



Indonesia in international institutions: Living up to ideals

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has been active in international institutions since its independence. It joined the United Nations in 1950 and was an early and active participant in its peace-making forces. In 1967, Indonesia was a founding member of the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN), created to maintain security and stability in Southeast Asia. In the post-Cold War period, Indonesia was a founding member of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1989 and hosted the APEC Summit in 1994. More recently, in 1999, Indonesia joined the Group of Twenty (G-20), a selected group of advanced and emerging economies that has become a key forum for global economic governance.

This issue brief focuses on Indonesia's involvement in three major and uniquely different international institutions, the Non Aligned Movement (NAM), the United Nations (UN), and the G-20 respectively. Through analysis of public statements of President Yudhoyono, it will look at how the Yudhoyono government has kept the essence of the traditional narratives of Indonesian foreign policy while reshaping them in the context of Indonesia's economic and political ascent.

The first section briefly looks at the genesis of the 'independent and active' orientation of Indonesia's foreign policy and the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, both of which laid the ideological foundation of Indonesia's foreign policy. The next three sections will examine Indonesia's membership and role in the above three international institutions, beginning with NAM as inspired by the Bandung Conference and Indonesia as a founding member, the UN as the universal international institution, then the G-20 as a selected premium group of industrialised and emerging nations.

INDEPENDENT AND ACTIVE FOREIGN POLICY

When Indonesia declared its independence in 1945, nationalist leaders had already envisioned a nation-state active in fostering global order. Their idealism was reflected in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, which stated that Indonesia must take responsibility for contributing to establishment of a world order in accordance with the principles of independence, eternal peace, and social justice.¹ Not long after, in 1948, Vice President Mohammad Hatta, in what was to become a landmark speech, stressed that Indonesia should be 'a subject, not an object' in its international affairs. He advocated the 'independent and active foreign policy' that, after six presidents and major changes in government systems, remains the bedrock of Indonesia's foreign policy.²

1 The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia: as amended by the First Amendment of 1999, the Second Amendment of 2000, the Third Amendment of 2001 and the Fourth Amendment of 2002, available at: <http://www.embassyofindonesia.org/about/pdf/IndonesianConstitution.pdf>.

2 Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, 'Speech before The Council on World Affairs (ICWA)', Jakarta, 19 May, 2005 available at: <http://www.presidentri.go.id/index.php/pidato/2005/05/19/332.html>

The First Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung in 1955, widely considered as a historical milestone, was a manifestation of this foreign policy philosophy. Five countries, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma initiated the conference. Twenty-nine countries from Asia and Africa participated in the conference.³ Representing Africa were Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, the Sudan, and the Gold Coast, while the remaining member-states were from Asia. Despite disagreements during the course of the conference, caused in part by the fissures of the prevailing Cold War, the conference participants united in a final communique that incorporated the Ten Bandung Principles.⁴

As Shimazu argues:

This diplomatic performance lent legitimacy symbolically to the twenty-nine participating states as a new collective 'actor' in international relations. What is striking about Bandung is that it was an act of confident assertion vis-à-vis the ruling elite international society, and not a passive act of seeking acceptance. Symbolically, not a single 'white' or 'Western' state was present. Thus, it was a daring act, proud and defiant, borne out of the political momentum created by the global process of decolonization.⁵

3 Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, China (People's Republic), Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Yemen.

4 The principles are:

- (1) Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,
- (2) Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations,
- (3) Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations large and small,
- (4) Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country,
- (5) Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations,
- (6) Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers and abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries,
- (7) Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country,
- (8) Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties' own choice, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations,
- (9) Promotion of mutual interests and co-operation,
- (10) Respect for justice and international obligations.

5 Naoko Shimazu, 'Diplomacy as Theatre: Recasting the Bandung Conference of 1955 as Cultural History', Asia Research Institute, *Working Paper Series* No. 164, October 2011.

INDONESIA AND THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM)

The 1955 Bandung Conference inspired the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961.⁶ At the Belgrade Summit in September of that year, 25 countries declared their commitment to maintain independence in the context the Cold War between the Western and Eastern Blocs. When Indonesia chaired NAM in 1992, there were 113 member-states. In 2012, NAM had 119 member-states, equivalent to two thirds of the UN members. However, the Non Aligned Movement represented diverse interests and political orientations that created serious obstacles to consolidation as a single voice. Nevertheless, with the dramatic increase of membership the movement has been able to claim a continuing legitimacy.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the relevance of the movement to the world's post-cold war politics came into question.⁷ Amid ensuing skepticism Indonesia was elected to chair NAM in 1992. At the 10th NAM Summit in Jakarta, NAM leaders agreed on the Jakarta Message and a Final Document of the Tenth Summit with a realistic, inclusive, non-confrontational approach. These documents highlighted the new NAM's roles: from advocate of decolonisation in the context of the West–East confrontation to the promoter of dialogue aimed at mitigating increasing polarisation between the North and the South. The Jakarta Message defines the new objectives of NAM: to increase constructive cooperation between nations, focus on economic cooperation, and increase South–South cooperation to develop the economic potential of member-states.⁸

President Suharto ended Indonesia's term as chair in 1995 with a declaration of confidence in NAM. In his speech, delivered at the Eleventh NAM Summit in Cartagena, Columbia on 18 October 1995, he said:

The tenth Summit Meeting of our Movement has indeed been a watershed. It established beyond doubt the continuing relevance of Non-Alignment in the post-Cold War era as validated by subsequent events. Just as important, our Movement emerged from that Summit with a new orientation and a new approach in its relationships with the developed countries and with international institutions.⁹

6 The initiators of the formation of NAM were President Soekarno (Indonesia), President Joseph Broz Tito (Yugoslavia), President Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), President Gamal Abdul Nasser (Egypt) and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (India).

7 Antoinette Handley, 'Non-Aligned Against what? South Africa and the Future of the Non-Aligned Movement.' *SAlIA Report* No.10, South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, 1998, p. 1

8 'Non-Aligned Movement', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, Indonesia, available at: <http://www.deplu.go.id/Pages/IFPDisplay.aspx?Name=MultilateralCooperation&IDP=3&P=Multilateral&l=en>

9 President Soeharto's Address as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement of the inaugural session of the Eleventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries in Cartagena, Columbia, 18 October 1995.

At the 16th Ministerial Conference and Commemorative Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Bali in 2011, President Yudhoyono defined three major roles that NAM could play in response to the complex challenges of the twenty-first century: contribution to the achievement of a global culture of peace and security; a vigorous advocate of political development and social justice; encouraging and strengthening democratic values and achieving good governance; and operating as a force for equitable global prosperity in regard to economic development.¹⁰

Transforming NAM to become an effective force faces similar challenges. The Non-Aligned Movement has been vocal in mobilising support for world-wide recognition, but with little effect. Indonesia has played an active role in this advocacy. At the Summit in Teheran in August 2012 the head of the Indonesian delegation, Vice President Boediono, called on NAM members to be more proactive in supporting Palestinian independence by taking action in relation to five pressing issues:

First, how to respond effectively to Israeli illegal activities. Second, how to support and promote Palestinian bid for UN membership. Third, how to promote and support the institutional capacity building of Palestine. Fourth, how to support reconciliation among Palestinians; and finally, how to effectively engage the media to raise public awareness on the Palestinian cause.¹¹

The Vice President also pointed out the need for NAM to build an effective organisation arguing that 'having 120 members means nothing if we do not have the power of collective influence, a power that we can only earn through hard work and a reputation for being reliable partners.'¹²

10 Susilo Bambang Yudoyono, 'Fighting for Peace, Justice and Prosperity in the 21st Century', Speech delivered at the inaugural address at the 16th Ministerial Conference and Commemorative meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Bali 25 May 2011 available at: <http://www.setkab.go.id/berita-1836-fighting-for-peace-justice-and-prosperity-in-the-21st-century.html>

11 Statement by H.E. Dr. Boediono Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia at XVI Summit of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement available at <http://wapresri.go.id/index/preview/pidato/158>

12 *Ibid.*

INDONESIA AND THE UNITED NATIONS

Indonesia became a member of the UN on 28 September 1950 and has been active in the organisation since that date. Indonesia chaired the UN General Assembly in 1971, the second Asian representative to chair the Assembly. Indonesia was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 1974, 1995 and in 2007. In 1970 and again in 2000 Indonesia was elected president of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the largest of the UN's six organs. It was vice president of the ECOSOC in 1969, 1999 and 2012. The country has been a member of the UN Human Rights Council since the Council was established in 2006, and in 2009 was chosen to become vice president of the Council. Besides being active in the UN organs, Indonesia has contributed actively to the UN peacekeeping forces since 1957, sending troops as part of UN missions to Congo, Vietnam, Iran, Kuwait, Bosnia, Campuchea, the Philippines, and Lebanon.¹³

Since its inception, the UN has frequently been a target of criticism from different quarters. One important organisational aspect of the UN that has perennially come under attack has been the role of the Security Council.¹⁴ As an increasing number of countries play important roles on the world stage, whether economically or politically or both, the limited number of Security Council members (five) and their composition (USA, UK, Russia, China, and France) have become increasingly anachronistic to many member states.

In a speech addressed to the General Assembly at the UN in September 2012, President Yudhoyono emphasised the importance of the UN Security Council reform in reflecting the reality of the twenty-first century:

We have moved from the era of the Cold War to an era of warm peace. In this 'warm peace', the world remains stuck with an outdated international security architecture that still reflects 20th century circumstances; in contrast with the global economic architecture that has done much better to adjust to the 21st century.¹⁵

13 Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, 'Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa,' available at: <http://www.deplu.go.id/Pages/IFPDisplay.aspx?Name=MultilateralCooperation&IDP=12&P=Multilateral&I=id>; Indonesia Permanent Mission to the United States New York, 'Indonesia and the United Nations' http://www.indonesiamission-ny.org/menu_atas/a2_indo_un/indonesia_unitednations.php

14 Richard Butler, 'Reform of the United Security Council,' *Penn State Journal of Law & International Affairs*, Vol.1 No.1, available at: <http://elibrary.law.psu.edu/jlia/vol1/iss1/2>, 2012, pp. 23-39; Sahar Okhovat, 'The United Nations Security Council: Its Veto Power and Reform', *CPACS Working Paper* No.15/1, December 2011, available at http://sydney.edu.au/arts/peace_conflict/docs/working_papers/UNSC_paper.pdf

15 Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, 'Speech at the General Debate of the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly', New York, 25 September 2012 available at: <http://www.presidentri.go.id/index.php/eng/pidato/2012/09/26/1970.html>

At the opening of the fifth Bali Democracy Forum in November 2012, the President reiterated the need for Security Council reform:

We need to ensure a harmony between the aspirations of the Security Council Members and members of the General Assembly. Such harmony requires the promotion of multilateralism and rejection of unilateralism.¹⁶

He went on to say that 'an effective Security Council must be one that better represents contemporary global realities (and serves as) an intergovernmental forum for exchanging ideas and sharing experiences on democracy.'¹⁷

While calls for Security Council reform has had little impact, whether from Indonesia or otherwise, it has not prevented Indonesia from intensifying its peacekeeping involvement in the UN. In 2013, Indonesia was the 16th largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping forces, totalling 1,815 personnel deployed on six UN operations. The increased involvement was an indication of the growing national confidence arising from recent economic growth and political stability. Increased resources have allowed the country more scope to contribute to UN operations. A case in point was the establishment of a Peacekeeping Mission Education and Training Facility at the Indonesia Peace and Security Center (IPSC) in West Java in 2011. It is the largest international training facility for UN peacekeeping forces in Southeast Asia.¹⁸

INDONESIA AND THE GROUP OF TWENTY

The Group of Twenty (G-20) was established in 1999 as a forum for finance ministers and central bank governors from major economies¹⁹ to deal with the global impact of the Asian economic crisis and to prevent similar crises in the future. However, the group became prominent in 2008 when the first G-20 Leaders' Summit was convened in Washington DC to stabilise the global economy in the aftermath of the American economic crisis.²⁰ There have been eight Summit meetings since the first Washington Summit in 2008, with a continuing focus on global economic growth and emphasising job creation and open trade.²¹

16 President SBY's speech delivered at the opening of the Fifth Bali Democracy Forum in Bali 8 November 2012; 'SBY Reiterates Urgency for UN Security Council Reform', available at: <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/sby-reiterates-urgency-for-un-security-council-reform/555029>

17 *Ibid.*

18 Natalie Sambhi, 'Indonesia's push for peacekeeping operations', *The Strategist*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 17 September 2013, available at: <http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/indonesias-push-for-peacekeeping-operations/>

19 Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.

20 Yulius Purwadi Hermawan, et.al, (2011). 'The Role of Indonesia in the G-20: Background, Role and Objectives of Indonesia's Membership'. (FES: Jakarta, 2011), pp. 4-10.

21 'A short history of the Group of Twenty' September 3, 2013 available at: http://g20.org.thebricspost.com/a-short-history-of-the-group-of-twenty/#.UwA_SIVQM-M

Indonesia's engagement in the G-20 was a breakthrough in the history of Indonesian diplomacy. On one hand, its membership in the G-20 provides an opportunity to contribute to establishing a new form of global governance – an agenda with which NAM, the UN, and the industrialised countries are seriously concerned. On the other hand, Indonesia needs to ensure that the new architecture of global governance benefits developing countries in order to assure both an international and a domestic public audience that Indonesia's membership, engagement and compliance with commitments to the G-20 remains compatible with Indonesia's commitment to other international institutions, such as the UN and NAM.

NAM reflects the expectations Indonesia has for the G-20. As expressed by President Yudhoyono, the G-20 is a 'civilizational powerhouse', not only an economic one:

The G-20 for the first time accommodates all the major civilizations – not just Western countries, but also China, South Korea, India, South Africa, and others, including significantly, three countries with large Muslim populations: Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Indonesia. The G-20 is representative of a multi-civilizational global community. Perhaps this is why the G-20 has been successful in arresting a global meltdown.²²

At the same time, with its diplomatic history and tradition taken into account, Indonesia's notion of membership in international institutions goes beyond national focus. It also considers itself as representing the interests of the developing world:

For long, within the Non-Aligned Movement as well as the G77, Indonesia has regarded the needs and interests of developing nations as a priority in its global diplomacy. We pioneered the discussion on the right to development and exerted concerted efforts to promote its global support.

Therefore, Indonesia with other emerging economies in the G20 leads the way in the discussion on the issue of development in the G20 forum. We promote financial inclusion in the forum, an issue which is increasingly critical to the economy of developing countries.²³

At the 2012 Los Cabos Summit in Mexico, Indonesia joined with Mexico and Chile in the initiative for a reciprocal learning program on financial inclusion to increase access to credit for the poor. Indonesia also proposed the funding scheme for infrastructure development, a global infrastructure initiative aimed at overcoming bottlenecks in economic development.²⁴ The initiative is in line with Indonesia's major policy initiative on the Master Plan for Planning, Extension and Accelerating Economic Development (MP3EI). It is also compatible with the interests of emerging economies, an important matter given the frequent opposition to G-20 positions from civil society organisations (CSOs) both domestic and international.²⁵

INDONESIA AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: BEYOND SYMBOLISM

As Hurrell²⁶ points out, foreign policy can be derived out of an 'embedded guiding narrative', an ideology born out of a country's history shaped from domestic and international trends. As this issue brief illustrates, Indonesia's guiding narrative has been its 'independent and active' foreign policy—the legacy of the first Vice President Mohammad—and the 1955 Bandung Conference, which became a symbol of that policy. That narrative has guided Indonesia's policy in its involvement in the NAM, the UN, and the G-20, for example, in its role in re-establishing ties between NAM and the industrialised countries in its calls for Security Council reform and its UN peacekeeping activities; and in joining coalitions in the G-20 to orient the Group to development concerns.

And if, as Hurrell also suggests, 'sovereignty may be increasingly defined not by the power to insulate one's state from external influences but by the power to participate effectively in international institutions of all kinds',²⁷ then history suggests that Indonesia has not acquitted itself poorly in this respect. Whether it can continue to do so in the future raises a key question: Is numerical strength, as typified by the mantra of being the third-largest democracy, the largest Muslim country, and the fourth largest population in the world—not to mention the third Asian economic giant—sufficient to shape the direction and agenda of the international institutions?

22 Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. (2009) 'Towards Harmony among Civilizations', speech delivered at the John F Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Boston 29 September 2009, available at:

<http://www.presidentri.go.id/index.php/eng/pidato/2009/09/30/1228.html>.

23 Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2012) 'Indonesia's role as a regional and global actor', speech at the 2nd Annual Address at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, 2 November 2012 available at:

<https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/president-yudhoyonos-speech-at-our-annual-address/>

24 Maria Monica Wihardja, 'Indonesia and the G20: a door left half open', *East Asia Forum*, 29 June, 2012, available at: <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2012/06/29/Indonesia-and-the-g20-a-door-left-half-open/>

25 Hermawan, et.al., *op. cit.* pp. 99-127.

26 Andrew Hurrell, 'Some Reflections on the Role of Intermediate Powers in International Institutions', in *Paths to Power: Foreign Policy Strategies of Intermediate States*, Andrew Hurrell, Andrew F. Cooper, Guadalupe Gonzalez Gonzalez, Ricardo Ubraci Sennes, Sрни Sitaraman, (eds.), Latin American Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, March 2000, p. 1

27 *Ibid.*, p. 4

Assuming the necessary link between internal national strength and international power, Indonesia will face both external and internal constraints to translation of its power into influence in world politics. Internally domestic issues that require attention include rampant corruption, communal and sectarian tensions, and poor law enforcement, all within an evolving democracy.²⁸ An economy based on commodities is also vulnerable to global economic uncertainty. Externally, Indonesia faces greater powers unwilling to respond to demands for fundamental and progressive changes in international institutions.

Indonesia has repeatedly expressed its idealistic views on the roles of international institutions as agencies that can be delivered shared benefits for both industrialised and emerging countries. Calling on other nations to realise its vision of a fair and just global governance will no longer be sufficient. To emerge as a middle power, Indonesia will have to play an increasingly assertive, broader role in international institutions: to be a 'subject', as envisioned by Mohammad Hatta, and not an 'object'. This issue brief has described Indonesia's increasing engagement in three international institutions as evidence of a more confident diplomatic role on the global stage. But in the future, political and economic strengths emanating from the Indonesian domestic front will be needed in order to strengthen Indonesia's systemic influence in the NAM, the UN and the G-20.

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28 Rizal Sukma, 'Domestic Politics and International Posture: Constraints and Possibilities', in Anthony Reid (ed.) *Indonesia Rising, The Repositioning of Asia's Third Giant*. (ISEAS: Singapore, 2012), pp. 82-90.

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