focal areas include among others the following three things.

- The first is *Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPA)*: Indonesia has concluded various economic partnership agreements at bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels. However, a persistent problem is the comparatively low utilisation rates of these CEPAs compared to the those of some neighbouring countries. The government has not adequately supported exporters in accessing capital and capacity building to capitalise on new trade agreements, and in return has focused too much on promotional activities over substantive engagement.

To improve competitiveness, Indonesian companies need support to meet market requirements (e.g., product labelling, phytosanitary standards, halal certification, supply chain due diligence). Moreover, there is a tendency that the selection of CEPA has thus far been based solely by international political consideration.

- *The second is development assistance and South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC).* Since gaining independence, Indonesia has been a proponent of SSTC, sharing its experiences with fellow developing countries in areas such as family planning, agriculture and fisheries, macroeconomic management, micro-finance, and disaster management. In recent years, following the establishment of the Indonesian Agency for International Aid (IndoAID), Indonesia's niche in international aid on the contrary has become less defined and not particularly strategic. Meaningful leadership has not emerged, partly because Kemlu does not control the resources for aid programmes. Concurrently, Indonesia has not differentiated itself from other donors in terms of target beneficiaries, expected outcomes, or terms and conditions.
- *The third is Indonesia's Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP).* This state-backed scholarship fund can be instrumental in enabling Indonesians to pursue high-quality education, gain international work experience, and cultivate global networks. Despite its strategic value, the LPDP is rarely recognized as an economic lever that generates spillover effects in destination countries through tuition payments, housing rents, and daily expenditures. Nevertheless, the strategic value of LPDP will also depend on other areas of public policy such as education policy, technological policy, or even industrial policy. More importantly, skilled labour mobility agreements such as the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements in Services, Indonesia-Japan Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) Scheme, and South Korea's Employment Permit System are necessary to strengthen the whole LPDP ecosystem.

In the past, economic diplomacy has also been strategically employed as a soft balancing tool. For instance, amidst China's expanding influence through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Indonesia has actively sought to deepen economic ties with Japan, South Korea, and the EU. This diversification of foreign investment aims to mitigate overdependence on any single partner. The Japan-funded Patimban Port project and the EU-Indonesia CEPA negotiations exemplify how economic partnerships are concurrently utilised to shape Indonesia's strategic alignment within an increasingly contested Indo-Pacific economic landscape.

Indonesia's recent decision to join BRICS marks a significant shift in its outward-oriented economic diplomacy. The decision has drawn criticism due to its lack of clear and well-discussed risk-benefit calculation. On the one hand, BRICS offers access to supplementary development financing, new markets, and a platform to advocate for reforms in the global economic order. This aligns particularly well with Indonesia's longstanding support for a more equitable multilateral system. It also strengthens Indonesia's economic ties with major non-Western economies, in this case China, India, Brazil, and South Africa, thereby reinforcing its narrative of "non-alignment" in an increasingly multipolar world. On the other hand, this move may entail reputational and strategic risks. Accession to BRICS could be interpreted by some partners—especially those in the G7 and Western-aligned blocs—as a tilt away from the current global economic architecture. If not managed carefully, it may complicate Indonesia's engagement in initiatives such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) or the G7's Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII). Moreover, BRICS's effectiveness as a cohesive economic bloc remains uncertain, compounded by internal divisions and limited institutional coherence. Since the decision has been made, Indonesia will have to work hard to capitalise and draw tangible benefits from this membership.

At the same time, Indonesia's interest in joining the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) may also reshape the direction of its outward-economic diplomacy. On the one hand, OECD membership offers enhanced credibility as a country with a favourable business environment, potentially attracting more foreign direct investment from developed countries. It also provides access to best practices that support Indonesia's vision of becoming a developed country by 2045. On the other hand, this membership also likely has foreign policy costs and consequences. While it may not necessarily compel Indonesia to align with OECD members on every issue in multilateral fora, the notion of 'like-mindedness' referenced in the Accession Document may alter room for Indonesia's economic diplomacy to manoeuvre in the event of geopolitical turbulence in Europe, Indo-Pacific, or the Middle East.

While Indonesia's natural resources and substantial market afford it considerable economic leverage, several persistent challenges and strategic considerations that must be addressed to fully capitalise on this potential. The first is Regulatory Certainty and Investment Climate. Foreign investors often cite regulatory uncertainty, rent-seeking behaviour, and bureaucratic inefficiencies as obstacles to doing business in Indonesia. The success of Indonesia's resource-based leverage depends on the government's ability to create a more stable and transparent investment climate. Secondly, the Indonesian government has introduced regulations that require foreign companies to use a certain percentage of locally produced goods and services in their operations, which is known as the Local Content Requirement (TKDN). This policy is prevalent in industries like telecommunications, energy, and manufacturing. While local content requirement may create opportunities for the development of domestic industries, the extent to which these requirements can genuinely serve as a tool for promoting technology transfer and capacity-building, ultimately strengthening Indonesia's industrial base, remains a subject of ongoing assessment.

Thirdly, the focus on resource extraction, especially in the mining sector, has raised legitimate concerns about environmental degradation and social displacement. There needs to be a balance between industrial ambitions with sustainable practices to ensure that its economic growth does not come at the expense of environmental and social well-being.

In conclusion, while Indonesia's market size, natural resource wealth, and industrialisation strategy offer significant geopolitical leverage, these advantages must be wielded through coherent, forward-looking economic diplomacy. Economic tools extend beyond merely maximizing national income—they are essential for shaping global value chains, reducing strategic dependencies, and expanding Indonesia's international influence. However, their efficacy hinges upon regulatory certainty, the purchasing power of the populace, sustainable practices, and strategic coordination with other foreign policy instruments.

D. Identity: Value Projection and Normative Influence

Indonesia's democratic governance, multicultural societal fabric, and the moderate Islamic practices by majority of its Muslim citizens provide a foundation for projecting normative influence on the global stage. While these attributes may not constitute soft power in the classical sense of widespread cultural allure or dominant influence over global entertainment and media narratives, they undeniably represent a strategic asset for diplomacy. Rather than passively attracting others, Indonesia's value-based assets operate as tools of strategic positioning, assisting in shaping perceptions, fostering trust, and strengthening bilateral or multilateral partnerships. This particular form of foreign policy tool is particularly relevant in a multipolar and ideologically fragmented world, where identity and governance models often shape alignments as much as material power.

Indonesia's successful navigation of democratic consolidation, pluralism, and relative political stability—despite internal diversity and prevailing global populist trends—gives it considerable credibility among developing countries. At a juncture when the liberal international order appears to be in retreat and democratic backsliding is common even in established democracies, Indonesia stands out as a state that has consistently maintained electoral democracy and civilian rule while preserving national cohesion. This normative distinction has generated both opportunities and expectations for Indonesia to assume a more active role in international norm entrepreneurship.

- **Democracy Promotion in Regional and Global Platforms**

Indonesia's commitment to democratic principles is evident in its leadership role in promoting democracy within Southeast Asia and beyond. Initiatives like the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF), inaugurated in 2008, have provided an inclusive platform for dialogue on democracy, governance, and political reform among countries with diverse political systems.

Rather than advocating for prescriptive models or engaging in regime-change rhetoric, Indonesia consistently posits democracy as a long-term developmental process that must be adapted to each country's unique socio-cultural, historical, and institutional contexts.

This approach reflects Indonesia's own trajectory: a transition from authoritarian rule to a democratic system through a largely homegrown process that preserved national stability. As such, the BDF advances a non-coercive and context-aware form of democracy promotion, emphasising inclusivity, gradual institutional building, and political consensus. It deliberately eschews conditionality or interventionism, instead seeking to create shared learning among peers. In a world increasingly sceptical of externally imposed political models—given the adverse reactions observed contexts such as Iraq or Afghanistan—Indonesia's message of democratic gradualism, firmly grounded in national ownership and development priorities, carries significant normative weight.

In fact, sharing the success of democracy as an example—particularly through showcasing the system still as the best way to achieve inclusive development and modernization—remains the best way to project democracy. Through such type of efforts, Indonesia has carved out a distinct role in the global discourse on democracy.

- **Track Record in Democratic Diplomacy**

Indonesia has leveraged its democratic credentials in conflict mediation and peace diplomacy. Its involvement in peace processes—such as mediating in the Southern Philippines (Mindanao) and the Thai-Cambodian border dispute—highlight its role as a neutral and respected actor. Indonesia's peaceful resolution of the Aceh conflict, which culminate in the 2005 peace agreement, serves as a compelling example of how its domestic peace-building experience can be externally projected as a diplomatic asset. These contributions enhance Indonesia's credibility in regional and global peace forums and demonstrate how democratic legitimacy can reinforce conflict resolution efforts.

- **Islam and Engagement with the Muslim World**

Indonesia's multicultural society, characterised by religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity, positions it as a compelling model for coexistence and tolerance. As the world's most populous Muslim-majority democracy, Indonesia is uniquely positioned to bridge divides between the Muslim world and the West. Its promotion of *wasatiyah* (moderation) resonates with other Muslim-majority states seeking to reconcile tradition with modernity. Indonesia has historically played a constructive role in the Muslim world by advancing a democratic and tolerant interpretation of Islam through both state-led and societal initiatives. Organisations such as the NU and Muhammadiyah reinforce this message through their global networks, interfaith engagement, and commitment to peaceful coexistence. Through these efforts, Indonesia has consistently sought to demonstrate that Islam, democracy, and pluralism can mutually reinforcing—thereby providing an alternative model to authoritarian or theocratic narratives often associated with political Islam.

This normative positioning has underpinned Indonesia's engagement with key international issues involving the Muslim world. On the issue of Gaza, Indonesia has consistently supported Palestinian statehood, condemned Israeli military actions, and called for adherence to international humanitarian law—while maintaining a resolute pro-peace stance that avoids sectarian framing. Indonesian leaders have regularly raised the Palestinian cause in forums like the UN General Assembly, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Similarly, Indonesia's involvement in Afghanistan following the US withdrawal included quiet diplomacy and civil society engagement aimed at supporting women's rights and inclusive governance. While Indonesia has not recognised the Taliban regime, it has facilitated humanitarian aid, including through the Indonesian Red Cross and Nahdlatul Ulama-affiliated networks—underscoring its dual commitment to pragmatism and principle.

• **Countering Extremism**

Indonesia's achievements in addressing terrorism also constitute an important aspect of its normative influence. After experiencing major attacks by radical groups, including the Bali bombings, Indonesia developed a multi-layered approach that combined security enforcement with deradicalisation programmes and community engagement. Civil society organisations, religious leaders, and moderate Islamic organisations have been central to this effort. These actors not only help delegitimise violent extremism at home but also engage globally to share Indonesia's model of community resilience and religious moderation.

In the post-9/11 era, Indonesia's global image as a bulwark against extremism has been shaped in part by the transnational efforts of NU and Muhammadiyah. They have actively collaborated with international institutions, religious networks, and governments to promote a peaceful interpretation of Islam. This has included engagements in counter-extremism dialogues in the Middle East, South Asia, and Europe, positioning Indonesia as a credible voice in shaping global discourse on Islam and violence. Indonesia's national deradicalisation programme, which integrates religious re-education, psychological counselling, and vocational support for former militants, has been widely studied and cited by other countries—further reinforcing Indonesia's reputation as a thought leader in counterterrorism through non-coercive means.

While Indonesia's value projection has gained traction, it faces internal contradictions. Instances of democratic backsliding—such as restrictions on civil liberties, ambiguous responses to human rights violations, or threats to press freedom—can erode its normative appeal and undermine its credibility, especially on issues like Myanmar or Palestine.

Indonesia's pragmatic foreign policy often tempers its democratic rhetoric. Despite promoting democratic values multilaterally, it avoids overtly criticising authoritarian neighbours, maintaining cordial relations with regimes not sharing its governance ideals.

This ambivalence was evident in its handling of the Myanmar crisis, where ASEAN's consensus-based diplomacy limited Indonesia's ability to push for stronger democratic outcomes. As Indonesia seeks to lead in shaping regional norms, it will need to calibrate when and how to.

In sum, Indonesia's value-based tools—rooted in democratic consolidation, religious moderation, multiculturalism, and developmental solidarity—offer a unique normative influence. While these tools may not always yield immediate strategic returns, they differentiate Indonesia on the global stage, build long-term trust-based partnerships, and shape international narratives on inclusive governance and peaceful coexistence. To fully leverage these assets, Indonesia must resolve internal contradictions, enhance institutional coordination, and strategically align normative ambitions with broader foreign policy objectives. As global competition intensifies, value projection complements hard power and economic leverage, proving effective when integrated into coherent strategies and supported by other tools of statecraft. This foundation now leads to the concluding reflections and recommendations on reforming Indonesia's foreign policy to meet the demands of an evolving international order.

Taken together, Indonesia's foreign policy tools—military, diplomacy, economic statecraft, and value projection—each offer distinct functions and potentials, yet possess inherent limitations if not used in concert. Military capabilities assert sovereignty and support defense diplomacy; diplomatic efforts sustain Indonesia's multilateral presence and navigate geopolitical shifts. Economic instruments, particularly critical mineral policy and market leverage, provide new avenues for strategic engagement, while normative influence rooted in democracy, moderation, and South-South cooperation enhances Indonesia's international image. However, each tool's effectiveness depends on a coherent overarching strategy, inter-agency coordination, and alignment with national interests. Without an integrated, future-facing approach that harmonises these instruments, Indonesia risks resource dissipation and sending mixed signals. The next section critically analyses why reforming the foreign policy process—by addressing systemic and unit-level challenges—is crucial for Indonesia's foreign policy tools to function as a unified and strategic whole.

3. Challenges in the Current Foreign Policy Process

Indonesia's expanding international profile and diverse foreign policy tools—encompassing diplomacy, military instruments, economic leverage, and normative influence—have not been matched by institutional readiness or strategic coherence. While Law No. 37/1999 on Foreign Relations designates the president as the highest authority in foreign policy, with the Foreign Minister executing it, the law is outdated. It fails to accommodate the multidimensional landscape shaped by cross-sectoral actors, overlapping jurisdictions, and complex geopolitical dynamics. Notably, the law refers to *hubungan luar negeri* (foreign relations) rather than foreign policy in a more integrated, strategic sense. This legal and conceptual gap has fostered overreliance on diplomacy as the sole frontliner and inhibited whole-of-government coordination. Given the growing role of other state institutions and the multifaceted nature of modern international engagement, foreign policy cannot afford to be reduced to routine diplomatic procedures with limited integration of broader strategic and cross-sectoral considerations. Consequently, Indonesia's expanding international commitments have outpaced its capacity for strategic planning, coordination, and response. Without reforming the institutional foundations and decision-making processes underpinning foreign policy, Indonesia's growing toolbox will be deployed inconsistently and inefficiently, diminishing its potential impact.

One of the primary challenges is a *lack of strategic coherence*. The current administration often reacts to global events without a clear overarching strategy, particularly as Indonesia grapples with intensifying US-China competition, regional security concerns, and economic disruptions. This fragmented approach limits Indonesia's ability to project a unified stance, especially in multilateral forums like ASEAN and the G20. Indonesia's foreign policy process has been criticised for being overly reactive rather than strategic and anticipatory. While a reactive, ad-hoc approach may have sufficed in the past, it is increasingly insufficient in an environment characterised by great power competition, rising populism, and unpredictable global economic trends. Indonesia needs to transition from a crisis-driven foreign policy to one that is proactive and capable of anticipating future challenges. For instance, Indonesia's cautious and noncommittal response to AUKUS, by expressing concern about the risks of nuclear proliferation without articulating a firm position, reflected a broader tendency toward strategic ambiguity in dealing with emerging regional security architectures. Similarly, Indonesia welcomed the Quad's emphasis on regional stability, describing it as an ASEAN "partner, not a competitor," yet stopped short of outlining how it would engage or respond to issue-specific initiatives under the Quad framework. Regional observers noted these episodes, questioning whether Indonesia had a clear framework for positioning itself amid shifting Indo-Pacific alignments. During its G20 Presidency in 2022, Indonesia was lauded for its diplomatic balancing act over the Ukraine conflict, but behind the scenes, a clearly articulated long-term strategy for translating such leadership into sustained influence in global governance was absent. These examples underscore the risks of a foreign policy posture driven more by crisis management than long-term strategic planning.

More recently, Indonesia's unexpected decision to join BRICS raised questions about its long-term strategic alignment. While framed as part of a multipolar engagement strategy, the move appeared to be lack thorough public deliberation or a clear policy roadmap for managing its implications—particularly concerning Indonesia's existing commitments to ASEAN and its relationships with US-aligned partners. This absence of policy synchronisation reinforces the perception that Indonesia's foreign policy remains driven by short-term diplomatic gestures rather than a coherent, future-facing strategic doctrine.

Another critical weakness is poor *inter-agency coordination*. As previously discussed, foreign policy is no longer the sole domain of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; it now necessitates cross-sectoral interaction spanning trade, defence, technology, and environment, among others. Each agency often pursues their own agenda, leading to unsynchronised and scattered foreign policy implementation. When agencies fail to coordinate, policies can conflict, or opportunities can be missed. For example, an over-reliance on ASEAN as the cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy can limit ability to pursue more agile, issue-specific platforms like minilateral groupings. Without a clear mechanism to assess the benefits and risks of new regional initiatives, Indonesia risks missing opportunities to diversify its foreign policy tools. Conversely, joining minilateral initiatives based on impulsive, top-down decisions without carefully assessing the costs and benefits—not only for short-term gains but, more importantly, for the long term—would be equally problematic. Any participation in such initiatives must align with a clear strategic agenda; otherwise, Indonesia risks overextending its diplomatic presence and straining resources without substantially improving its global standing.

This risk is not hypothetical. Indonesia's abrupt export bans in recent years have raised concerns among key international markets. The aforementioned nickel export ban was initially celebrated as an industrial policy success, yet coordination gaps between the Ministry of Investment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs compromised Indonesia's chances of winning the legal battle against the EU at the WTO. Similarly, in 2021, the Ministry of Trade announced an export ban on palm oil—aimed at controlling domestic prices—with limited consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, leading to international backlash and confusion among trade partners. More recently, in early 2022, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources implemented a sudden coal export ban due to inadequate preparedness for domestic shortages, triggering concerns from significant markets such as Japan and South Korea. These examples illustrate how weak inter-agency planning and unclear messaging can undermine Indonesia's credibility in presenting a consistent, reliable, defensible foreign policy position, especially when economic decisions have global ramifications.

Coordination gaps also exist in the political-security realm, for instance in the response to China's assertiveness in the Natuna Sea in early 2020. Coordination gaps between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Indonesian Navy, and the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs complicated Indonesia's position. While the military conducted patrols and media outlets called for a firmer stance, Indonesia's diplomatic messaging remained restrained and ambiguous, leading to confusion about its strategic posture.

The issue was not the substance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statements—which consistently rejected the legitimacy of China's excessive maritime claims—but rather the perceived weight and impact of those responses. The Ministry's statements primarily targeted at domestic audiences to clarify Indonesia's legal and territorial position, while engagement with China was limited to communication and clarification requests via the Chinese Embassy in Jakarta. This resulted in a mere exchange of press statements rather than any escalation through diplomatic gestures, potentially undermining the signalling effect of Indonesia's position.

Another instance was the overlapping mandates between the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (Badan Keamanan Laut/Bakamla) and the Navy, complicating operational responses to foreign incursions and delayed coherent signalling to external partners. While the presence of Navy personnel within Bakamla has somewhat mitigated this overlap, institutional ambiguity persists. As the agency tasked with maritime patrol and law enforcement in Indonesia's maritime jurisdiction, Bakamla is expected to serve as the primary first responder—particularly in addressing non-traditional security challenges such as incursions by maritime militias, illegal foreign fishing vessels, and unauthorized marine survey ships. However, the lack of a clear operational hierarchy could continue to hinder Indonesia's ability to deliver a unified and timely response from the appropriate agency. These disjointed efforts reduce Indonesia's credibility in asserting its maritime sovereignty and weaken its influence in shaping regional maritime norms.

A further challenge is the risk of *groupthink* in foreign policy decision-making. Groupthink occurs when a desire for consensus or conformity narrows perspectives, overlooks alternative strategies, and ignores potential risks. In Indonesia's context, the absence of a comprehensive decision-making framework that integrates diverse governmental viewpoints heightens this risk. If ministries and agencies operate in silos, and senior officials are not exposed to a range of ideas, critical issues may not be adequately debated, leading to suboptimal policy decisions lacking strategic foresight.

One instance illustrating the potential pitfalls of groupthink in Indonesian foreign policy can be observed in the country's initial engagement with the Indo-Pacific strategy discourse. This monograph has mentioned AOIP in the earlier section, and while AOIP was ultimately adopted by ASEAN, Indonesia's internal process of championing the initiative was largely confined to a restricted policy circle. This narrow approach afforded minimal engagement from sectoral ministries, legislative actors, or external experts. Consequently, while the AOIP reflected Kemlu's diplomatic stance and Indonesia's normative leadership within ASEAN, it lacked operational clarity. Furthermore, it struggled to garner sufficient traction among ASEAN member states beyond mere rhetorical and symbolic endorsement. The limited cross-sectoral consultation also meant that AOIP was poorly integrated with Indonesia's own domestic development priorities, such as maritime infrastructure or green energy investment. This type of siloed formulation process carries the inherent risk of entrenching abstract initiatives that prove challenging to translate into tangible strategic influence, thereby reinforcing a tendency to pursue broad consensus without rigorous critical examination of underlying assumptions or viable implementation pathways.

The risk of groupthink may become even more pronounced under conditions of robust centralised leadership and a decision-making culture characterised by a military-style hierarchy. An assertive personal leadership style, coupled with the consolidation of key foreign and defence policy portfolios among loyal figures, could discourage dissenting opinions or nuanced deliberation within the executive branch. Whilst such centralisation might convey an impression of decisiveness, it simultaneously elevates the likelihood of strategic blind spots if policies are formulated without rigorous debate or cross-sectoral input. The swift announcement of Indonesia's intent to join BRICS can again be a good example here. The announcement was made without a comprehensive public explanation or prior parliamentary consultation, exemplifying how top-down decisions can bypass institutional checks and dilute broader strategic assessment. Should such tendencies persist, Indonesian foreign policy risks becoming excessively personality-driven, reactive to symbolic achievements, and ultimately disconnected from longer-term national interests.

Prioritisation of budget and spending is another challenge. In recent years, there has been an overemphasis on extravagant diplomatic events, exemplified by Indonesia's considerable expenditure during its G20 presidency and ASEAN Chairmanship. This trend is compounded by an impulse to maintain presence across a vast array of global forums; indeed, Indonesia holds membership in over 170 international organisations and groupings. Such wide-ranging engagements often occur without a clear assessment of their multiplier effect on Indonesia's strategic interests.

The challenge of budget prioritisation has become more acute in light of recent reductions to Indonesia's foreign policy and defence-related budgets. In early 2025, Kemlu faced significant reductions, which have limited its capacity to sustain overseas missions and participate effectively in multilateral initiatives. These constraints may necessitate some embassies scaling down programming or delaying diplomatic rotations. These financial pressures came just months after Indonesia's ASEAN Chairmanship, which, while diplomatically high-profile, reportedly strained the ministry's operational capacity due to lavish event spending. Concurrently, Indonesia's delayed payment in the KF-21 fighter jet programme with South Korea, alongside limited contributions to regional humanitarian mechanisms such as the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre), have underscored persistent issues in resource allocation. The AHA Centre remains heavily dependent on external donors, with ASEAN member states collectively contributing less than a quarter of its funding. Indonesia's budget cuts could result in reduced support for multilateral engagement and international cooperation mechanisms. Consequently, Indonesia's ability to lead or sustain regional humanitarian diplomacy—particularly in crisis hotspots like Myanmar—can be constrained. These imbalances suggest that symbolic and ceremonial engagements are sometimes prioritised over long-term capability-building or strategic investment. Without a clearer hierarchy of foreign policy objectives, budget planning risks becoming reactive and politically driven, thereby undermining Indonesia's ability to project sustained influence in priority areas.

In sum, the effectiveness of Indonesia's foreign policy is not solely determined by the availability of tools—be they military posture, diplomatic finesse, economic leverage, or value-based projection—but critically by the coherence, capacity, and coordination of the foreign policy process itself. Strategic incoherence, inter-agency fragmentation, top-down decision-making, and reactive budgeting collectively erode the state's ability to mobilise its instruments of power in a systematic and outcome-oriented manner. As Indonesia navigates intensifying geopolitical competition and increasingly complex global issues, it is imperative that it shifts from symbolic engagement to substantive execution. Strengthening institutional alignment, embedding strategic foresight in policymaking, and building inter-sectoral collaboration are no longer merely optional considerations; they are essential for ensuring that Indonesia's foreign policy tools deliver on their intended national objectives.

Assessing Policy Outcomes: Illustrative Episodes in Security, Economy, and Identity

To complement the preceding conceptual and institutional analysis, this section offers a closer empirical examination of Indonesia's foreign policy in practice. It examines three carefully selected episodes—drawn from the domains of security, economic diplomacy, and identity/normative leadership—which reveal how international pressures, domestic institutional arrangements, and the interplay of foreign policy tools collectively shape real-world outcomes. Rather than presenting idealised narratives or policy prescriptions, these case studies illustrate the strategic choices, inherent constraints, and direct consequences Indonesia has encountered as a middle power navigating an increasingly complex global order. Each case highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of Indonesia's current foreign policy process—specifically, its ability to mobilise various tools, coordinate across diverse actors, and influence regional or global dynamics. Furthermore, these cases reveal how gaps in strategy, coordination, or institutional capacity have sometimes limited Indonesia's effectiveness. Collectively, these episodes provide critical insight into the structural reforms and strategic recalibrations necessary to strengthen Indonesia's future foreign policy, thereby establishing a clear foundation for the subsequent policy recommendations.

Exhibit 1: Securing Natuna Waters – Tools and Coordination in the South China Sea

One emblematic security episode is Indonesia's handling of encroachments around the Natuna Islands, situated on its northern maritime frontier. In March 2016, a Chinese fishing vessel and accompanying coast guard intervened to resist an Indonesian navy arrest within Indonesia's EEZ near the Natuna Islands. Indonesian officials reacted forcefully yet in a somewhat uncoordinated fashion. The then Minister of Fisheries and Marine Affairs Susi Pudjiastuti publicly accused the Chinese vessel of "stealing fish," threatened to pursue the matter at an international tribunal, and even controversially summoned the Chinese Ambassador, a move against standard diplomatic protocol. The Foreign Minister similarly lodged a protest with the Ambassador, whilst the Defence Minister, who was a retired military general, signalled his intention to do the same. This sowed a degree of confusion, because customarily, only the Foreign Minister and the head of state of the host country are entitled to summon an ambassador.

Such spectacle of multiple ministers stepping forward suggested a lack of coordination in the administration's initial response. Nevertheless, Jakarta refused to release the detained Chinese crew and subsequently intensified its presence around the Natuna Islands, bolstering air and naval patrols and approving new military facilities on the islands. Indonesian media and parliamentarians demanded a firm stance to defend territorial integrity, framing the Natuna incursions as a test of national sovereignty. Beijing officially denies the existence of any dispute with Indonesia, acknowledging Indonesian sovereignty over the Natuna islands whilst ambiguously asserting "traditional fishing grounds" in the surrounding seas. Chinese officials typically advocate for bilateral dialogue to manage such incidents. In practice, this ambiguity has suited both sides, allowing Jakarta to insist no territorial dispute exists even as it protests Chinese vessels' incursions.

Indonesia's foreign policy tools in this case encompassed diplomatic and military measures. Diplomatically, it issued official protests and, in 2020, even submitted a note to the United Nations rejecting China's "*nine dash-line*" claims as having "no legal basis" under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) citing the 2016 arbitration ruling between Vietnam and China. Indonesia also undertook symbolic moves such as renaming the northern part of its EEZ as the "North Natuna Sea" in 2017—an act widely seen by analysts as an assertion of Indonesian sovereignty over waters overlapping China's claims. Militarily, Indonesia has increased naval and air deployments to the Natuna area. A series of incursions in late 2019 prompted Jakarta to dispatch warships and F-16 fighter jets, and to rally domestic fishermen to assert presence, underscoring that there would be "no compromise" on Indonesia's territorial sovereignty. President Jokowi himself flew to Natuna in January 2020 in a high-profile move to demonstrate national resolve.

These actions showcased Indonesia's willingness to reinforce its position around Natuna through unilateral action when multilateral solutions proved slow or inadequate. Simultaneously, Indonesia has carefully avoided framing the Natuna issue as part of the broader South China Sea disputes—consistently reiterating that it is not a claimant to the Spratly or Paracel Islands and positioning the Natuna matter as enforcement of its EEZ rights rather than a direct territorial confrontation with China. This nuanced approach reflects a desire to uphold international law (UNCLOS) without overtly antagonizing a major power.

Actor dynamics during the Natuna episodes highlight persistent coordination challenges among Indonesia's institutions. The 2016 incident, in particular, revealed divergent approaches between a tough, sovereignty-minded maritime minister and more cautious diplomats, as well as overlapping authorities involving the security sector. Without a single coordinating body to forge a unified strategy, responses were somewhat ad hoc – reactive naval deployments coupled with uncoordinated public messaging. Over time, the Indonesian government did centralise its messaging to some degree, with the President and Foreign Ministry taking the lead in 2020, as the outspoken Minister Susi (who personified Indonesia's hard line on illegal fishing) had by then left the cabinet.

Still, institutional fragmentation persists in Indonesia's maritime security domain. Multiple agencies share responsibility—the Navy (TNI-AL), the coast guard-equivalent Bakamla, the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, and others—reporting under different coordinating ministers. There is a significant overlap in responsibilities between TNI-AL and Bakamla in patrolling these grey zones, a product of blurred lines between defence and law enforcement at sea. Compounding this, Bakamla has been chronically under-resourced, reportedly receiving barely 10% of the funding needed to adequately patrol Indonesia's vast waters. As a result, Indonesia remains continually dependent on TNI-AL to deal with Chinese incursions, deploying warships for duties typical performed by a coast guard. This reliance on grey-hulled Navy vessels to counter China's white-hulled coast guard is problematic; it marks an escalatory act in grey zone conflicts, potentially giving China pretext to respond with larger naval assets. In essence, Indonesia's lack of a well-equipped, unified maritime security force has forced it into responses that risk military escalation it is ill-prepared to win. This case exposes how institutional challenges—fragmented authority and limited capacity—constrain Indonesia's ability to leverage its foreign policy tools effectively in the security realm.

The outcomes in the Natuna case have been mixed. Indonesia has successfully defended the *de jure* status of its EEZ; Chinese officials publicly acknowledge Natuna as belonging to Indonesia and have not attempted to seize the Indonesian-held territory. By responding firmly (even if not always coherently), Indonesia signalled its red lines. Following the 2020 standoff, the Chinese fishing fleets did pull back to the edges of Indonesia's claimed waters (at least temporarily). Jakarta's combination of diplomatic protests and visible enforcement has, to an extent, deterred overt Chinese encroachment on Natuna's resources, reaffirming Indonesia's commitment to its maritime right. However, the ambiguous status quo remains: China's "*nine-dash line*" claim still overlaps Indonesian waters, and Chinese coast guard and militia vessels continue to intermittently test Indonesia's responses. No long-term resolution has been reached, and Indonesia refuses to negotiate its sovereign rights, pinning its hopes on continued enforcement and China's tacit acceptance of the *de facto* boundaries. The Natuna episodes have also spurred Indonesia to invest more in its outer islands and surveillance—e.g., expanding runways and garrisons on Natuna—and to consider new partnerships (such as information-sharing with like-minded countries) to monitor Chinese movements.

Overall, the Natuna case demonstrates Indonesia's capacity to safeguard its interests when pushed, but at the cost of exposing gaps in inter-agency coordination and capabilities. It underscores why Indonesian policymakers are increasingly contemplating structural reforms to better synchronise diplomatic, defence, and law enforcement responses in such security scenarios. The experience also illustrates the limits of relying solely on ASEAN or gentle diplomacy in the face of great-power pressure: Indonesia had to act largely unilaterally in Natuna, hinting at the necessity for Jakarta to develop "*strategic options beyond ASEAN*" and enhance its own deterrent capacities going forward.

Exhibit 2: Downstream Ambitions – The Nickel Export Ban and Economic Statecraft

Indonesia's bold economic move to leverage its critical mineral resources provides a second case study. In January 2020, Indonesia enforced a sweeping ban on the export of unprocessed nickel ore, aiming to spur domestic downstream industries. This policy—rooted in resource nationalism and President Jokowi's quest to move Indonesia up the value chain—tested Indonesia's ability to reconcile domestic development goals with international economic rules. The ban quickly escalated into a diplomatic and legal dispute with major trading partners. The European Union, home to a large stainless-steel industry reliant on Indonesian nickel, contended that the export ban “unfairly harmed” EU manufacturers and violated WTO rules. Brussels initiated a WTO case in late 2019, and in 2022, a WTO panel ruled against Indonesia, finding that the nickel export prohibition and the mandated domestic processing breached the principle against quantitative trade restrictions. Despite this clear international legal defeat, Jakarta's reaction was defiant. President Jokowi publicly declared that the adverse ruling would “not deter” Indonesia's campaign to process its own raw materials, instructing his ministers to appeal and stating, *“even though we lost at the WTO... it's okay.”* He bluntly argued that if Indonesia conceded every time it was challenged, *“we will not be a developed country,”* underscoring a political consensus in Jakarta that short-term trade frictions are justifiable for the long-term gain of industrialisation.

The foreign policy tools and actor dynamics in this economic domain revolved around trade and investment diplomacy, law, and coalition-building. Legally, Indonesia defended its policy through the WTO's dispute mechanism by filing an appeal in late 2022. This process, due to the WTO Appellate Body's paralysis, effectively stalls any enforcement of the ruling. Politically, Jakarta framed its nickel policy as a sovereign right to development, seeking to build a narrative of developing nations resisting unfair global rules. In August 2023, for instance, Jokowi used the BRICS summit—a forum of emerging economies—to call for an end to “trade discrimination” and assert the “right of developing countries to engage in industrial downstreaming” of their own natural resources. This was a thinly veiled rebuke of the WTO decision and signalled Indonesia's intent to forge strategic channels beyond ASEAN and the West by aligning with like-minded countries in the Global South to challenge or reform trade rules. Notably, ASEAN largely remained a bystander in this matter, as the export ban issue played out in global arenas (WTO, G20, BRICS) rather than regional forums.

Indonesia's trade and foreign ministries coordinated to defend the policy internationally, whilst economic ministries and state-owned enterprises courted foreign investors to build smelters on Indonesian soil. Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investment Luhut Pandjaitan—a close Jokowi confidant—was instrumental as the President's special envoy for investment, negotiating deals with Chinese and firms from other countries to invest capital into nickel processing facilities.

This high-level backing and intra-government coordination (centred around Jokowi's office and Luhut's ministry) led to a relatively unified domestic execution of the ban. However, this centralisation also sidelined some institutions. For instance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Trade had to manage the fallout with the EU and at the WTO, essentially tasked with justifying a policy they had not shaped. The absence of a formal inter-agency mechanism to weigh both economic and foreign policy considerations in tandem meant Jokowi's inner circle pushed the ban through with minimal consultation on diplomatic repercussions. In effect, economic nationalism took precedence over trade diplomacy.

Regarding structural constraints and opportunities, this case clearly reflects evolving global dynamics. The escalating demand for nickel, driven by its crucial role in electric vehicle batteries and renewable technology, presented a huge opportunity for Indonesia. As the world's largest nickel ore producer, by halting ore exports, Indonesia could attract investment in domestic smelters and capture greater value from the supply chain. This strategy has yielded notable successes. In just a few years, Indonesia transformed from exporting raw ore to exporting intermediate and refined nickel products (such as nickel pig iron, ferronickel, and stainless steel).

The export ban, combined with incentives for foreign investors, spurred a boom in smelter construction—particularly by Chinese steel and battery companies looking to secure supply. By 2022, Indonesia's annual nickel export value (predominantly in processed form) had surged to US\$34 billion, representing a remarkable 750% increase from just \$4 billion in 2017. This dramatic rise attests to the near-total creation of a vibrant nickel-based industrial sector. Domestic employment in mining and metals has expanded, new industrial parks (among others Morowali in Sulawesi) have flourished, and Indonesia has emerged as a key link in the global EV battery supply chain. These outcomes align directly with Jokowi's priority of economic self-strengthening and have been touted as a model for managing other resources; indeed, the government proceeded to ban raw bauxite exports in 2023 and has indicated similar measure for copper and tin in the future.

Nevertheless, the achieved results also reveal inherent limitations and costs. Firstly, Indonesia's hardline stance alienated important partners, leading to delays in the negotiation of a free trade agreement with the EU and creating the potential European retaliatory measures or a cooling of investment in other sectors. The WTO case outcome, even if unenforceable in the short term, diminished Indonesia's reputation for adhering to international rules, which somewhat contradicts its self-perception as a champion of a rules-based order. Additionally, resource mercantilism carried domestic trade-offs: while downstream industries benefited, Indonesian ore miners who lacked the capital to build smelters were adversely affected by losing export markets. Moreover, concerns were raised by foreign businesses who might now view Indonesia as an unreliable supplier. Jakarta deemed these sacrifices acceptable, yet they underscore that the policy created clear winners and losers.

Moreover, the rapid growth in downstream processing relies heavily on Chinese investment and technology, which raises questions about strategic dependence. Chinese entities now control significant stakes in Indonesia's nickel processing; for instance, Tsingshan Holding Group is a dominant player in the Morowali industrial complex. This could translate to long-term leverage for Beijing over a critical sector of Indonesia's economy—an ironic outcome for a policy initially driven by nationalist impulses. Environmentally, the rapid development of nickel smelting, often powered by coal plants and involving disposal of mining waste, has caused alarm. Studies project severe impacts on air and water quality in Sulawesi and Maluku, noting that the industry's heavy reliance on coal energy could damage local livelihoods. These externalities point to institutional challenges in regulatory oversight and sustainable planning, as Indonesia's bureaucracy struggles to balance ambitious industrial goals with environmental and community protection.

Crucially, the nickel case shows Indonesia's willingness to challenge international constraints when it perceives a strategic opportunity. The Jokowi administration calculated that WTO rules, which generally prohibit export bans, were too inflexible and disproportionately favoured advanced economies' access to cheap raw materials. By framing the issue as one of economic justice—the right for developing countries to pursue their own development—Indonesia sought to transform a structural constraint into a unifying cause. It has since joined calls to reform the global trade system to better accommodate developing countries' needs, leveraging forums like the G20 (which Indonesia chaired in 2022) to advance this conversation. Concurrently, Jakarta has strengthened strategic ties with countries that value its nickel for geopolitical reasons. For example, the United States and its allies, in their efforts to establish non-Chinese EV supply chains, have initiated dialogues with Indonesia on critical minerals cooperation, potentially giving Jakarta additional bargaining chips beyond its traditional ASEAN-centric economic arrangements.

Nevertheless, Indonesia's assertiveness primarily stems from unilateral policy backed by ad hoc diplomacy, rather than any established multilateral framework. ASEAN offer neither obstacle nor assistance; it is simply not the appropriate venue for such mining and trade issues. Moreover, other ASEAN member states have divergent interests. Some, like the Philippines, benefited in the short term by filling the nickel ore supply gap left by Indonesia. This further reinforces the lesson that Indonesia often needs to operate outside its traditional ASEAN comfort zone to pursue its economic statecraft, engaging major powers and alternative groupings when needed.

In summary, the nickel export ban exemplifies Indonesia's evolving foreign policy toolkit on the economic front. It demonstrates a willingness to employ robust instruments, such as export controls, to achieve ambitious industrial goals. This policy also highlights an acceptance of diplomatic friction when it serves of national development objectives; and active effort to build new coalitions with fellow developing economies or key investor countries, thereby to counterbalancing pressure from established powers. The case illustrates the significant potential of a coordinated, top-level political drive, where Jokowi's political will, executed through a select group of trusted ministers, achieved a drastic policy shift with tangible economic outcomes.

However, it also highlights why Indonesia may need to reform its institutional framework and resource allocation for foreign economic policy. Successfully navigating the complex intersection of trade laws, investment needs, and diplomatic relations demands both deep expertise and agility. Indonesia's trade diplomats and embassies will require greater capacity and budgetary support to effectively lobby, negotiate, and mitigate fallout in global fora if such assertive policies are to continue. Furthermore, inter-agency coordination could be improved through a central mechanism that better aligns economic and foreign policy. This would ensure, for instance, that future steps—such as banning exports of other minerals—are timed and messaged in a way that anticipates the reactions of both allies and competitors. As Indonesia considers similar resource strategies in the critical minerals and energy transition sector, its experience with nickel will serve as a crucial benchmark for balancing national interests against international regimes, and for leveraging global trends (like the EV boom) while simultaneously guarding against strategic vulnerabilities.

Exhibit 3: Normative Leadership under Strain – Indonesia's Diplomacy in the Myanmar Crisis

The third case examines Indonesia's role as a normative leader and mediator in regional crises, epitomised by its diplomacy concerning the Myanmar issue. As Southeast Asia's largest democracy, Indonesia traditionally projects an identity as a champion of human rights, political freedom, and peaceful conflict resolution—principles deeply rooted in its *Reformasi* era values. The *coup d'état* in Myanmar in February 2021, where the military (Tatmadaw) overthrew the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, severely tested Indonesia's commitment to these ideals and the effectiveness of its foreign policy tools in the identity/normative domain. Jakarta had to balance competing imperatives: supporting a fellow ASEAN member's return to democracy and stability, upholding ASEAN's non-interference norm, managing great-power interests, and responding to Indonesian domestic expectations, which strongly favoured solidarity with Myanmar's pro-democracy movement and the persecuted Rohingya minority.

Indonesia moved swiftly within days of the coup to spearhead an ASEAN response, leveraging its diplomatic clout to convene regional discussions and build consensus on addressing the crisis. Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi embarked on extensive shuttle diplomacy across ASEAN capitals to galvanise what she termed a "consultative approach." Notably, Indonesia reportedly floated a proposal in late February 2021 for ASEAN to press the Myanmar junta to honour its own promise of new elections within a year, and to deploy ASEAN observers to ensure any such elections were fair and inclusive. The plan also envisioned ASEAN facilitating dialogue between the junta and the anti-coup protest movement, as well as establishing a humanitarian corridor—effectively, a mediated roadmap for Myanmar's "return to democratic transition" without immediately reinstating the ousted government. This pragmatic stance fell short of the demands of Myanmar's protesters and many international human rights advocates, who called for the immediate release of all political prisoners and recognition of the November 2020 election results (won by Suu Kyi's party).

News of Indonesia's initiative sparked anger among Myanmar's pro-democracy activists, some of whom protested outside the Indonesian Embassy in Yangon, fearing Jakarta's plan would legitimise the junta by allowing it to hold new elections on its own terms. In response, Indonesia publicly clarified that it did "not endorse new elections" per se and that its ideas were merely to "seek consensus" among ASEAN states on steps forward. Jakarta affirmed that it ultimately "would adopt the consensus decision" reached by ASEAN, signalling that Indonesia would not unilaterally recognise the junta or its election plans without regional agreement, and that it still aligned itself with ASEAN's collective process rather than acting independently.

This episode showcased the inherent tension between Indonesia's normative aspirations and ASEAN's structural constraints. On one hand, Indonesia was willing to take the lead and propose actionable solutions, such as special envoys, rather than remain silent—living up to its self-image as an "honest broker" in Southeast Asia's conflicts. On the other hand, Jakarta had to exercise caution not to be perceived as violating ASEAN's cardinal principle of non-interference or as outright condemning a fellow member. This involved juggling pragmatic considerations regarding power shifts in Naypyidaw with the need to enforce principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter. The result was a carefully couched approach: Indonesia condemned the violence and called for restoration of democracy, but initially avoided directly naming or shaming Myanmar's generals, preferring a consensus-building tone.

This careful line illustrates how actor dynamics within ASEAN and Indonesia's own government shape its response. Kemlu was the central actor formulating the diplomatic initiative, with Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi personally deeply engaged. She coordinated closely with President Jokowi, who authorised Indonesia's convening of a special ASEAN Leaders' Summit in Jakarta in April 2021—an extraordinary event that brought ASEAN heads of state face-to-face with Myanmar's coup leader, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. Other parts of the Indonesian government, such as the military or intelligence services, played a more subdued role but undoubtedly monitoring the situation. Indonesia has quietly supported backchannel communications to encourage dialogue in Myanmar. Domestically, there was broad support for Indonesia's proactive stance, though some civil society groups urged Jakarta to adopt a tougher line on the junta and deny it any legitimacy. Notably, Indonesia's parliament and Islamic organisations had previously been vocal during the 2017 Rohingya crisis, pressing the government to act on humanitarian grounds. This time, with the entire Myanmar nation in turmoil, Indonesian public opinion again aligned with a compassionate, principled diplomacy, giving the government a mandate to lead regional efforts as long as it did not breach ASEAN unity.

The culmination of Indonesia's early diplomatic push was the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus (5PC) agreed on 24 April 2021. Large due to Indonesian mediation (with support from Malaysia, Singapore, and others), ASEAN achieved an unprecedented joint agreement with General Min Aung Hlaing on a conflict resolution framework.

The five points called for: (1) an immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar; (2) dialogue among all parties concerned; (3) the appointment of a special ASEAN envoy to facilitate the dialogue; (4) the provision of humanitarian assistance through ASEAN's coordination; and (5) a visit by the envoy to Myanmar to meet all parties. Although the consensus pointedly did not mention political prisoners, it did reflect calls by some leaders for their release. At the summit, General Min Aung Hlaing did not outright reject these points, even if his acquiescence was lukewarm, effectively giving ASEAN a diplomatic handle on the crisis.

The 5PC was lauded at the time as a breakthrough—“*beyond our expectation*” in the words of Malaysia’s Prime Minister—and a testament to Indonesia’s convening power. It showed Indonesia deftly using the ASEAN platform as its primary foreign policy tool: only through ASEAN’s framework could such commitments be extracted from Myanmar, as bilateral pressure from Indonesia alone would carry less weight and breach regional protocol. Importantly, Indonesia managed to align its normative goal (ending violence and starting dialogue in Myanmar) with ASEAN’s collective decision, thus avoiding a split within the group. This highlights Indonesia’s often-cited role as the “*de facto* leader” of ASEAN—willing to articulate a vision and marshal consensus, but also constrained by the need to keep all members, including more reticent ones like Thailand or Vietnam, and even the junta-led Myanmar itself initially, on board.

However, the Myanmar saga also starkly illustrates the limits of ASEAN’s influence and the challenges for Indonesia in translating its normative diplomacy into tangible results. Implementation of the 5PC stalled almost immediately, as the Myanmar junta dragged its feet and continued brutal military campaigns, ignoring the agreed points. By late 2021, ASEAN, under Brunei’s and subsequently Cambodia’s chairmanships, began excluding the Myanmar military leadership from high-level meetings due to non-compliance—a bold step pushed by Indonesia and like-minded members. This marked a significant departure from ASEAN’s tradition, essentially suspending Myanmar’s generals from the bloc’s summits until they honoured their commitments. Indonesia strongly supported this hard line. As Foreign Minister Retno stated, “*there is no progress on the implementation*” of the 5PC, necessitating that Myanmar remained represented only at a non-political level in ASEAN forums. Such censure is unprecedented in ASEAN and reflects Indonesia’s recognition that its cherished principles (democracy and rule of law) could not be realised through a business-as-usual approach.

During Indonesia’s own chairmanship of ASEAN in 2023, Jakarta took an even more proactive role in attempting to operationalise the peace plan. It effectively appointed its own foreign minister as the ASEAN special envoy and conducted intensive, discreet shuttle diplomacy. Throughout 2023, Indonesia’s diplomats engaged in “more than 110 engagements” with all stakeholders in Myanmar—including the junta, the opposition National Unity Government (NUG), ethnic minority armed groups, neighbouring countries like Thailand and India, and major powers like the US and China—all in an effort to restart dialogue or broker localised ceasefires. Retno Marsudi emphasised the need to build trust and “not use megaphone diplomacy,” indicating Indonesia’s preference for quiet facilitation rather than public condemnation at that stage.

This approach achieved only modest tangible outcomes as no comprehensive peace talks emerged, but it did keep ASEAN's process alive and demonstrated Indonesia's commitment to engage all sides, not just the junta. Notably, Jakarta also coordinated with extra-regional actors; it kept the UN involved and consulted dialogue partners like China and India, recognising that any solution would require broad backing. This hints at an important evolution: Indonesia understood that ASEAN's channels alone were insufficient to alter Myanmar's calculus, and it cautiously expanded the diplomatic framework.

By late 2024, frustration with the lack of progress led Indonesia to take an even more extraordinary step—convening an informal international meeting on Myanmar that extended beyond ASEAN. In October 2024, Indonesia hosted talks involving the UN, the European Union, and Myanmar's opposition NUG, according to media reports. Notably, Myanmar's junta was not invited, given its continued disregard of ASEAN's 5PC. This meeting, held quietly in Jakarta, reflected a tacit acknowledgement that the ASEAN-led effort had failed to gain traction after three years. In essence, Indonesia expanded the circle of stakeholders in search of new leverage: incorporating the UN and Western players introduced the prospect of a more robust international roadmap or pressure mechanism, something ASEAN alone could not provide. It was a delicate move—potentially sensitive within ASEAN—but Indonesia managed it carefully, framing it as consultation by the ASEAN special envoy with external partners. Such a step indicates how Indonesia's foreign policy actors innovated in the face of institutional paralysis, stepping outside established norms (ASEAN-only solutions) to uphold fundamental goals (peace, a return to civilian rule). It underscores Indonesia's reputation for moderate, bridge-building diplomacy, positioned between great powers and regional interests. Jakarta did not abandon ASEAN—it still operated under ASEAN auspices—but it certainly stretched its boundaries, effectively seeking a wider coalition to address a crisis that threatens regional stability and ASEAN's credibility.

The outcome of Indonesia's efforts in Myanmar, to date, presents a complex picture. While immediate change on the ground remains limited—violence in Myanmar tragically persists and the junta continues its repressive rule with plans for unilateral elections in 2025—these efforts represent a significant demonstration of Indonesia's normative policy in action. In that narrow sense, Indonesia's diplomatic tools have not yet achieved their ultimate aim of restoring democracy or halting repression in Myanmar. However, Indonesia did succeed in forging an ASEAN united front that has subjected the Myanmar regime to significant diplomatic isolation.

Largely due to Indonesia's leadership, ASEAN's policy shifted from toothless statements to actively excluding the junta from high-level meetings and engaging with opposition actors. This marks a notable moral stand, surprising many observers of the usually conflict-averse bloc. This approach has, to some extent, protected ASEAN's integrity and credibility, by preventing the Myanmar crisis from derailing all ASEAN cooperation and signalled to the junta that its actions carry costs.

Indonesia also set a precedent for ASEAN to deal more frankly with internal crises, potentially paving the way for institutional reform in how ASEAN handles gross violations of its charter values. In the broader international arena, Indonesia's handling of Myanmar enhanced its standing as a principled voice for democracy and humanitarian concern, balancing its non-aligned pragmatism with value-driven policy. It stood in contrast to other regional players (like Thailand, which engaged the junta more normally) and showed that ASEAN's "centrality" need not mean passivity.

For Indonesia itself, the crisis was a learning experience in inter-agency coordination: the foreign ministry took charge, but had to constantly update and involve the President, the military (for any security contingencies or evacuation scenarios), and coordinate with the ASEAN. The intensive diplomacy of 2023, under Jakarta's leadership, likely stretched the foreign ministry's resources—Retno Marsudi noted how "complex and delicate" the 110+ engagements were—revealing both the capabilities and the limits of Indonesia's diplomatic machinery when tackling a protracted conflict.

In conclusion, the Myanmar case illuminates why Indonesia views improved policy coordination and the adoption of new strategic approaches as imperative. It demonstrated that while noble intentions and regional leadership are undoubtedly important, they are not insufficient on their own to resolve deeply entrenched problems. Without stronger mechanisms to translate consensus into tangible action—such as an empowered special envoy or a peacekeeping capacity, which ASEAN lacks—Indonesia's influence reached a ceiling. This directly informs the renewed calls in Jakarta for establishing a more permanent National Security Council-type body. Such a body could integrate diplomatic, security, and humanitarian strategies during crises like Myanmar, facilitating quicker, unified responses that combine political negotiation with various forms of leverage (e.g., sanctions, peacekeepers, or backchannel deals). Moreover, the need to work with partners beyond ASEAN became evident. Indonesia had to quietly involve the UN, major powers, and even consider formats like the ASEAN Troika or an international "Friends of Myanmar" group to break the deadlock. Such flexibility, however, pushes against ASEAN conventions, and required Indonesia to exercise deft diplomacy to avoid backlash from fellow members wary of external interference. Thus, the Myanmar experience underscores that Indonesia's commitment to ASEAN remains strong, yet it also highlights the increasing necessity of augmenting ASEAN efforts with broader coalitions to effectively tackle complex issues of governance and human rights.

Cross-Cutting Lessons: Coordination, Partnerships, and Institutional Reform

These three cases—a security flashpoint (Natuna/South China Sea), an economic sovereignty gambit (nickel export ban), and a normative crisis (Myanmar)—clearly illustrate the interplay of Indonesia's foreign policy tools, actor dynamics, and institutional constraints. They also highlight recurring gaps that have hampered optimal outcomes, pointing to areas where Indonesia needs to adapt and improve its foreign policy apparatus.

Specifically, the analysis demonstrates why Indonesian policymakers are increasingly advocating for: (1) enhanced inter-agency coordination through a central authority; (2) expanding strategic partnerships and channels beyond ASEAN to complement its traditional approaches; and (3) upgrading the allocation of resources and authorities to strengthen Indonesia's foreign policy capacity. Below we distil the key lessons from the case studies in each of these areas.

1. Enhance Inter-Agency Coordination and Strategic Planning (Towards a National Security Council/NSC). All three cases reveal that Indonesia's fragmented policy process has consistently impeded coherent action. The Natuna incident exposed multiple ministries operating in silo, with civilian and military officials overlapping responsibilities or sending mixed signals due to the absence of an integrated chain of command on national security issues. At the bureaucratic level, Indonesia lacks a 'centralised hub' under the President to overcome the 'sectoral ego' present among governmental agencies. Instead, coordination is managed by separate Coordinating Ministers and ad hoc presidential envoys, a structure that often fails to integrate cross-cutting policy options effectively.

A National Security Council-like body, directly reporting to the President, could bring together defence, foreign affairs, economic, and intelligence chiefs to formulate unified strategies and enable rapid, coherent responses. Its absence can exacerbate policy problems as seen in the Natuna incident where maritime and defence agencies were not operating from a shared, strategic playbook. Similarly, the Myanmar case would benefit significantly from a standing NSC capable of aligning diplomatic initiatives with contingency planning (e.g., for refugee flows or peacekeeping), which involves both the military and domestic security forces. Simply put, Indonesia needs a more effective mechanism to forge "one voice" on strategic issues. Encouragingly, discussions are underway in Jakarta about creating an Office of Strategic Affairs under the President—effectively an NSC by another name—which could be established via executive decree. This reform would institutionalise coordination, reduce reliance on individual personalities, and ensure that when crises erupt or major policies are pursued, all government branches are synchronised in purpose and message.

2. Expand Strategic Channels Beyond ASEAN. The case studies highlight that while ASEAN remains Indonesia's default diplomatic platform, it is not always sufficient or ideally suited to Indonesia's diverse foreign policy interests. ASEAN-centric frameworks sometimes offer no innovative policies or tangible outcomes when addressing urgent strategic challenges. In the South China Sea, Indonesia found limited solace in ASEAN, as the organisation cannot collectively confront China's incursions due to divergent member interests. Consequently, Jakarta wisely pursued unilateral and minilateral measures—exemplified by renaming the North Natuna Sea and conducting joint naval exercises with willing partners. Indonesia needs to develop strategic options beyond ASEAN for pressing strategic and operational challenges, whether over the South China Sea, Myanmar, or other Indo-Pacific flashpoints.

This includes considering minilateral security arrangements with partners like India, Japan, Vietnam, or Australia. In the context of Myanmar diplomacy, Indonesia was eventually compelled to involve the UN and EU, recognising that ASEAN's consensus alone could not persuade the junta to change course. Furthermore, in the economic realm, Indonesia effectively leveraged forums like G20 and BRICS to garner support for its resource policies, as ASEAN's existing economic cooperation agreements do not fully encompass its ambition for industrial downstreaming.

This is not to suggest that Indonesia should abandon ASEAN. Rather, it must pursue a two-pronged strategy. First, it needs to augment ASEAN-led efforts with parallel engagement in other coalitions. Secondly, it needs to actively work to reform ASEAN from within. The Myanmar crisis has exposed ASEAN's institutional weaknesses, particularly the limitations of its slow, consensus-based decision-making in times of crisis and its lack of enforcement mechanisms. If Indonesia wishes to preserve the ASEAN Centrality while advancing regional order, it must spearhead a push for a more responsive and rules-based ASEAN. This should begin with a long-overdue revision of the ASEAN Charter and the creation of protocols for crisis management, improved decision-making process, as well as strengthened institutional capacity. Whether it is defending maritime rights, reforming global trade rules, or responding to human rights crises, Indonesia will achieve better outcomes by having non-ASEAN options alongside maintaining ASEAN unity. Diversifying its diplomatic channels (through the UN system, OIC, G20, IORA, or ad-hoc regional alliances) provides Indonesia additional leverage and flexibility.

The cases demonstrate that such multi-channel approach is already nascent. What is needed now is a deliberate strategy to institutionalise it, ensuring Indonesia is present and proactive in all forums relevant to its interests, rather than being exclusively tethered to the pace of ASEAN deliberation. In essence, ASEAN will remain the cornerstone, but it should not be a cage: Indonesia can uphold ASEAN centrality while simultaneously leading and joining coalitions that address issues ASEAN finds hard to resolve.

3. Reform Resource and Institutional Allocation for Foreign Policy. Finally, the empirical evidence points to under-resourced and structurally suboptimal institutions holding Indonesia back. Despite Indonesia's growing international profile, its diplomatic service and security agencies often lack the material support necessary to operate at their potential. Due to budget cuts under Prabowo's administration in January 2025, Kemlu was allocated a modest budget—approximately US\$464,500,000 based on the IDR-USD exchange rate at the time—which is small given Indonesia's size and global interests. This limits Indonesia's diplomatic reach and ability to undertake robust international initiatives. The recommendation is clear: Kemlu needs a significant budgetary increase to deploy more resources across a wider range of Indo-Pacific affairs.

With additional investment, Indonesia could elevate its profile in key countries (e.g., more Indonesian diplomats specialising in Southeast Asian or the Indian Ocean regions) and better coordinate multinational endeavours.

In the defence realm, Indonesia's spending (around 0.8% of GDP in recent years) has lagged, and funds within this budget are disproportionately skewed towards personnel and internal tasks. The Natuna case underlined the need to modernise and rebalance security expenditures—shifting some focus from army-centric territorial defence to maritime and air capabilities, and from sheer numbers to technology and training. Boosting the coast guard budget and assets is a prime example, so that grey-zone maritime patrols do not always fall to the Navy by default. Similarly, investing in intelligence and policy planning units would enable Indonesia to anticipate crises such as the coup in Myanmar's and prepare options proactively, rather than merely reacting. Institutional reform also involves clarifying mandates: streamlining the overlapping authorities among maritime agencies, or between ministries and coordinating ministries, would reduce turf wars and inefficiency.

While the government has taken steps in this direction (for instance, formulating the Indonesian Ocean Policy in 2017 and creating a unified Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs although it has since been abolished), the case studies show gaps persist between policy paper and its practical implementation, thus coordination "failure" in maritime security is still evident. Lastly, to support its normative leadership, Indonesia should empower specific institutions—for example, by spearheading regional efforts to increase funding to the ASEAN Secretariat or the AHA Centre more generously. This would ensure that agreed plans, such as the Myanmar consensus come with the necessary operational capacity for mediation or relief missions. In cases like Myanmar, Indonesia must be willing to invest resources into on-the-ground efforts, information gathering, and sustained engagement, rather than relying on 'diplomacy on a shoestring'.

Across the board, more strategic allocation of resources—financial, human, and organisational—is needed to align Indonesia's capabilities with its foreign policy ambitions. If Jakarta genuinely seeks to be a serious player shaping the Indo-Pacific order (as its vision statements proclaim), it must equip itself with the requisite diplomatic corps, naval/coast guard strength, developmental aid budget, and policy think-tank support as well as open environment for academic and policy research engagement with policy makers. The three exhibits above, where Indonesia often demonstrated the right instincts but sometimes lacked the capacity for full execution or follow-through, strongly reinforce this crucial point.

In conclusion, these empirical examples underscore that Indonesia's foreign policy effectiveness in the 21st century will depend as much on internal reforms as external posture. Indonesia has already begun moving in many of these directions, emphasising domestic infrastructure development and pursuing a more assertive, interest-based foreign policy abroad. establishing a National Security Council or equivalent could institutionalise strategic coordination at the top. Proactive engagement in minilateral groupings could complement ASEAN and provide Indonesia more avenues for leadership. Furthermore, reallocating resources would empower Indonesia's agencies to effectively implement its foreign policy vision.

By learning from these practical examples of successes and shortfalls, Indonesia can better position itself as an active shaper of its regional environment. This will enable it to effectively protect its sovereignty, drive its economic transformation, and champion its values, even amid the complex geopolitical currents of the post-*Reformasi* and post-Jokowi era.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Indonesia's foreign policy necessitates a fundamental recalibration to navigate the complex systemic shifts in the global order while simultaneously addressing domestic constraints. The preceding analysis—which has explored changes in great-power dynamics, the roles of key domestic actors, the available foreign policy tools, and the policy-making process—underscores that Indonesia can no longer rely on a 'business-as-usual' approach. Instead, a more proactive, adaptive, and strategic foreign policy is imperative. The following recommendations delineate how Indonesia can strategically leverage each level of international engagement—bilateral, minilateral, regional, and global—to its comparative advantage, whilst undertaking internal reforms to enhance its foreign policy coherence and capacity. These measures are grounded in Indonesia's political context and strategic interests, aiming to preserve its sovereignty and strategic autonomy amidst intensifying great power competition. They also address areas where the current system underperforms, from institutional coordination to diplomatic resources, by offering concrete and realistic proposals for improvement.

1. Strengthen Strategic Leadership and Coordination

A top priority is to bolster Indonesia's strategic planning and policy coordination at the highest level. Establishing a National Security Council (NSC)—or a similar high-level coordinating body—would greatly enhance interagency coherence in foreign and security policy. An NSC, presided over by the President and comprising key ministers (e.g., Foreign Affairs, Defense, Trade, and Finance) should drive long-term strategic planning, ensure the integration of all instruments of national power, and conduct regular scenario forecasting for emergent challenges. This reform dismantles existing silos between agencies, thereby mitigating the risk of insular decision-making or *groupthink* in crisis situations. Furthermore, it would institutionalise a practice of whole-of-government planning, ensuring that diplomacy, defence, economic statecraft, and informational tools are cohesively aligned toward shared objectives.

In parallel, the presidency must exert clear strategic leadership in foreign policy. The President should articulate a unifying grand strategy that balances Indonesia's core principles, such as the "free and active" principle of non-alignment, with the demands of the evolving international order. Issuing a formal National Security Strategy or White Paper would effectively communicate Indonesia's priorities and 'red lines' across the government and to the public. This document would serve as a roadmap for global, regional, minilateral, and bilateral engagements, ensuring that day-to-day diplomacy is guided by a long-term vision. Under a stronger coordinating framework, Indonesia can transition from a reactive to a more proactive stance, anticipating geopolitical shifts and formulating policy responses in advance, rather than merely scrambling in the face of crises.

Critically, improved coordination extends beyond government agencies; it should also draw upon domestic expertise and societal inputs. Indonesia's vibrant community of scholars, think tanks, civil society organisations, and media can offer diverse perspectives and expertise to inform policy choices. Engaging these stakeholders through regular consultations will ground foreign policy in rigorous analysis and broaden public support. One example of such consultation is the 'Foreign Policy Breakfast', which was regularly organised by Kemlu when the Foreign Minister was Hassan Wirajuda. Ultimately, a more inclusive policy process will strengthen Indonesia's external standing, as policies will be backed by domestic consensus and deeper understanding. In essence, instituting an NSC and embracing a whole-of-nation approach will give Indonesia the strategic coherence and agility it currently lacks.

2. Reinvigorate ASEAN and Regional Engagement

At the regional level, Indonesia must revitalise its leadership within ASEAN while simultaneously exploring new complementary frameworks. ASEAN has historically been the cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy, with the comparative advantage lying in its capacity to present a unified voice and shape regional norms through the "ASEAN Way" of consensus and dialogue. However, ASEAN's limitations have become increasingly evident: consensus-based decision-making often leads to inaction during urgent crises, and divergences among members can impede robust responses to security challenges such as the South China Sea disputes or the Myanmar coup. Indonesia can no longer solely rely on ASEAN's symbolic centrality alone; it must both strengthen ASEAN's effectiveness and supplement it with other regional initiatives.

Firstly, Indonesia should push for institutional reforms within ASEAN to improve the bloc's responsiveness. This includes advocating the adoption of flexible decision-making mechanisms, such as the "ASEAN Minus X" formula, where a subset of willing members can proceed on pressing issues when full consensus is unattainable. Embracing such flexibility would enable ASEAN to act in crises—for example, concerning humanitarian interventions or joint responses to security threats—without being held hostage by a single dissenting member. Indonesia could also propose an ASEAN crisis management mechanism—a formal framework or task force activated during regional emergencies, such as pandemics, natural disasters, or conflict flare-ups, to coordinate timely collective action. By spearheading these reforms, Indonesia would demonstrate effective leadership and bolster ASEAN's credibility as a relevant player in regional affairs.

Secondly, Indonesia must reassert its agenda-setting role in ASEAN. Jakarta should lead efforts to update ASEAN's priorities to address contemporary challenges. This encompasses enhancing regional economic integration (e.g., in the digital economy and supply chain resilience), formulating joint positions on emerging security issues (e.g., autonomous weapons, submarine cables, climate-related security impacts, online scams), and strengthening adherence to democratic principles and human rights in line with the ASEAN Charter.

In practice, this could involve Indonesia championing new agreements on digital trade or public health cooperation, pressing for a more united ASEAN stance on the South China Sea Code of Conduct negotiations, and continuing to seek solutions to the Myanmar crisis that balance ASEAN's non-interference norm with the need to protect civilians and regional stability. Indonesia should remain the driving force that injects purpose and direction into ASEAN deliberations.

Thirdly, while maintaining ASEAN centrality, Indonesia should diversify its regional engagements beyond ASEAN. Given ASEAN's constraints, it is prudent to leverage other complementary forums in the Indo-Pacific. Indonesia can deepen involvement in economic and security partnerships that overlap with, but are not limited to, ASEAN membership. For instance, joining high-standard trade arrangements like the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) or expanding cooperation under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) could boost Indonesia's integration into regional value chains beyond Southeast Asia, provided its domestic industry is adequately prepared.

In the security realm, Indonesia can engage selectively with minilateral security arrangements to advance its strategic interests while avoiding entanglement in formal alliances. For example, enhancing dialogue with Quad members—Japan, Australia, India, and the United States—on shared concerns such as maritime security, cyber governance, and infrastructure resilience can deepen strategic trust and enhance Indonesia's role in the Indo-Pacific security architecture, simultaneously acting as a bridge between rival groupings.

Likewise, the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA)—involving the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Singapore—present another example of a potential pragmatic minilateral platform. Although historically rooted in the post-Konfrontasi era and once viewed with caution by Indonesia, the FPDA has evolved into a confidence-building mechanism focused on non-traditional security cooperation, including disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. Indonesia's potential engagement—whether through observer status or targeted participation—would carry significant symbolic weight, signalling a shift towards proactive regional security diplomacy. It would also reflect Indonesia's readiness to forge balanced relationships with both traditional partners and emerging powers, conveying a clear message to China and the US that Indonesia is charting its own middle-power path.

Such engagement, however, must be calibrated: Indonesia should frame its participation as contributing regional public goods (e.g., joint naval exercises for piracy prevention or information-sharing on cyber threats) rather than joining any military alliance. By doing so, Indonesia complements ASEAN's broad-based approach with targeted cooperation that addresses specific gaps, all while avoiding undermining ASEAN. In sum, a reinvigorated ASEAN remains Indonesia's primary regional platform, but it should be reinforced by flexible coalitions and initiatives that help achieve what ASEAN alone currently cannot.

3. Engage Dynamic Minilateral Forums (BRICS and Beyond)

In an era characterised by fluid alignments, minilateral diplomacy—involving small groups of states focused on particular issues or geographies—has emerged as an important supplement to traditional multilateralism. For Indonesia, engagement in minilateral forums offers both agility and focus: these coalitions can yield concrete outcomes more readily than larger institutions, and they enable Indonesia to collaborate with like-minded partners on shared interests. However, minilateral engagements also entail risks if they are perceived as aligning Indonesia too closely with one bloc against another. The strategic objective of Indonesia's minilateral engagement should therefore be to diversify partnerships and amplify Indonesia's voice on specific issues, without eroding its non-aligned stance or strategic autonomy.

A notable recent development is Indonesia's decision to join the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) grouping. By acceding to BRICS, Indonesia aims to deepen ties with major emerging economies and champion the causes of the Global South. BRICS potentially offers economic benefits, such as development financing through the New Development Bank or increased trade and investment with member countries and provides a platform to advocate for reforms in global financial governance. This engagement also aligns with Indonesia's identity as a leader among developing nations, echoing the spirit of the 1955 Bandung Conference in a contemporary context, given its association with the reform of the global order to better reflect the needs of the global majority.

Nevertheless, BRICS alone cannot fulfill all of Indonesia's objectives, and involvement in this forum brings certain limitations. For instance, BRICS is often viewed by Western powers as a geopolitical counterweight to the G7-led order, a sentiment exacerbated following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the consequent geopolitical crisis in Europe. Consequently, Indonesia must be careful that its BRICS membership does not create a perception in Washington, Brussels, or even among its ASEAN neighbors that it is "choosing sides" against the West. Additionally, BRICS may not always act cohesively on issues important to Indonesia, and its agenda might be influenced by great-power interests (Beijing's or Moscow's priorities) more than by middle-power voices. This is because consensus within BRICS can be challenging due to the grouping's diverse political systems and sometimes divergent interests (e.g., India and China's strategic rivalry).

Therefore, Indonesia should meticulously balance its minilateral engagements. Embracing BRICS should be accompanied by active participation in other small-group initiatives, especially those involving Western partners or fellow middle powers. Indonesia can mitigate geopolitical misperceptions by, for instance, initiating minilateral dialogues with Quad members (without formally joining the Quad alliance) on non-controversial areas such as infrastructure connectivity, vaccine distribution, or climate action in the Indo-Pacific. Similarly, Indonesia could reinvigorate forums like MIKTA (the informal partnership of Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey, and Australia), which convenes middle-income democracies to consult on global governance issues.

As previously discussed, the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) also offers an opportunity. Engagement with FPDA can signal to both the US and China that Indonesia is seeking broader, inclusive arrangements, rather than binary alignments. Concurrently, within BRICS, Indonesia should exercise caution not to be unduly influenced by the agendas and interests of major powers within the group. Instead, it should seek to moderate initiatives that could potentially disadvantage developing countries.

Furthermore, Indonesia should spearhead the creation of new issue-specific coalitions that address niche priorities. For example, it could convene a trilateral maritime security initiative with littoral states in the Indo-Pacific to combat illegal fishing and bolster search-and-rescue capabilities. Most crucially, Indonesia should consider launching a minilateral platform on critical minerals, bringing together resource-rich states, key manufacturing partners, and clean energy technology leaders. This could include countries like Australia, India, South Korea, and Brazil, offering a space for joint investments, supply chain security, and the establishment of environmental standards. Given Indonesia's increasing importance in nickel and other strategic resources, a Critical Minerals Partnership for Sustainable Transition (CM-PST) would serve both economic and diplomatic goals, reinforcing Indonesia's relevance in the global energy transition while ensuring it avoids strategic overdependence on any single actor.

In managing its minilateral diplomacy, Indonesia's comparative advantage will be its reputation as a relatively impartial, non-aligned middle power. Unlike alliance-bound countries, Indonesia can participate in a broad spectrum of groupings. It should leverage this position by acting as a connector and mediator—for instance, using its role in BRICS to convey developing country perspectives to the West, whilst also introducing insights from G7 or Indo-Pacific discussions into BRICS debates. Nevertheless, maintaining this delicate balancing act requires transparency and consistency: Indonesia must clearly communicate the purpose of each minilateral engagement to both domestic and international audiences, emphasising that the goal is to advance Indonesia's own interests and regional stability, not to antagonize any major power. By actively shaping the agendas of minilateral forums and carefully selecting its participation, Indonesia can maximize the benefits of these agile diplomatic channels—focused cooperation, resource pooling, and influence on emerging rules—whilst avoiding the pitfalls of overalignment or duplication of efforts.

4. Adapt and Expand Bilateral Partnerships

Bilateral diplomacy remains an indispensable channel through which Indonesia can pursue its national interests. One-on-one relationships with other countries offer flexibility and depth that larger forums cannot; they enable Indonesia to negotiate tailor-made agreements, rapidly address specific disputes or opportunities, and build trust on sensitive issues. Particularly amidst great power rivalry, bilateral engagement serves as a crucial tool for Indonesia to avoid being caught in zero-sum games. By maintaining robust ties with all major players, Indonesia can secure its interests without formally taking sides.

Nevertheless, bilateral channels also have inherent limitations: a single bilateral partnership, regardless its strength, cannot independently resolve transnational problems such as regional security threats or global economic volatility. Consequently, Indonesia needs a diverse portfolio of bilateral relationships, each serving particular strategic goals, and it must manage these relationships shrewdly to prevent over-dependence on any single country.

Firstly, Indonesia should *strengthen strategic partnerships with key middle powers* that share its geopolitical outlook and can act as counterbalances in the region. Countries such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, India, and the EU member states are natural partners in advancing a free, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. These partners offer valuable resources; Japan and the EU provide investment and technology, South Korea contributes expertise in technology and development experience, Australia offers security cooperation, and India contributes across both economic and security spheres. Most importantly, none of these countries seek to dominate Indonesia. Deepening ties with these nations can assist Indonesia in diversifying its economic markets, facilitating technology transfer, securing infrastructure financing, and collaborating on security capacity-building, all whilst avoiding excessive reliance on either the US or China. Concretely, Indonesia can institutionalise “2+2” dialogues (joint meetings of foreign and defence ministers) with more partners. Indonesia already does so with a few countries Japan, Australia, and more recently China, and now contemplating innovative formats such as “2+2+2” that incorporates either finance or trade ministers to ensure economic and security strategies are integrated. Expanding high-level consultations will maintain the focus and forward-looking nature of these relationships, and identifying new areas of cooperation, for example, joint initiatives on renewable energy projects or coordination on Indo-Pacific maritime patrols.

Secondly, irrespective of the major powers’ interest in fostering deeper relations with Indonesia, it must endeavour to *preserve a balanced approach in its major-power bilateral engagements*, notably with China and the United States. Both relationships are pivotal and offer distinct benefits: China is Indonesia’s largest trading partner and a major investor in infrastructure, including Indonesia’s high-speed rail, whereas the US provides security partnerships, export markets, and is a source of advanced technologies and investment. The comparative advantage of bilateral dealings in this context lies in the ability to extract tangible gains from each side—for instance, securing Chinese investment in industrial parks and digital economy, whilst acquiring US military equipment and development aid—without the complexities of multilateral politics. Under President Joko Widodo, Indonesia demonstrated this balance by welcoming Chinese BRI projects and simultaneously purchasing US fighter jets and cooperating on maritime security.

Going forward, Indonesia should institutionalise this multi-vector diplomacy: maintain active bilateral working groups with China on trade and infrastructure, even as it engages the US through strategic dialogues on defence modernisation and economic initiatives such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. It is crucial, however, that Indonesia also sets boundaries in these relationships. With China, for example, Indonesia should firmly defend its maritime rights around the Natuna Islands even as economic ties grow, thereby demonstrating that sovereignty is non-negotiable. With the US, Indonesia should assert its independent positions, for instance, on not hosting foreign military bases or joining any formal alliance, even as security ties deepen. By clearly communicating its non-aligned posture, Indonesia can continue to benefit from both partnerships; each power will recognise that courting Indonesia on its own merits is more effective than pressuring it to choose sides.

Thirdly, Indonesia ought to *leverage bilateral diplomacy to support its economic transformation and defence needs*. Bilateral free trade agreements or preferential trade deals (for example, the Indonesia–EU Comprehensive Economic Partnership which is currently under negotiation) can open new markets for Indonesian products and attract investments into priority sectors such as manufacturing, downstream mineral processing, and the creative economy. On the defence front, bilateral arrangements can assist Indonesia in diversifying its military procurement and training. Recent arms deal for fighter jets with France and on joint development of submarines with South Korea are examples of how bilateral channels deliver concrete security benefits. Continuing this trajectory, Indonesia should pursue technology-sharing and joint production agreements in its bilateral defence deals, aiming to boost the domestic defence industry, which aligns with the goal of self-reliance in weaponry. It should also seek bilateral partnerships for capacity-building in cybersecurity and intelligence, for example, with countries like Australia or Japan that possess advanced capabilities in these areas, which will strengthen Indonesia's overall defence against non-traditional threats.

Finally, Indonesia must not overlook its immediate neighbourhood in bilateral outreach. While ASEAN provides a multilateral umbrella, *strong bilateral ties with each Southeast Asian neighbour* are fundamental for regional cohesion. Indonesia should reinvigorate diplomacy with countries in the Mekong sub-region (Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos) and others such as the Philippines and Malaysia on a one-on-one basis. Regular bilateral visits, development assistance, and cultural exchanges with these neighbours build goodwill and mutual understanding that facilitate cooperation within ASEAN and prevent misunderstandings. By acting as an engaged, good neighbour in Southeast Asia, Indonesia can ensure that its leadership in ASEAN is supported by trust at the bilateral level. These ties also offer early warning channels and opportunities for mediation when bilateral issues arise, such as border disputes or migrant worker issues, preventing them from escalating into regional complications.

In summary, bilateral channels afford Indonesia the most direct control over its foreign engagements and the flexibility to advance specific interests pragmatically. By broadening

and balancing its network of bilateral partnerships—focusing on middle powers, carefully managing relations with China and the US, leveraging economic and defence deals, and bolstering ties with neighbours—Indonesia can achieve outcomes that neither global nor regional forums alone can deliver. This bilateral activism, however, must be pursued in harmony with Indonesia’s multilateral commitments to avoid sending mixed signals. When executed judiciously, each bilateral relationship will serve as a building block for Indonesia’s overarching goal: maximising its national prosperity and security whilst upholding an independent, active foreign policy.

5. Promote Inclusive Global Governance and Niche Agendas based on Substantive Expertise

On the global stage, Indonesia should continue to exert its influence in shaping a more inclusive and equitable international order. Global multilateral institutions—particularly the UN, the WTO, the International Monetary Fund/World Bank, and forums like the G20—remain vital arenas for Indonesia to advance its interests and values. These global channels provide Indonesia with broad legitimacy and the ability to form issue-based coalitions that transcend regional boundaries. They enable Indonesia to advocate for rules and norms that safeguard the sovereignty and development rights of smaller states in the face of great power dominance. However, traditional multilateralism is under strain: major powers occasionally circumvent the UN/WTO processes, great-power vetoes paralyse the UN Security Council, and global trade rules have not kept pace with digital and environmental challenges. Thus, while Indonesia leverages these global platforms, it must also campaign for their reform and ensure its engagement is innovative and impactful.

Indonesia’s strategic purpose in global forums is twofold: to *protect the rules-based order* that allows all nations a voice, and to *amplify the concerns of the Global South* to render that order more just. As a country that embodies multiple identities—a developing economy, a democracy, a Muslim-majority nation, and a member of the G20—Indonesia is uniquely positioned to serve as a bridge-builder between the Global North and South. It should capitalise on this by championing initiatives that address the asymmetries in global governance. For example, Indonesia can advocate for WTO reforms that give special and differential treatment to least developed countries, or push for the updating of trade rules to better accommodate the digital economy, thereby benefiting countries with growing digital sectors, such as itself.

Within the UN, Indonesia should persist in calling for Security Council reform—expanding representation to include more voices from Asia, Africa, and Latin America—aligning with long-standing proposals to make the Council more reflective of contemporary realities. While such UN reform is a protracted endeavour, Indonesia’s voice lends moral authority given its status as the world’s third-largest democracy and a consistently constructive UN member, which has thus far included multiple stints on the Security Council as a non-permanent member.

Beyond institutional reform, Indonesia should use its global engagement to establish norms on emerging issues. In domains such as cyberspace governance, climate change, and global health security, there is a need for forward-looking rules and equitable frameworks, and Indonesia can be a prominent norm entrepreneur. Building on its successful G20 Presidency in 2022, where Indonesia prioritised inclusive recovery (coining the mantra “Recover Together, Recover Stronger”), Jakarta can continue to inject Global South perspectives into G20 discussions on issues like pandemic preparedness, sustainable energy transitions, and the reform of global financial safety nets.

Likewise, in the UN, Indonesia can assume leadership in shaping global compacts on matters like ocean sustainability (leveraging its marine expertise) or countering online extremism (drawing from its experience in promoting interfaith dialogue and moderate Islam). Indonesia’s image as a moderate Muslim-majority democracy is an asset here. Through forums and initiatives, it can project values of tolerance, pluralism, and equitable development. For instance, Indonesia could spearhead international efforts to clarify state responsibilities within digital transformation with regards to the ethical uses of artificial intelligence, or co-chair a global task force on climate finance for developing nations—all actions that underscore its role as a principled solutions-provider on global challenges.

Importantly, Indonesia’s entry into minilateral groups like BRICS should complement—not replace—its traditional multilateral activism. Indonesia can introduce ideas formulated in minilateral settings (e.g., a BRICS stance on development finance reform) to larger forums like the IMF or G20 for broader adoption. Similarly, it can utilise global platforms to dispel any notions that its BRICS membership signifies a departure from multilateralism; by actively engaging in both, Indonesia demonstrates it is broadening its diplomacy, not shifting alignments. Maintaining this balance will reinforce Indonesia’s image as a country that is “multialigned” and bridge-building—cooperating with Western powers and developing nations alike to strengthen a global system in need of fresh ideas.

Indonesia’s current application for OECD membership reflects its ambition to align with international norms on governance, trade, investment, and regulatory frameworks. Accession to the OECD would serve as a strong signal to global markets and investors regarding Indonesia’s commitment to rule-based economic reform. It also offers long-term benefits in improving policy coherence, fiscal transparency, education benchmarks, and innovation ecosystems. However, the process requires sustained institutional reform and interagency coordination. The government must prepare a robust roadmap for meeting OECD standards, ensure transparency in the accession process, and leverage the platform to forge stronger ties with OECD member countries—especially the EU, Japan, and the US. If managed effectively, OECD membership can be a cornerstone of Indonesia’s strategy to augment global economic influence whilst simultaneously improving domestic policy quality.

Finally, Indonesia can adopt a Global South identity to forge solidarity on global issues. Reviving the Bandung Spirit, it can convene or lead coalitions of African, Asian, and Latin American states on specific negotiations—for example, within the G77+China grouping at the UN.

By acting as a consensus-builder among developing countries (as it has done in climate change talks and in peacekeeping initiatives), Indonesia increases its leverage when engaging with the US, China, and other great powers; these powers are more inclined to listen when Indonesia speaks for a broader constituency. Promoting South-South cooperation is another facet – through its development aid agency and educational scholarships, Indonesia can share expertise with fellow developing nations in areas like disaster management, Islamic banking, or democratic governance. Such efforts bolster Indonesia’s standing and moral leadership globally.

In essence, global engagement is where Indonesia can aspire to shape the “rules of the game” in line with its interests and values. By pushing for a fairer, more inclusive international system—one that curbs unilateralism and respects each nation’s development pathway—Indonesia not only safeguards its own sovereignty but also fulfills a historical calling as a leader of the post-colonial world. The comparative advantage of global forums for Indonesia lies in their legitimacy and scale: they transform Indonesia’s voice into a chorus. Yet, these forums only deliver if Indonesia remains active and creative within them. The country should therefore continue to be a constructive force in multilateralism, even as it insists on much-needed reforms, ensuring that global governance evolves (rather than erodes) under the pressure of great power rivalry.

6. Enhance Diplomatic Capacity and Resources

Achieving ambitious foreign policy goals will require significant improvements in Indonesia’s diplomatic capacity, resources, and institutional proficiency. Even the most meticulously crafted strategy will falter if not underpinned by adequate budgetary support, skilled personnel, and effective on-the-ground presence. As discussed, Indonesia’s current diplomatic infrastructure underperforms in several areas: Kemlu’s budget and staff size have not kept pace with the country’s growing international role, training has lagged in new issue domains such as cyber diplomacy, and certain important regions remain understaffed or overlooked in Indonesia’s diplomatic outreach. To genuinely “punch at its weight or above,” Indonesia must invest substantially in the tools and people who execute its foreign policy.

Firstly, Indonesia must align its foreign affairs budget with strategic priorities. It should increase funding for diplomacy so that resources commensurate with its global ambitions. Currently, Kemlu’s budget is a tiny fraction of the national budget—considerably less than what other G20 middle powers allocate for external affairs. This constrains Indonesia’s ability to respond to crises, initiate new international programmes, or even adequately assist its citizens abroad. A recalibrated budget should ensure that Indonesian embassies and consulates are well-resourced to conduct economic diplomacy, cultural promotion, and citizen protection. For example, if Indonesia identifies Africa or the South Pacific as emerging priority regions, among others to cultivate new markets and allies or to support its bid for UN leadership roles, it must allocate funds to establish new missions or expand existing ones there, rather than concentrating resources solely in traditional posts in Europe or North America.

Conversely, if the more consequential strategic permutation lies in strengthening relations with countries like the United States, then Indonesia should prioritise increasing funding for major initiatives within its diplomatic missions there. Sufficient funding is also crucial for Indonesia to host international events and summits (like the G20 in 2022 or ASEAN meetings) with professionalism and influence, ensuring that substantive outcomes are not overshadowed by ceremonial aspect. In short, the government should perceive diplomatic spending not as an expenditure, but as an investment in national security and economic opportunity. Even modest increases can yield outsized returns if they enable Indonesia to mediate a conflict, secure a trade deal, or win a key vote in a multilateral forum.

Secondly, Indonesia must cultivate a world-class diplomatic corps through comprehensive training and human capital development. Indonesia's diplomats must be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to operate within a rapidly evolving international landscape. This means going beyond traditional area studies and language training (though these remain important) to also focus on new domains of diplomacy. Kemlu should expand specialised training in areas like cybersecurity policy, digital economy, climate negotiations, global health, and strategic communications. Diplomats posted to key technology centres should possess a comprehensive understanding of topics such as data governance and artificial intelligence, while those in financial centres should be well-versed in international finance and sanctions regimes. Investing in such expertise will empower Indonesia to participate effectively in negotiations on cutting-edge issues that were not on the agenda a decade ago. This approach is not entirely novel, as Indonesia has a history of adapting and developing diplomats with both strategic political insight and technical expertise on issues such as nuclear governance. Additionally, Indonesia should encourage cross-postings and secondments—for instance, foreign service officers undertaking a stint at the Ministry of Defence or trade negotiators working with the Foreign Ministry—to dismantle institutional silos and cultivate versatile policymakers who can bridge various sectors. Language capabilities must also be broadened; as Indonesia engages more with non-traditional partners, having diplomats fluent in languages like Arabic, French, or Portuguese (for Africa and Latin America outreach) will be a prove highly advantageous. Overall, a more skilled diplomatic corps will improve the quality of policy input to Jakarta and bolster Indonesia's reputation as a savvy actor on the global stage.

Thirdly, a recalibration of the global deployment of Indonesia's missions and diplomats is long overdue. A strategic review of Indonesia's diplomatic footprint is essential. Some regions critical to Indonesia's future interests are under-represented in its diplomatic network. For example, Africa—with its booming economies and significant voting power in multilateral bodies—currently hosts relatively few Indonesian embassies. The same applies to parts of Latin America and even the Indo-Pacific (for instance, the Pacific Island nations). Indonesia should establish or upgrade missions in these areas, possibly starting with multilateral hubs to maximize impact.

Even within well-covered regions, mission staffing may require adjustments; key embassies engaging with great-power capitals or economic centres, for example Beijing, Washington DC, Brussels, Tokyo, and New Delhi should have dedicated officers focusing on Indonesia's priority sectors (economy, defence, culture, and labour) and sufficient numbers to effectively engage local decision-makers and diaspora communities. Concurrently, lower priority posts could be streamlined or regionalised to free up resources. Embracing technology can aid this effort: Indonesia could implement more "roving ambassadors" or regional envoys for specific issues, thereby reducing the need for a brick-and-mortar embassy in every country whilst still ensuring diplomatic reach. A nimble, well-distributed diplomatic presence will enable Indonesia to be proactive rather than reactive—identifying opportunities in distant locales (such as investment from Gulf states or partnerships in Central Asia) and responding quickly to developments affecting Indonesians abroad.

Finally, Indonesia needs to improve operational support and policy analysis capacity. Kemlu should strengthen its policy planning unit, enabling it to conduct in-depth strategic assessments and future scenario planning whilst working closely with the proposed NSC. This would assist in anticipating global trends and injecting fresh ideas into policy formulation. Increasing collaboration with Indonesian universities and think tanks can also expand bandwidth—for instance, commissioning external research on topics like the impact of artificial intelligence on jobs or the future of maritime security. Additionally, diplomatic missions should be given the tools to effectively project Indonesia's public diplomacy. This could involve dedicated funds for cultural programmes, educational exchanges, and media engagement in host countries—all critical for building Indonesia's soft power, which in turn reinforces its foreign policy objectives. Providing missions with country-specific experts or better data resources (e.g., economic and political analysis software) can improve reporting quality and the advice envoys provide to Jakarta.

In summary, without more diplomats, better training, and greater funding, Indonesia risks ambition without delivery in its foreign policy. Enhancing capacity is a foundational recommendation because all other recommendations ultimately depend on the quality of Indonesia's diplomatic machinery. The Prabowo administration and its successors should therefore prioritise resource allocation to foreign affairs as a matter of national interest, ensuring Indonesia's global engagement is underpinned by the requisite muscle and savvy to make a tangible impact.

Looking Ahead: Recalibrating Foreign Policy in the Prabowo Era

The 2020s present Indonesia with a pivotal opportunity to recalibrate its foreign policy – both to better serve its national interests and to respond to a world marked by great-power rivalry and rapid change. Implementing the recommendations outlined above signifies a strategic overhaul, aiming for Indonesia to become more agile in its diplomatic engagements, more cohesive in its decision-making, and more influential in shaping regional and global norms. This policy reboot is timely as Indonesia confronts a dawning multipolar order, striving to avoid being constrained by US-China competition and instead carving out a role as a confident middle power capable of engaging all sides while uphold its core principles.

The recalibration requires a shift in mindset and capacity—from a reactivity proactivity, from *ad-hoc* coordination to institutionalised planning, and from fragmented engagement to integrated, purposeful diplomacy across all levels.

The new administration under President Prabowo Subianto offers both fresh opportunities and notable constraints for realising these changes. His background as a former general and Defence Minister suggests an acute awareness of security challenges, potentially inclining him towards bolstering defence diplomacy and institutional coordination, such as the proposed NSC. Early signals, including the swift move to join BRICS and a commitment to “sovereign” decision-making, indicate a willingness to assert Indonesia’s autonomy. This momentum could be leveraged to enact overdue reforms in the first years of his term, capitalising on his political capital. Prabowo’s stature and nationalist credentials might also garner domestic support for a bolder foreign policy, appealing to national pride and security as vital for protecting Indonesia’s sovereignty and economic interests.

However, certain constraints and risks demand careful consideration. International observers may remain wary of his past human rights record and authoritarian leanings, potentially complicating Indonesia’s image as a champion of democracy and human rights abroad. Domestically, his governing coalition might prioritise inward-looking or populist agendas, potentially diverting attention and funds from diplomatic initiatives. His pledges to boost a sovereign wealth fund and military spending could also strain the foreign affairs budget, unless diplomacy is equally prioritised for Indonesia’s security and prosperity. Moreover, navigating great-power relations carries the risk of missteps that could reduce Indonesia’s strategic room for manoeuvre—for example, an imbalanced tilt toward BRICS might provoke pushback from Western partners, or a harder line on China might invite economic retaliation. The Prabowo government must maintain discipline and consistency to uphold Indonesia’s independent posture, resisting temptations to swing too far to any side while engaging all major players.

Crucially, many of the suggested reforms demand sustained political will and bureaucratic buy-in. These changes may face inertia or resistance from elements within the government preferring the status quo. While the new administration has an opening to assert a novel approach, it must skilfully manage the civil service and military bureaucracy to embrace these changes rather than resistance to these reforms. Building a consensus, or at least quelling dissent for reforms like “ASEAN Minus X” or closer ties with non-traditional partners will test Prabowo’s political acumen in forging unity on foreign policy goals.

In conclusion, for Indonesia to effectively navigate the turbulent waters of this decade, its foreign policy must be future-oriented and resilient. The recommendations outlined provide a comprehensive blueprint for strengthening internal coordination and strategy, maximising each diplomatic channel’s benefit while mitigating its drawbacks, reinvesting in regional leadership, venturing confidently into new partnerships, and empowering its diplomatic corps.

Under President Prabowo's leadership, Indonesia has a significant opportunity to reset and reinvigorate its foreign policy apparatus. Should his administration commit to these reforms, Indonesia is more likely to withstand great-power pressures, seize opportunities in the changing global economy, and uphold a regional order that protects its interests. The path ahead will be challenging, but with clear vision and unified effort, Indonesia can steer its "free and active" doctrine into a new era—one where it not only reacts to global events, but actively helps to shape them in line with its national aspirations.

Box 1. Proposal for a National Security Council: A Solution for Coordination and Strategic Coherence

The proposed NSC would be chaired by the President, who would then appoint a National Security Advisor. This advisor would be fundamentally responsible for advising the President on national security affairs and coordinating the activities of the NSC through timely research. The advisor would be supported by a team of researchers selected by the advisor, who would conduct research and analysis on issues pertaining to national interest and security. Crucially, the advisor would not be an active military officer, thereby reinforcing civil-military relations in alignment with democratic principles and supporting grounded, objective analysis.

The permanent membership of the NSC would comprise selected members of the President's cabinet, which include the Minister of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, Trade, Finance, and Industry. Non-permanent members will be invited to NSC meetings depending on the specific policy issue under discussion. The NSC fundamentally differs from Indonesia's existing National Defence Council (NDC), as the NSC would be tasked with advising the President on all aspects of National Security, encompassing military, diplomatic and economic affairs. The NDC, on the other hand, is only responsible for advising on matters related to defence policy. The NSC's scope is thus broader than that of the NDC. Finally, the NSC should possess clear and non-overlapping responsibilities in relation to other existing institutions. Therefore, it is also necessary to establish precise boundaries between the NSC and other agencies such as National Resilience Institute and Executive Office of the Presidency.

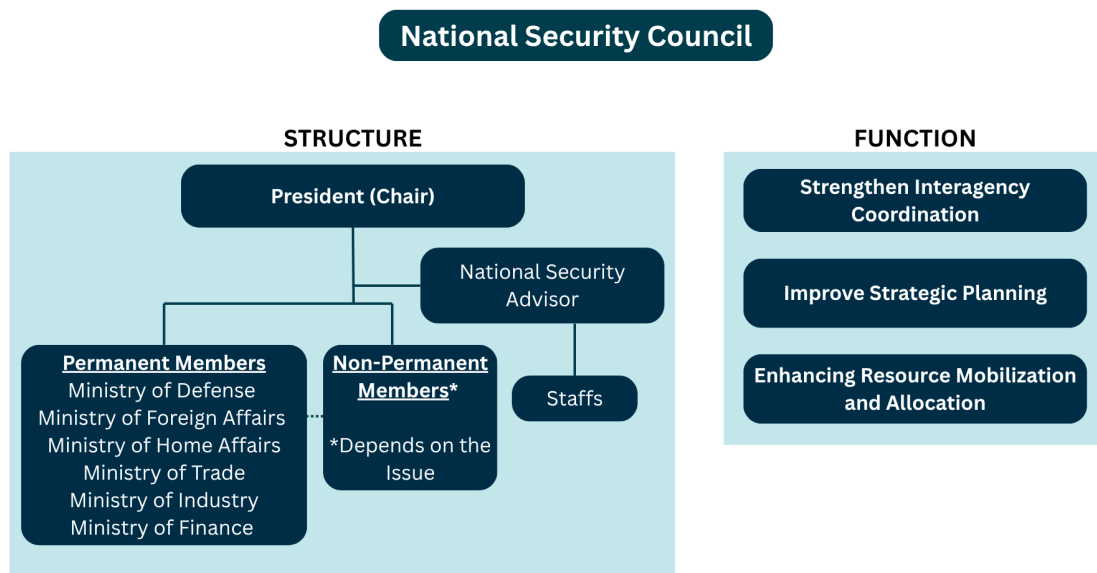
Concretely, the NSC would be tasked with:

- **Strengthening Interagency Coordination:** By bringing together key ministries—such as Foreign Affairs, Defence, Trade, Finance, and Technology—the NSC would facilitate enhanced collaboration and ensure that Indonesia's foreign policy tools (military, economic, diplomatic, and informational) are deployed in a coordinated and strategic manner. This would address the current siloed approach and allow for better integration of diverse perspectives, ensuring that policy decisions reflect a broad range of considerations.

- **Improving Strategic Planning:** The NSC would assume a leading role in conducting scenario planning and risk assessments to anticipate future global trends and challenges. By developing long-term strategies, Indonesia can transition from reactive diplomacy to a more proactive approach, ensuring that its policies are aligned with its national interests and adaptable to changing global dynamics. This proactive approach is crucial as Indonesia faces complex challenges, such as great power rivalry, regional security issues, and economic disruptions.
- **Enhancing Resource Mobilisation and Allocation:** The NSC would assist in aligning budgetary priorities with Indonesia's foreign policy objectives, ensuring that foreign policy is adequately funded and that resources are distributed effectively across different sectors, thereby also ensuring that foreign policy budgets are aligned with Indonesia's strategic priorities. This would address the current misalignment between budgets and strategic priorities, preventing the weakening of Indonesia's diplomatic efforts.

Figure 2.

National Security Council





 csis.or.id

 csis@csis.or.id

  [@csisindonesia](https://www.instagram.com/csisindonesia)

  CSIS Indonesia

**Centre for Strategic and
International Studies
(CSIS Indonesia)**

Tanah Abang III, 23-27
Gambir, Jakarta Pusat, 10160
Indonesia