



Indonesia in ASEAN: Mediation, leadership, and extra-mural diplomacy

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INTRODUCTION

This issue brief analyses the factors supporting and motivating Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN and their implications for the organisation. It discusses Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN in terms of: its role in managing crises and mediating conflicts/ disputes; second, the novel proposals Indonesia has made to enhance ASEAN; and finally, Indonesia's rising global profile, which complements the significance of its leadership. Each factor results in diverse implications for the organisation in constructive and negative ways, leading to the issue brief's concluding assessments regarding the opportunities and challenges of Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN in the future.

Indonesia has long been regarded as the natural born leader or, at minimum, first among equals within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The leadership role of Indonesia dates back to the establishment of ASEAN in 1967. The end of *konfrontasi* and Indonesia's willingness to join ASEAN were critical to ASEAN's formation, which served President Soeharto's goal of portraying Indonesia to the region as a constructive neighbour.¹ As Dewi Fortuna Anwar argues in relation to the period following ASEAN's formation, 'Indonesia's restraint, plus its substantial contribution to regional cooperation, has earned the country the respect and recognition of the other members as a *primus inter pares*.'² However, the establishment of ASEAN has also been interpreted as an effort to constrain Indonesian hegemony in Southeast Asia. Therefore, Soeharto's policy towards the organisation was also influenced by a desire to reassure its regional partners.³ While Indonesia became relatively introverted following the 1997–1998 East-Asian Financial Crisis and the associated collapse of President Soeharto's New Order regime, Indonesia has once again become an active leader in ASEAN following the reconsolidation of stability, economic growth, and democratic values.

Given these considerations, this issue brief assesses the evolution of Indonesia's role in ASEAN together with the implications of a more powerful and robust Indonesia for the future of ASEAN. Although Indonesia's leadership encompasses economic and sociocultural dimensions, this issue brief primarily focuses on the nation's political and security spheres. The analysis is undertaken in three sections: the first section examines the Jakarta's role as manager and mediator of crises and conflict; the second assesses the evolving nature of Indonesia's ideational leadership (e.g., norms and values) in ASEAN; while the final section assesses the implications for ASEAN of Indonesia's rising international power and prestige. As will be demonstrated, there are both positive and negative inferences for each issue and there

are a number of opportunities and constraints for Indonesia's future leadership in ASEAN. Nonetheless, the analysis argues that Indonesia has developed a critical leadership role regarding the mediation of conflict and the management of crises in Southeast Asia and the immediate region.

INDONESIA AS MANAGER OF CRISES AND MEDIATOR OF CONFLICTS

Indonesia has had the necessary power and influence to undertake an important role in almost all conflicts and crises with the potential to jeopardise the region's stability. For instance, when diplomatic relations broke down between Malaysia and the Philippines in 1968 over allegations that Manila had been plotting to fund a separatist rebellion in Sabah (the Corregidor Affair), Indonesia's President Soeharto intervened at an ASEAN Ministerial Meeting with a proposal for a cooling-off period.⁴ As a further instance, Indonesia worked with Malaysia in formulating the March 1980 Kuantan statement⁵ in relation to the Cambodian conflict; when other attempts to resolve the crisis failed, Jakarta sent its military chief to negotiate directly with Hanoi, and ASEAN later appointed Indonesia as its official interlocutor for these negotiations.⁶ Positioning itself in a mediatory role, Indonesia was able to acquire Vietnam's trust, which led to an agreement for two informal meetings to be held between Hanoi and ASEAN.⁷ While the negotiations during these meetings stalled, the final resolution at the Paris Conference on Cambodia (chaired by Indonesia) was strongly supported by the multilateral framework created by ASEAN and Indonesia's leadership within it.⁸

4 However, this attempt at preventive diplomacy did not have a lasting impact as diplomatic relations were once again suspended when, a month later, the Philippines passed a senate resolution reaffirming its claim to Sabah. Ralf Emmers, *Cooperative Security and the Balance of Power in ASEAN and the ARF* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003) p.16.

5 The statement drew on the philosophy of the 'Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality' (ZOPFAN) and sought to find common ground by recognising the security concerns of Vietnam (e.g. previous border incursions and Beijing's support for the Khmer Rouge) while also calling for an end to Soviet influence in Vietnam. Justus M. van der Kroef, 'ASEAN, Hanoi, and the Kampuchean Conflict: Between "Kuantan" and a "Third Alternative"', *Asian Survey* 21, no.5 (1981) p.516. While the statement was engineered outside ASEAN's formal framework, its key concerns and principles were repeated in the Joint Communique from the June 1980 ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. 'Joint Communique of the Thirteenth Asean Ministerial Meeting (Kuala Lumpur)', ASEAN Secretariat, available at: <http://www.aseansec.org/3679.htm>.

6 Shaun Narine, *Explaining ASEAN: Regionalism in Southeast Asia*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2002) p. 52.

7 Kroef, 'ASEAN, Hanoi, and the Kampuchean Conflict: Between "Kuantan" and a "Third Alternative"', p. 528.

8 Jürgen Rüländ, 'Southeast Asian Regionalism and Global Governance', *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs*, vol.33, no.1, 2011 p. 84.

1 Anthony L. Smith, 'ASEAN's Ninth Summit: Solidifying Regional Cohesion, Advancing External Linkage', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol.3, no.26, December 2004, p. 419.

2 Dewi Fortuna, Anwar, 'ASEAN and Indonesia: Some Reflections', *Asian Journal of Political Science*, vol.5, no.1, 1997, p 33.

3 Indonesia also played a leading role in supporting ASEAN's ambition to develop the Association in a manner that reinforced its resilience from external influence. Ralf Emmers, *Cooperative Security and the Balance of Power in ASEAN and the ARF*, (London. Routledge Curzon, 2003) pp. 62-63.

Indonesia has been increasingly involved in crises related to human security following the consolidation of a new democratic government between 1998 and 2004.⁹ For example, when the Myanmar junta continued to block the entry of foreign aid organisations following the devastation of Cyclone Nargis in 2008, Indonesia's Foreign Minister sought to resolve the situation: at an ASEAN Ministerial meeting he 'leaned across the table and asked the Foreign Minister of Myanmar what he thought ASEAN membership meant to Myanmar and what—at that time and in those circumstances—Myanmar's membership meant to ASEAN—in terms of ASEAN's internal coherence—international profile—and its membership's shared vision for the future'.¹⁰ Having specifically outlined the stakes for Myanmar, the ASEAN foreign ministers explained 'that the crisis offered Naypyidaw a final opportunity to allow the Association a role in facilitating the military's relations with the international community'.¹¹ Ultimately, Indonesian pressure, combined with the diplomacy of the ASEAN Secretary General Surin Pitsuwan, persuaded the junta to permit foreign aid organisations into the country.

Indonesia also took the lead in responding to armed conflict between Thailand and Cambodia over the Preah Vihear temple. Following the initial eruption of hostilities in early 2011, Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Marty Natalegawa, travelled to and negotiated with the leaders of both countries and attended a meeting of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).¹² Indonesia then convened an ASEAN Informal Foreign Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta on 22 February 2011. During this meeting the two parties agreed to accept Indonesian military and civilian observers along the border to monitor a ceasefire agreement.¹³ However, following protracted negotiations, Thailand refused to agree to the final terms of reference to enable monitors into its territory. While neither Indonesia nor ASEAN was able to resolve the dispute in the absence of arbitration by the International Court of Justice (ICJ),¹⁴ the last hostilities occurred in February 2011 and the collective pressure of Indonesia, ASEAN, and the international community have increased the perceived costs of further conflict since this time.

Perhaps the most significant challenge for ASEAN unity concerns the conflicting maritime claims in the South China Sea. While Indonesia is not officially a disputant,¹⁵ it has been active in a mediatory role. For example, at the July 2012 ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, tensions quickly escalated when Foreign Minister Hor Namhong, representing ASEAN as the then Cambodian Chair, refused to issue a joint communique on behalf of the members. While a key point of objection concerned the insistence of the Philippines and Vietnam to include reference to recent instances of Chinese assertiveness,¹⁶ revelations that Hor Namhong had been simultaneously consulting with Beijing during the discussions sparked outrage in some of the ASEAN countries.¹⁷

ASEAN had never previously failed to issue a joint communique. As Foreign Minister Natalegawa commented to the press: 'I think it is utterly irresponsible if we cannot come up with a common statement on the South China Sea'.¹⁸ Natalegawa sought to resolve the impasse by travelling to Cambodia, Vietnam and Cambodia, holding meetings with leaders from the three countries. Based on discussions from the meetings Natalegawa drafted a six-point plan, which was publicly released in late July 2012. Each of the ASEAN members provided their 'approval to the six principles of "ASEAN's Common Position" on the South China Sea', in particular a commitment to the DOC and an 'early adoption of a Code of Conduct'. While this outcome falls far short of resolution to the dispute, Indonesia was pivotal in reducing tensions.

9 Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2009) p. 254.

10 Email Correspondence between Christopher Roberts and Ambassador to Singapore, January 2009.

11 Jurgen Haacke, 'ASEAN and Political Change in Myanmar: Towards a Regional Initiative', *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30, no.3 (2008) p. 371.

12 'ASEAN Envoy Seeks to End Thai-Cambodia Clashes', *Voice of America*, 7 February 2011.

13 Cheang Sokha, 'ASEAN Brokers Preah Vihear Deal', *The Phnom Penh Post*, 22 February 2011.

14 However, the final decision by the ICJ on 11 November 2013 only provided a determination over the promontory where the temple was located but left the broader 4.3 square kilometres to be resolved through negotiations between Cambodia and Thailand. Hui Yee Tan, 'Analysis: Vihear Verdict Boosts Thai-Cambodia Relations', *The Straits Times*, 13 November 2013, 'Icj Ruling Likely to Lead to Intensified and Disruptive Opposition Protests against Thai Government', *IHS Global Insight Daily Analysis*, 12 November 2013.

15 However, its efforts to maintain such status may represent one of the shrewdest diplomatic ploys in ASEAN's history. In reality, China's 9 dash-line (map) overlaps with Indonesia's Natuna gas field, Exclusive Economic Zone, and continental shelf. A senior official from Kemlu (Indonesia's Foreign Ministry) did acknowledge that Jakarta sent a letter of protest to Beijing over the map but did not receive a response. She stated that Jakarta then sent an envoy to ask about this and that Beijing verbally assured Jakarta that 'our interests do not conflict with yours'. Interview by Christopher Roberts with Senior Official from Kemlu (Jakarta), January 2013. See also, Christopher B. Roberts, 'China and the South China Sea: What Happened to Asean's Solidarity?', Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, available at: <http://www.ntu.edu.sg/idss/>.

16 Donald K. Emmerson, 'ASEAN Stumbles in Phnom Penh', *PacNet*, 23 July 2012.

17 Vietnam and the Philippines wanted specific references to Chinese aggression such as the Scarborough Shoal incident and Beijing's award of hydrocarbon exploration leases within Vietnam's EEZ. Ibid. In relation to Cambodia's consultations with China, see 'Cambodia's Foreign Relations: Losing the Limelight', *The Economist*, 17 July 2012. Moreover, Cambodia's Secretary of State for Finance has publically acknowledged that it financially benefited from Beijing 'in appreciation for the part played by Cambodia as the chair of ASEAN to maintain good cooperation between China and ASEAN'. 'Brunei Carefully Pursues Binding Code to Settle South China Sea Dispute', *IHS Global Insight Daily Analysis*, 3 April 2013. These events were further reaffirmed by political elite from Cambodia during fieldwork in April 2013.

18 'ASEAN Struggles for Unity over South China Sea', *Agence France Presse*, 12 July 2012.

The willingness of Indonesia to maintain an active role in mediating disputes and crises is positive because ASEAN cannot expect this role to derive from weaker members such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, or Brunei Darussalam. As Pek Koon Heng states, '[i]t's like flying geese. The lead goose goes ahead and the others follow. So, it's a matter of how quickly or how slowly the others are flying and this is very much an ASEAN process. I think that the weaker will always be helped by the stronger in ASEAN.'¹⁹ In this context, Dr Yayan Mulyana, a Senior Official from the Indonesian President's Office, argues that Indonesia has maintained a very important role as a 'consensus builder' within ASEAN and, importantly, its ASEAN counterparts have recognised this role.²⁰ Nonetheless, the continued necessity for Indonesia's ad hoc diplomacy demonstrates that ASEAN has not yet developed an effective set of binding dispute or crisis settlement mechanisms.²¹ Further, the prospects for such institutions in the future remain low due to continuing lack of trust in the ASEAN Secretariat and/or other ASEAN members to rule over a dispute appropriately.²²

INDONESIA AS AN AGENT OF INSTITUTIONAL AND NORMATIVE CHANGE?

Since the establishment of ASEAN, Indonesia has actively led and developed ASEAN's norms and institutions. Early examples include Indonesia's role in the creation of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), and the first Bali Concord.²³ However, as noted, the nature of Indonesia's foreign policy and leadership in ASEAN shifted following its consolidation of democracy. Consequently, Indonesia has viewed the aforementioned considerations together with a proliferation of new non-traditional security challenges in a very different light than it had previously, and this has contributed to reassessment by Jakarta of the utility of the region's existing norms and institutions. For example, from the perspective of Indonesia's Director of Public Diplomacy, Umar Hadi, the ASEAN Way represented 'a solution to a given problem in a given time, but today we need to reflect on whether this solution is still valid or is still workable for another set of problems.'²⁴

Given this new state of affairs, Indonesia's Foreign Ministry drafted a policy document entitled 'Towards an ASEAN Security Community'.²⁵ According to the document, ASEAN should commit to the creation of a regional order where its members 'share dependable expectations of peaceful change' and 'rule out the use of force as a means of problem solving'.²⁶ The central tenets of the proposal were then endorsed by all the ASEAN members through the second Bali Concord in October 2003.²⁷ The Bali Concord II also provides complementary goals for the creation of an 'economic community' and a 'socio-cultural community'. In order to reshape the regional order, the document declared that the level of 'ASEAN's political and security cooperation' would need to move 'to a higher plane' and also referred to 'conflict resolution' and 'post conflict peace building'.²⁸

While the second Bali Concord received significant international attention, the full extent of Indonesia's vision for change was encapsulated in its 'Draft Plan of Action for a Security Community'. This document contained seventy-five concrete steps for the realisation of a security community, including a regional commission for human rights and a regional peacekeeping force operating under a standby arrangement.²⁹ For reasons explained below, some of the more significant aspects of the draft were either tempered or removed entirely.³⁰ Nonetheless, the Bali Concord II and the later Vientiane Plan of Action did indicate significant normative change, including commitments to 'human rights' and a 'democratic environment'.

19 SophatSoeung, 'As Summit Opens, ASEAN Faces Test of Leadership', [cited 27 December 2012] available at: <http://www.voacambodia.com/content/as-summit-opens-asean-faces-test-of-leadership-145000845/1356>.

20 Presentation by Dr. Yayan Mulyana, ANU National Security College Workshop, 'Indonesia's Ascent: Power, Leadership and Asia's Security', Jakarta, 23 January 2013.

21 ASEAN has established, on paper, a High Council as well as an ASEAN Troika but neither mechanism can be employed unless all parties to a dispute agree and their findings are not binding.

22 Christopher B. Roberts, *ASEAN Regionalism: Cooperation, Values and Institutionalisation* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2012) pp.147-87.

23 For an overview of these developments, see *ibid.*, pp. 53-55.

24 'The Future of East and Southeast Asian Regionalism', in *East and Southeast Asia: International Relations and Security Perspectives*, ed. Andrew Tan (London: Routledge, 2013) p. 286.

25 'Towards an ASEAN Security Community', *Departemen Luar Negeri* (Department of Foreign Affairs), Deplu Paper on ASEAN Security Community, Tabled at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Cambodia, 16-18 June 2003, based on concept paper: Rizal Sukma, 'The Future of ASEAN: Towards a Security Community', paper presented at the seminar, 'ASEAN Cooperation: Challenges and Prospects in the Current International Situation', Permanent Mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations, New York, 3 June 2003.

26 Roberts, *ASEAN Regionalism: Cooperation, Values and Institutionalisation*, p. 3.

27 'Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II)', ASEAN Secretariat, available at: <http://www.aseansec.org/15159.htm>.

28 *Ibid.*

29 'The ASEAN Charter: A Crossroads for the Region?', IDSS, available at: <http://www.idss.edu.sg/publications/Perspective/IDSS602005.pdf>.

30 Roberts, *ASEAN Regionalism: Cooperation, Values and Institutionalisation*, p. 122.

A key outcome of these negotiations was the ASEAN Charter in 2007. The Charter was a significant achievement in that it provided ASEAN with a legal personality and, through its ratification into domestic law, bound the ASEAN members to a more formalised structure of regional governance—particularly in the economic sphere.³¹ Some noteworthy aspects included an agreement to proceed with certain economic initiatives even where the Association is short of complete consensus (e.g., the ASEAN-X principle) as well as the consolidation of conflict resolution procedures in the economic sphere. However, while the Charter also referred to principles such as democracy and human rights, it contained a number of contradictory components including reaffirmation of ASEAN's long-stated principle of non-interference and the continuation of consensus-based decision making in the political-security sphere.³² Further, the Charter did not provide any binding commitments regarding 'dispute settlement mechanisms' or 'conflict resolution'. As Ambassador Barry Desker, Dean of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, argues, 'the Charter was a disappointment because it codifies existing norms and maintains its historical identity as an inter-governmental organisation'.³³

While Indonesia's proposal for establishment of a human rights commission had initially been rejected, in July 2007 ASEAN announced that its members had agreed to create what was then termed a 'human rights body' and that its specific structure and purpose would be addressed in the Charter.³⁴ However, the ASEAN members could not agree on its terms of reference in time for the final Charter. Nonetheless, Indonesia persisted and the terms of reference for what is now known as the *ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)* were concluded in October 2009. Through Indonesia's leadership, ASEAN has established a formal schedule of AICHR programs occurring between 2012 and 2015 that are designed to advance the goals of the ASEAN Charter.³⁵ The AICHR has conducted several dialogues with the *ASEAN Commission of the Promotion and the Protection of the Rights of Women and Children* in order to encourage steps towards the promotion of human rights in the region.³⁶ These achievements notwithstanding, the commission's purpose has been said to 'promote' rather than 'protect' human rights and, consequently, it does not have the power to investigate any breaches of human rights.³⁷

As with its diplomacy in the wake of Cyclone Nargis, Indonesia has also been willing to act over human security and/or human rights issues. Thus, President Yudhoyono more recently called on Myanmar President Thein Sein to resolve the deadly communal conflict between the Rakhine and Rohingya ethnic groups that have led to asylum-seekers flowing into neighbouring ASEAN countries.³⁸ While this challenge continues, earlier examples mentioned above—such as Indonesia's role in the wake of Cyclone Nargis—are indicative of times when Indonesian diplomacy has succeeded in making a critical, beneficial difference. Moreover, Indonesia's consolidation of stronger institutions for governance means that it is now better equipped than ever to exercise a leadership role should the chairmanship of other members, such as Myanmar, be less than desirable. Indonesia's broad success in democratisation also provides a model for other countries such as Myanmar. In relation to Myanmar Indonesia has been discreetly promoting political reforms and has hosted visits by the country's presidential advisory team while also sending military reformers (e.g., Agus Wijoyo) to share Indonesia's experience of democratic transition.³⁹ In this regard, some non-ASEAN states have already asked if it would be willing to assist Myanmar with its democratic transition during its chair of ASEAN.⁴⁰

Indonesia's role as an architect of ideas has made ASEAN a dynamic organisation that has been better able to adjust to—or at least to mitigate—many intra-regional and extra-regional challenges. However, the ambitious nature of Indonesia's leadership during the past decade has led to other difficulties and even resentment within some ASEAN quarters. During the course of research for a book entitled *ASEAN Regionalism: Cooperation, Values and Institutionalisation*, a broad range of complaints included that it was nothing more than an attempt to 'reassert Indonesian leadership'; that it had been induced by the United States for the purpose of its war on terror, or that the proposal had been pushed through in a very 'un-ASEAN like manner'.⁴¹

31 Tommy Koh et al., 'Charter Makes ASEAN Stronger, More United and Effective', *The Straits Times*, 8 August 2007; ASEAN, 'Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations', (Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 2007) pp.2, 4 & 18.

32 'Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations', pp. 2-4.

33 Barry Desker, 'Where the ASEAN Charter Comes up Short', *The Straits Times*, 18 July 2008.

34 'ASEAN Overcomes Resistance, Will Set up Regional Human Rights Commission', Associated Press Newswires, 30 July 2007 2007, Jim Gomez, 'ASEAN Agrees to Human Rights Commission', *The Irrawaddy*, available at: <http://www.irrawaddy.org>.

35 I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, 'Developing Cooperation with ASEAN Dialog Partner', Paper presented at the Centre for Education and Training of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 13 October 2012.

36 *Ibid.*

37 Shaun Narine, 'ASEAN in the Twenty-First Century: A Sceptical Review', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 22, no. 3 (2009) p.370. 'Asean's 'Human-Rights' Council: Not Off to a Great Start', *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 October 2009.

38 Lutfia, 'Indonesia Leads From the Front on ASEAN'.

39 'Indonesia's Quiet Diplomacy Triumphs in the Region', *The Jakarta Globe*, 6 August 2012.

40 Nicholas Perpitch, 'Ausaid Myanmar Focus', *The Australian*, 27 November 2012, 'Myanmar (Burma)/ASEAN: Myanmar Gets Help with Preparations for ASEAN Chair', *Thai News Service*, 1 April 2013.

41 Roberts, *ASEAN Regionalism: Cooperation, Values and Institutionalisation*, pp. 120-21.

Despite these challenges, Indonesia has remained highly active both during its 2011 role as the ASEAN Chair and during the years that have followed.⁴² Aside from the already noted role of Indonesia in the South China Sea, Indonesia successfully pressed for the adoption of a 'human rights declaration' as well as the establishment of the ASEAN Institute of Peace and Reconciliation at the twenty-first ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh (2012). During the chairmanship of Brunei in 2013, Indonesia launched several more initiatives including a post-2015 vision for the 'ASEAN Community'. The post-2015 vision proposes further action concerning the consolidation of the ASEAN Community: stronger regional leadership; progress in the resolution of global issues; and the promotion of regional prosperity.⁴³ As elaborated below, an additional key initiative was the proposal for an Indo-Pacific Treaty.

As to the situation in the South China Sea, Indonesia also proposed the 3+1 formulation of the objectives of a regional code of conduct in the South China Sea (COC). The formula comprises: (i) promoting trust and confidence; (ii) preventing incidents; and (iii) managing incidents when they occur. A precursor to these objectives is creating a condition conducive for the COC to take place.⁴⁴

LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE: INDONESIA, ASEAN, AND THE GLOBAL NEXUS

Indonesia's size, together with the pace of its economic growth, means that it is increasingly well placed to represent ASEAN's interests in the broader Indo-Pacific region. Thus, the proposal for an Indo-Pacific treaty is intended to maintain ASEAN centrality by extending and consolidating the Association's norms concerning the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-use of force in the broader Indo-Pacific region. A key outcome of its realisation would be a shift from the current 'trust deficit' to a 'strategic partnership'; a commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes; and the capacity to respond appropriately to geopolitical change.⁴⁵ Given recent increases to the level of strategic competition and tension, Indonesia's belief is that a post-2015 ASEAN will need a treaty based arrangement that is adequately legally binding for Southeast Asia and the broader Indo-Pacific.⁴⁶

42 As a high level official from Indonesia's Foreign Ministry states, "Indonesia has been very active in almost all crises in ASEAN, if not all, both during its chairmanship or other country's chairmanship. Therefore, Indonesia believes that it will still play an important role after the chairmanship is handed over to Cambodia in 2012 and then from Cambodia to Brunei Darussalam in 2013.", *Interview by Erline Widyaningsih with senior level officer of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1*, Jakarta, 16 February 2011.

43 'Roundup: ASEAN Vows to Speed up Community Building', Philippines News Agency, 20 January 2014.

44 'Transcript of Speech of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia', DR. R. Marty M. Natalegawa, at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat, Hua Hin, Thailand, 14 August 2013.

45 'Indonesian Foreign Minister Receives Honorary Doctorate Degree', Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Canberra, 29 August 2013.

46 *Ibid.*

The Indo-Pacific treaty proposal is in line with Natalegawa's vision to establish a 'dynamic equilibrium' in which the expanded 'regional architecture' would more actively involve a broader range of middle and great powers in a comprehensive range of sectors including those of security, politics, the environment, the economy, and the socio-cultural realm.⁴⁷ While the vision for a dynamic equilibrium pragmatically recognises the prevalence of power,⁴⁸ it acknowledges that regional order can be enhanced through multi-sectoral enmeshment—complex interdependence—and the normative constraints provided by an Indo-Pacific treaty. However, rising strategic competition between Japan and China, India and China, and the United States and China; questions concerning the legitimacy of the Chinese regime domestically; mounting resource scarcity; and continued economic instability globally, raise significant caveats against the prospects for converting these visions into reality. The limitations of ASEAN and Indonesia are even more apparent considering the possibility that the 'long peace of ASEAN' may, in the words of Mark Beeson, 'owe as much to the widely noted general decline in the level of inter-state conflict as it does to anything ASEAN itself may have done'.⁴⁹

Nonetheless, Indonesia's leadership has also been critical to the establishment of the East Asia Summit and ASEAN's inclusion of Australia and New Zealand as well as, eventually, the United States and Russia. In line with some of the motives behind the Indo-Pacific treaty, Indonesia helped to persuade countries such as Australia and the United States to accede to the TAC as a precondition to becoming members of the EAS.⁵⁰ In turn, Indonesia's leadership and involvement was a key factor behind the willingness of the United States to engage with the forum. Indonesia's ascent, combined with its demographics, location and historical role in ASEAN, has meant that the United States and China have increasingly viewed enhanced relations with Jakarta as the 'giant prize' and both have invested significant time and resources to that end in their military, security, political and economic spheres.⁵¹ For example, in September 2010 China formalised a defence industrial relationship and the United States followed, two months later, with a comprehensive partnership with Jakarta on military affairs. Economically, Indonesia is also a key emerging market for the United States and China, in 2013 strengthening a five-year program for economic and trade cooperation designed to increase bilateral trade to US\$80 billion by 2015.⁵²

47 'A Conversation with Marty Natalegawa, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia', Council on Foreign Relations, available at: <http://www.cfr.org/indonesia/conversation-marty-natalegawa-minister-foreign-affairs-republic-indonesia/p22984>.

48 Rizal Sukma, 'Friendship and Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific: Will a Treaty Help?', *The Jakarta Post*, 28 May 2013.

49 Mark Beeson, 'Hegemonic Transition in East Asia? The Dynamics of Chinese and American Power', *Review of International Studies* 35 (2009) p.339. See also Roberts, *ASEAN Regionalism: Cooperation, Values and Institutionalisation*.

50 Prashanth Parameswaran, 'Will the United States Join the East Asian Summit', *East Asia Forum*, 18 June 2010.

51 Brad Nelson, 'Can Indonesia Lead ASEAN', *The Diplomat*, 5 December 2013.

52 'External Affairs, Indonesia', *Jane's Intelligence*, 2013.

Jakarta's new democratic image has strengthened Indonesia's relations with non-ASEAN countries such as Australia and the United States. Aside from removing obstacles to cooperation with military institutions such as kopassus or the sale of lethal military equipment, Indonesia's contemporary image and role has enhanced ASEAN's image. For example, Hillary Clinton praised Indonesia's efforts in securing cooperation on the part of the ASEAN states in regard to the South China Sea, observing: '[t]hat show of unity is very important for us'.⁵³ The United States has also turned to Indonesia to assist constructively with issues such as the democratisation process in Myanmar. These developments have provided Indonesia with the status and legitimacy to act as an intermediary between ASEAN and extra-mural actors, a role that was evident in the wake of Cyclone Nargis.

The rise of Indonesia's influence beyond the territorial borders of Southeast Asia has led some analysts to depict it as a pivot state that possesses the 'resilience' and 'flexibility' to reposition itself to adapt to shifting strategic needs, i.e., 'the flexibility to pivot among potential partners'.⁵⁴ Such capacity is strengthened by its long-standing policy of 'non-alignment' ('free and active') and associated status as a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).⁵⁵ Indonesia's leverage and voice is also reinforced by its membership in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and, since 2008, the G20.⁵⁶ In many respects, Indonesia's gain is ASEAN's gain as Indonesia can its influence to represent the needs of ASEAN—and developing countries more broadly—as has been the case regarding President Yudhoyono's diplomacy in the G20 forum.⁵⁷ President Yudhoyono was selected to co-Chair the High-Level Panel of the Post-2015 Development Agenda together with the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom David Cameron. The High-Level Panel consisted of 27 members and was tasked by the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to advise on the global development framework beyond 2015,

the target date for the Millennium Development Goals. The Panel submitted its report on 21 May 2013.⁵⁸

Nonetheless, Indonesia's rising global profile and activism has led to some negative implications including, for example, the perspective that Indonesia prefers 'to go it alone', and is 'acting in its own interests, not those of ASEAN'.⁵⁹ Such perspectives are inevitable given the continuation of intra-ASEAN distrust and concerns about the risk of conflict. For example, in an elite-level survey involving one hundred participants from throughout the ASEAN nations, only 40.2 per cent of interviewees said that they could trust other countries in Southeast Asia to be good neighbours. Interestingly, in a separate communal-level survey of 819 ASEAN citizens, 37.5 per cent responded 'yes' to the same question and only 26.5 per cent of the 108 Indonesian participants indicated that they could trust their neighbours.⁶⁰ The challenge of trust is reinforced by historical animosities (e.g., konfrontasi), ethnic rivalries (e.g., Singapore as a Chinese state), and more contemporary sources of tension including territorial issues such as Ambalat and the Ligitan and Sipadan Islands.

53 Ismira Lutfia, 'Clinton Applauds Indonesia's ASEAN Role', *The Jakarta Globe*, 4 September 2012.

54 Irar Nusa Bhakti and Leng C. Tan, 'Presidential Hopefuls' Checklist 2014: Resilience', *The Jakarta Post*, 12 November 2012.

55 For a contemporary example of the role of Indonesia in NAM together with the continued relevance of the NAM block in the UNGA, see Christopher B. Roberts, *Asean's Myanmar Crisis: Challenges to the Pursuit of a Security Community*, (Singapore: ISEAS, 2010), pp. 150-51.

56 Indonesia was also pivotal to the consolidation of APEC as an institution as, in the face of opposition from Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir bin Mohamad, President Soeharto offered to host the second summit.

57 Nani Afrida, 'Indonesia to Talk on Crisis Prevention', *The Jakarta Post*, 29 October 2011. See also Winfried Weck, 'ASEAN and G-20 – Indonesia's Foreign Policy Representatives', *Kas International Reports*, No.2, 2011, p. 22, Zamroni Salim, 'Indonesia in the G20: Benefits and Challenges Amidst National Interests and Priorities', in *G20 - Perceptions and Perspectives for Global Governance*, ed. Wilhelm Hofmeister (Singapore: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2011). Further, according to BegindaPakpahan, '[i]n practice, Indonesia should be a bridge builder between ASEAN, East Asia and the G20. Indonesia can balance its role as a promoter of aspirations from the developing nations in ASEAN, the EAS and the G20. At the same time, Indonesia can further its national interests by channelling them into the policy formulations within ASEAN, the EAS and the G20'. Beginda Pakpahan, 'The Role of Indonesia in ASEAN, in East Asia Summit and in G20', *The Jakarta Post*, 4 October 2011.

58 'High Level Post-2015 Development Agenda', [cited on 18 January 2014], available at: <http://www.post2015hlp.org/about/>

59 Luke Hunt, 'Indonesia capitalizes on ASEAN Divisions', (cited 2 January 2013) available at: <http://thediplomat.com/asean-beat/2012/07/25/indonesia-capitalizes-on-asean-divisions/>. Similar perspectives were also raised by Tang Siew Mun and Ralf Emmers. Interview with Tang Siew Mun, Director of Foreign Policy and Security Studies at the ISIS Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 4 March 2011. 'Interview with Dr. Ralf Emmers, Associate Professor', RSIS-Singapore, Singapore, 15 March 2011.

60 Roberts, *ASEAN Regionalism: Cooperation, Values and Institutionalisation*, pp. 155-56.

The trust deficit in ASEAN and the broader Indo-Pacific is strongly interdependent with conflicting strategic alignments,⁶¹ contending identities, and/or divergent political values.⁶² This mix of factors has impeded ASEAN's progress and Indonesia's leadership. Consequently, segments of the elite in Jakarta have become increasingly frustrated and this has led to calls for a 'post ASEAN foreign policy'.⁶³ This perspective has at times found traction within Indonesia's leadership. For example, when Singapore objected to Indonesia's proposal to admit East Timor as a member of ASEAN at the 1999 informal ASEAN Summit, President Abdurman Wahid (known as Gus Dur) later suggested that ASEAN could be replaced with a new 'West Pacific Forum' with Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines at its heart.⁶⁴ While this was a relatively isolated perspective at the time, such calls have become increasingly prevalent within Indonesia's parliament and other sectors of the political elite.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECTS

Indonesia has performed a role in ASEAN as a manager of crises and a mediator of disputes, proposing new ideas to enhance the Association, and strengthening the Association's global profile. Each role has positive and sometimes negative implications for Indonesia and ASEAN. Jakarta's function as a mediator has often helped to resolve, or at least mitigate, ASEAN's problems; however, it simultaneously demonstrates that ASEAN does not have effective dispute or crisis settlement mechanisms. Meanwhile, Indonesia's role as a creator of ideas is beneficial to the evolution of the Association if it is to become more effective as a coordinating and decision-making body capable of protecting the citizens of ASEAN's member states. While much remains to be done in this regard, this issue brief has provided several examples whereby Indonesia has made a tangible difference – management of responses to Cyclone Nargis; the Preah Vihear Temple; and Indonesia's lead in developing ASEAN's institutions.

61 Thus, the aforementioned survey also indicated that Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN and beyond is further challenged by the diversity of strategic alignment where the political and academic elite from four of the ASEAN member countries listed China as one of their country's three most important strategic allies while three other ASEAN countries selected the U.S. for the same question. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

62 'State Weakness and Political Values: Ramifications for the ASEAN Community', in *ASEAN and the Institutionalization of East Asia*, ed. Ralf Emmers, (Milton Park: Routledge, 2012) pp. 11-26.

63 Pavin Chachavalpongpun, 'Indonesia to Boost Human Rights, Doubts Support from ASEAN', *The Nation*, 19 January 2011, 'A Post-ASEAN Foreign Policy for a Post-G8 World', *The Jakarta Post*, 5 October 2009.

64 Gus Dur initially made this call during a speech at the Indonesian embassy in Singapore but the idea was then repeated and escalated to formal discussions with other Pacific countries such as Australia. John McBeth, 'Indonesia - Wahid and Sukarno's Gold', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 December 2000. Amit Baruah, 'Australia Backs W. Pacific Forum', *The Hindu*, 9 December 2000.

The nature of Indonesia's ascent has also provided a model for other ASEAN members; it has improved ASEAN's international profile and enhanced the opportunities to promote ASEAN's interests in global fora. Despite Indonesia's utility for ASEAN, some quarters within ASEAN have resented or competed against Indonesia's leadership—or, arguably, hegemony—within ASEAN while others have resisted its new form of leadership since its consolidation of democracy. Such resistance has been strongest over the proposals that that are seen to impinge on sovereignty and regime security—e.g., the creation of a human rights body, a peacekeeping force, a changed decision-making system, and formalised conflict resolution mechanisms. Further, there have also been significant difficulties regarding the transformation of vision into reality due to an associated aversion to legally binding institutions.

The current divide in the political systems of ASEAN and the broader Indo-Pacific has other implications. For example, should other countries follow the lead of Indonesia, and more recently Myanmar, in moving towards the consolidation of democracy, then the challenge of trust and contradictory strategic alignments will be far easier to resolve. Such dynamics were evident in the recent rapprochement between Indonesia and the United States. In this context, while Indonesia's ambition to maintain 'dynamic equilibrium' for itself and ASEAN is in a material sense the optimal option, such a policy may become impossible should the actions of a major power be irreconcilable with its identity and values, e.g., China in the South China Sea.

Additional challenges concerning the degree and nature of Indonesia's future leadership include uncertainty over Indonesia's ASEAN policy following the 2014 Presidential elections as well as other domestic issues such as religious intolerance, corruption, and West Papua. However, there are many opportunities ahead for Indonesia and ASEAN including Indonesia's continued membership in the G20, the openness of some of the weaker ASEAN countries to work with and learn from Indonesia (e.g., Myanmar), and the multifaceted benefits for ASEAN should Indonesia's economy continue to grow. As revealed in many of the other issue briefs from this special edition, Indonesia's continued ascent faces many uncertainties. Nonetheless, and regardless of the pace by which Indonesia grows or declines, one thing is certain: ASEAN's future is inseparable from Indonesia's future. Therefore, it is in the interests of all the ASEAN members to do whatever possible to aid Indonesia's continued growth and stability while also trying to ensure that Jakarta remains actively engaged in Southeast Asia.

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