

ARCHIPELAGO IN THE CROSSFIRE: INDONESIA BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND BEIJING

Alexandre Brans

As strategic competition between China and the United States intensifies across the Indo-Pacific, Southeast Asia has become a critical arena of competition. Positioned at the center of this contest is Indonesia, one the region's most politically influential countries and a leading member of the ASEAN. Given its strategic importance, Jakarta is likely to become a central focus for both Beijing and Washington as they vie to advance their competing interests in the region. Examining Indonesia's past political relationships with the two leading powers of the Indo-Pacific offers valuable insight into how past interactions may shape Jakarta's political decision-making in the event of a major regional crisis that might threaten the existing balance of power. This paper argues that China faces greater challenges than the United States in its bilateral relationship with Indonesia due to a more problematic historical legacy. Recognizing this asymmetry is crucial when considering possible scenarios for future regional developments.

Introduction

Indonesia occupies a critical geostrategic position at the intersection of major global trade routes, lying between the Indian and Pacific Oceans and encompassing several vital maritime chokepoints, including the Malacca and Lombok Straits. Furthermore, this Southeast Asian nation is not only the largest archipelago in the world, with approximately 17,000 islands, but also the fourth most populous country. Java alone has more inhabitants than the entire Russian Federation, and the Javanese ethnic group

numbers roughly the same as Vietnam's entire population. Since the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, which precipitated the fall of Suharto's New Order regime, Indonesia has embraced a democratic institutional system that, despite some setbacks,¹ has proven resilient and enduring.

The Southeast Asian archipelago also ranks among the fastest growing economies globally. Between 2013 and 2023, it has sustained

an average GDP growth rate of 5 percent,² underpinned by a broad range of structural reforms designed to enhance its investment climate and economic resilience. The enactment of the Omnibus Law in 2020, which eased foreign ownership restrictions across strategic sectors, underscores the nation's commitment to creating a more attractive and competitive investment climate for foreign investors. Indonesia is also rich in natural resources—including substantial oil reserves,³ abundant agricultural output,⁴ and critical minerals⁵—and benefits from a growing industrial base, particularly in manufacturing sectors,⁶ such as automotive, electronics, and consumer goods. In other words, Jakarta is well-positioned to emerge as an increasingly relevant actor in global affairs.

Given its growing strategic, economic, and demographic weight in international politics, Jakarta also occupies a central position in the ongoing geostrategic competition between Washington and Beijing. As the most strategically significant country in Southeast Asia, Indonesia is poised to become a key battleground for influence campaigns by both the United States (U.S.) and the People's Republic of China (China), each seeking to solidify its leadership in the region.⁷

Indonesia's relations with both great powers have been complex and, at times, contentious, shaped by historical and strategic considerations. However, the nature of these tensions differs in scope and intensity, offering potential insights into Jakarta's likely strategic paths and leanings in the event of a regional crisis involving both great powers. Consequently, this paper contends that Beijing is burdened with more negative precedents than Washington. Therefore, the U.S. continues to enjoy greater leeway in its relationship with Indonesia, given that it has fewer long-standing conflict-ridden issues to address.

U.S.-Indonesia Diplomatic and Military Partnership: Gradual Advancements Amid Past Challenges

At the onset of the Cold War, the United States played an important role in pressuring the Dutch to grant Indonesia independence as part of its broader strategy to contain the spread of communism worldwide. Washington also brokered the 1962 New York agreement that facilitated the transfer of the Dutch controlled part of Papua to the archipelagic nation despite local opposition, leading to the establishment of the province of Irian Jaya. The two countries maintained an especially close military-to-military relationship throughout much of Suharto's tenure as head of the New Order regime. Washington was even complicit in the government's anti-communist purges, providing the military with lists of suspected communists,⁸ and turned a blind eye on the 1975 full-scale invasion of East Timor.⁹

Following Sukarno's implementation of its "Guided Democracy" in 1959, the U.S. had grown fearful that Indonesia had become too close to China. Concerned also by its own military entanglement in Vietnam, Washington saw the need both to replace Sukarno's regime with a more favorable government hostile to communism and to accommodate some of the new Indonesian regime's requests. This latter statement is clearly underscored by President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger visit to Jakarta the night before the invasion of the former Portuguese colony by Indonesia's armed forces.¹⁰ In other words, previous actions reflected broader strategic calculations shaped by the dynamics of the bipolar confrontation.

The 1990s ushered a significant shift in the bilateral partnership, as the end of the Cold War marked the conclusion of great power rivalry,

reshaping global dynamics. Universal rights and liberal democratic values started to assume a more prominent role in American foreign policy, leading to diplomatic tensions with Jakarta. Periodic human rights abuses and military crackdowns in East Timor, Aceh, and Irian Jaya prompted the U.S. Congress to impose sanctions on the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), the Indonesian armed forces. Punitive measures included restrictions on military aid, arms sales, and participation in training programs such as the International Military Education and Training (IMET) initiative.¹¹ The 1991 Santa Cruz massacre in East Timor, in particular, left a lasting mark on bilateral relations, shaping perceptions of Indonesia in Washington for years to come.

U.S.-Indonesia relations suffered additional setbacks in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and the political transition of the Reformasi era. Washington used its dominant role within the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to tie financial assistance to Indonesia's implementation of political reforms and liberal economic restructuring. Relations deteriorated further following the 1999 violence in East Timor, where pro-Indonesian militias killed an estimated 1,500 people after the independence referendum.¹² In response, the U.S. Congress invoked the Leahy Amendment—originally introduced in 1997 to restrict cooperation with foreign military units accused of human rights abuses—further curtailing military assistance to Indonesia. Current President Prabowo Subianto's former unit, the Kopassus special forces was specifically targeted by American sanctions due to allegations of extrajudicial killings and human rights violations.¹³ President Prabowo was himself banned from entering the U.S. for 20 years for human rights violations and war crimes, including the Trisakti University shootings.¹⁴ Furthermore, the IMF, under strong U.S. influence, made the disbursement of funding conditional on Indonesia's acceptance of an

international peacekeeping force. This use of economic pressure to elicit concessions on East Timor was viewed by Jakarta as a violation of sovereignty and significantly strained the bilateral relationship.¹⁵

With the turn of the millennium, new challenges emerged in the form of political Islam and transnational terrorism. As the most populous Muslim-majority country in the world, Indonesia witnessed a surge in public suspicion toward the U.S. following the onset of the Global War on Terrorism (GWT) under the Bush administration.¹⁶ Popular distrust manifested in frequent calls for boycotts and demonstrations against U.S. actions in the Muslim world. For instance, Nahdlatul Ulama—the largest Muslim organization globally—has regularly voiced opposition to U.S. foreign policy in Muslim-majority countries.¹⁷ Although Operation Unified Assistance, a humanitarian mission launched in response to the 2004 tsunami, temporarily improved the U.S.'s image in Indonesia, bilateral relations have remained susceptible to periodic setbacks.

Despite growing popular discontent and various hindrances to deeper alignment, Jakarta's political leadership maintained a close relationship with Washington in post-9/11 era. President Megawati Sukarnoputri – daughter of Indonesia's founding father Sukarno – became the first leader of a Muslim-majority nation to visit President George W. Bush following the September 11 attacks, offering her government's political and moral support against terrorism¹⁸. This gesture was symbolic, not only of Indonesia's leadership desire to remain engaged with the U.S., but also of Jakarta's balancing act between domestic skepticism and international diplomacy.

Although Washington had imposed restrictions on military cooperation with the Southeast Asian archipelago in response to human rights abuses, these restrictions were not absolute. The emergence

of counterterrorism as a shared political priority, especially after the 2002 Bali bombing, created a pragmatic opening for renewed security ties. In this context, Indonesia was increasingly viewed by U.S. policymakers as a potential hotspot for Islamist militancy—a perception that spurred Washington to re-engage selectively, particularly through counter-terrorism assistance.¹⁹ One notable example was the establishment of a U.S.-funded counterterrorism training initiative for Detachment 88, an elite counterterrorism unit within the Indonesian police force, which has been operational since 2003 and played a central role in dismantling terrorist networks. In addition, the IMET program, which had been suspended since 1992, was reinstated in 2005, signaling the incremental restoration of defense ties.²⁰

Over the past 15 years, shifting regional dynamics—marked by the rise of China and the growing centrality of the Indo-Pacific—have contributed to the steady improvement of bilateral relations. These changes have facilitated the revitalization of multiple areas of defense cooperation. Sanctions on Kopassus were lifted in 2010, and combat training with U.S. counterparts officially resumed in 2019.²¹ The annual Garuda Shield bilateral military exercise has evolved into a multinational endeavor, which includes several regional U.S. allies, such as Japan and Australia.²² Jakarta has also intensified its engagement in the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training Indonesia (CARAT) initiative, a series of joint military exercises revolving around regional maritime security.

Furthermore, the U.S. has contributed to enhancing Jakarta's capabilities in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) and Washington remains an essential partner in intelligence sharing and terrorism prevention. Building on steadfast U.S. support for Indonesia's recent counterterrorism efforts, Jakarta has taken a proactive leadership role in

launching the ASEAN “Our Eyes” initiative—an intelligence-sharing platform inspired by the “Five Eyes” alliance. This initiative represents a strategic extension of Indonesia's counterterrorism architecture, aiming to foster deeper regional cooperation and intelligence coordination among ASEAN. The success of this newly established framework will likely hinge on sustained American support, which provides the technological edge to effectively counter militant threats across Southeast Asia.

Lastly, yet significantly, Washington continues to benefit from strong people-to-people ties, particularly among Indonesia's leadership. These ties encompass nearly all upper echelons of society and key decision-making circles,²³ with presidents, commanders of the armed forces and influential business tycoons having received higher education in American institutions. One example is former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) who famously referred to the United States as his ‘second home’,²⁴ reflecting the deep personnel and professional connections forged during his time at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth. While this trend is gradually evolving, with a growing number of students now pursuing education in alternative destinations, including China,²⁵ educational exchanges remain a powerful instrument of American soft power in its engagement with Indonesia.

Strategic Barriers Hindering Indonesia's Long-Term Engagement with China

In comparison to the relatively recent U.S.-Indonesia relationship, ties between China and the Southeast Asian archipelago date back to the Middle Ages, rooted primarily in commercial exchange and maritime trade. During the Ming dynasty Chinese merchants settled in Kalimantan, Java or Sumatra, forming the first overseas Indo-Chinese communities. Bilateral interactions

were not only peaceful but also marked by one instance of military engagement. In 1293, the Yuan dynasty, then ruling China, sent a punitive expedition against the ruler of Java in response to the mistreatment of Chinese envoys. While the campaign ended in disaster and the Chinese ruling dynasty at the time was not of Han stock, the Javanese, Indonesia's most influential ethnic group, came to recognize their vulnerability to military intervention from East Asia's dominant mainland power.

The ethnic Chinese rapidly grew to become one of the richest Indonesian communities during the colonial era. Starting with the 1740 Batavia massacre, the first major documented Sinophobic pogrom in Indonesia, outbreaks of anti-Chinese violence have periodically resurfaced throughout the nation's history. The last serious mass violence against the Chinese community took place in 1998. Economic downturns and close cooperation with Dutch colonial rulers, often acting as intermediaries, have frequently turn local Chinese into scapegoats.²⁶ Previous historical considerations suggest an underlying structural pattern that tends to manifest during periods of crisis or instability. As a result, domestic anti-Chinese sentiments cannot be regarded as a past issue that no longer holds relevance.

While contemporary Indonesia is heavily reliant on Chinese investments to sustain its growing economy, it remains suspicious of Chinese political intentions in Southeast Asia. Since the country gained formal independence in 1949, several historical issues have underpinned the bilateral relationship and continue to exert a lasting influence, with little prospect of complete resolution. First, the intricate question of Indonesia's Chinese identity remains a pending issue for Jakarta's leadership. Second, the perceived involvement of the PKI in the 1965 coup has shaped the national memory and is likely to continue to inform Jakarta's posture towards Beijing in times of bilateral crisis. Third, ongoing

overlapping claims over the Natuna archipelago complicate the prospects for a genuine long-term strategic synergy between Jakarta and Beijing. Fourth, Chinese actions to undermine ASEAN's centrality directly contradicts Indonesia's security objectives, which are grounded in Southeast Asia's regional cohesion.

One of the most pressing challenges affecting bilateral relations during the early Cold War was the question of identity and citizenship for Indonesians of Chinese ancestry. Chinese nationality can be traced back to the Qing dynasty's enactment of the 1909 Qing law on the acquisition and loss of nationality, which introduced the principle of *jus sanguinis* based on paternal descent and permitted dual nationality.²⁷ Notably, this legislation was partially influenced by lobbying efforts from the Sino-Indonesian business elites, which sought to resist Dutch attempts to impose Dutch citizenship on ethnic Chinese populations. The principle of *jus sanguinis* remained a cornerstone of the 1929 Nationality Law enacted by the Kuomintang (KMT).²⁸ During this period, the KMT actively mobilized nationalist sentiments among overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia—initially to attract financial contributions from affluent merchant elites, and subsequently to solicit broader support for its resistance against Imperial Japan.

The continuous engagement of the KMT, and later the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), with overseas Chinese communities for financial and political support had a significant unintended consequence. It contributed to the perception of the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia as a “fifth column” aligned with Beijing's interests. During Mao's rise to power and the CCP's victory in the Chinese Civil War, fears of a communist uprising began to spread across many newly independent Southeast Asian nations, including Indonesia. Sukarno maintained strong relations with Beijing and the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI),

then the third largest communist party globally. However, significant segments of Indonesia's strategic apparatus, especially the TNI leadership, held deep-seated antagonism toward both communism and China. Although the 1955 treaty on dual nationality signed between Jakarta and Beijing—which compelled Chinese nationals to choose either Chinese or Indonesian citizenship—was crafted with the aim of accommodating Indonesia, it ultimately fell short of fostering sustained bilateral rapprochement. Despite the high point of diplomatic entente marked by the Bandung Conference and the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement, an unforeseen event ultimately derailed this trajectory.

In 1965, elements within the military sympathetic to communist ideals staged a coup that resulted in the assassination of several top leaders of the TNI. Major General Suharto, the commander of Kostrad, the army strategic reserve command, swiftly mobilized his forces to suppress the coup and retake control of Jakarta. Responsibility for the coup was immediately blamed on the PKI, providing the justification for a nationwide anti-communist campaign. The repression that followed resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Indonesian nationals.²⁹ Common citizens suspected of communist sympathies, many of whom were of Chinese descent, were summarily executed or detained by the TNI. The outcome of the 1965 coup precipitated the fall of Sukarno and paved the way for the rise of Suharto's New Order regime. One of the most significant foreign policy shifts was a decisive turn toward anti-communism, which led to the severing of ties with China. The New Order also marked the end of the confrontation with Malaysia, clearing the path for the establishment of ASEAN. This regional initiative reflected shared concerns over communist expansion in Southeast Asia and brought Indonesia into closer alignment with U.S. strategic interests.

Under Suharto's New Order regime, Indonesia's

Chinese community was subjected to systematic repression, primarily through cultural assimilation policies. Chinese-language schools were shut down, Chinese-language newspapers were banned, and the public use of Mandarin and other Chinese dialects was strictly prohibited. Previous measures formed part of a broader authoritarian campaign enforced by the 1967 Presidential Decision No. 240 and Presidential Instruction No. 14.³⁰ In other words, the goal of the Suharto regime was to promote a singular national identity and suppress any ethnic distinctiveness perceived as a potential threat to national unity.

It is important to note, however, that while political and ethnically discriminatory policies prevailed in the aftermath of the attempted coup, they did not necessarily translate into economic persecution. The Chinese community retained a significant role in Indonesian commercial and business sectors during the New Order era, reflecting a longstanding pattern that predated the country's independence. In fact, Chinese entrepreneurial expertise and financial capital were crucial to successful implementation of the government's economic reform plans.³¹ As a result, prominent Chinese-Indonesia businessmen, such as Liem Sioe Liong, even rose to become among the wealthiest individuals in the country under the Suharto regime.³²

The fall of Suharto in 1998, after 32 years in power, marked a significant turning point for the Sino-Indonesian community. The post-New Order era saw the gradual dismantling of discriminatory policies targeting the Chinese community. With the revocation of the 1967 Presidential Instruction, restrictions on Chinese language, culture, and religious practices were lifted. A symbolic milestone was reached when then-President Megawati Sukarnoputri, Sukarno's daughter, officially recognized Chinese New Year as a national holiday through Presidential Decree No 19.³³ Further progress was reflected in

2014, when Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, commonly known as Ahok, an evangelical Christian of Chinese descent, was appointed as Jakarta's first ethnic Chinese governor.

While legal and cultural restrictions on Chinese Indonesians were formally lifted in the Reformation era, anti-Chinese sentiments continue to resurface intermittently, even within the upper echelons of political power. The controversial blasphemy trial of Ahok is emblematic of these enduring undercurrents. Large-scale demonstrations were orchestrated by Islamist groups under the banner of the "212 movement", highlighting sectarian motivation.³⁴ Although the legal basis for the charges was widely considered tenuous, his ethnic and religious identity likely played a role in shaping public perception and fueling political backlash.³⁵ This ultimately contributed to his conviction and subsequent imprisonment.³⁶ Ahok's conviction is particularly significant in light of remarks made by high-ranking military official Gatot Nurmantyo, who alleged that ethnic Chinese were contributing to the erosion of national security in support of Beijing's regional interests.³⁷ Put differently, domestic political debates surrounding the Sino-Indonesian community still exert, whether directly or indirectly, an influence on China's diplomatic engagement with Indonesia.

Potential tensions between Jakarta and Beijing are not limited to Indonesia's domestic socio-political dynamics. The Natuna Islands represent a continuing sore point in bilateral relations. Though both Jakarta and Beijing have handled these territorial disputes with caution to avoid open conflict,³⁸ they remain a serious obstacle to closer ties. Much like the issue of overseas Chinese citizenship, China's "nine-dash line"—which overlaps with Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Natuna Sea—originated from policies that predated the establishment of the CCP. The first version of what would become the "nine-dash lane" was proposed by

KMT geographer Bai Meichu and adopted by the Republic of China government in 1947.³⁹ As a result, the CCP was compelled to navigate the negative repercussions of inherited policies that it had not originally devised. Nevertheless, Beijing has consistently refused to abandon these expansive maritime claims and continues to maintain strategic ambiguity regarding the precise delimitations of its sea boundaries with Indonesia.

Given the Natuna Island's rich natural resources and strategic control over the Malacca Strait,⁴⁰ Jakarta has responded to China's territorial claims with significant militarization of the archipelago. Since 2018, the Indonesian government has invested heavily in military infrastructures on the Natuna Islands. In 2021, it began construction of a submarine support base in the Lampa Strait and established the headquarters of the 1st Fleet Naval Combat Group in Ranai. Continued encroachments by the Chinese Coast Guard vessels have further prompted the expansion and modernization of runways and port facilities.⁴¹

Most notably, the Natuna Islands serve as a central driver behind Indonesia's intensifying efforts in naval modernization. Recent acquisitions include French diesel-electric submarines equipped with next-generation lithium battery technology,⁴² as well as six FREMM-class frigates from the Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri.⁴³ The submarines will be assembled domestically at Surabaya's naval shipyard, signaling Jakarta's commitment to enhancing local shipbuilding capabilities. Complementing this, Indonesia has successfully developed and deployed the Nagapasa-class submarine, a variant of the German Type 209/1400 design.⁴⁴ This milestone demonstrates a growing proficiency in undersea warfare and indigenous defense manufacturing. On the surface fleet front, Jakarta has engaged in a joint development program with Japan to co-produce naval vessels⁴⁵ and has signed a licensing agreement with a British contractor

to build frigates domestically.⁴⁶ Together, these initiatives reflect Indonesia's broader maritime security goals: to acquire advanced technological expertise, foster a more self-sufficient defense industry, and position itself as a regional maritime power.

Lastly, past actions underscore Beijing's intent to dilute ASEAN's role as regional platform for multilateral cooperation, an institution that has long supported Indonesia's leadership and diplomatic influence in Southeast Asia. The primary goal of ASEAN is to uphold regional stability, facilitate conflict resolution, and serve as a force-multiplying mechanism when engaging with external power, which is not in Beijing's interest. A weakened and divided ASEAN ultimately serves China's strategic goals by shifting diplomacy towards bilateral arrangements, where Beijing enjoys asymmetric advantages. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that efforts have sometimes been made to hinder the creation of more inclusive frameworks or undermine the unity of the organization.⁴⁷

In 2004, China, with support from Malaysia, opposed the inclusion of non-Asian states in the East Asian Summit (EAS), a move that would have bolstered Beijing's influence within a less inclusive framework.⁴⁸ More critically, in 2012, Cambodia—widely considered as China's closest partner within ASEAN—obstructed the issuance of a joint communiqué on the South China Sea, marking the first time in the organization's history that it failed to reach a consensus. In both instances, Indonesia stood in opposition to Chinese preferences to prevent the fragmentation of Southeast Asian's negotiating power in international politics. The deliberate disruption of ASEAN unity revealed Beijing's capacity to instrumentalize sympathetic member-states to fragment the bloc from within,⁴⁹ thereby posing a direct challenge to Indonesia's efforts to advance its security priorities.

Conclusion

Although Indonesia continues to present itself as an unaligned country and resists direct involvement in the U.S.–China rivalry, historical precedents and strategic pragmatism are likely to shape its response in the event of a major escalation in great power politics. For the foreseeable future, Jakarta is unlikely to openly align itself with any coalition aimed at containing Beijing, given the significant role China plays in Indonesia's economic development. This partnership is crucial for maintaining national cohesion, as economic downturn could exacerbate ethnic tensions and trigger inter-religious violence, reminiscent of the unrests following Suharto's downfall.

Indonesia's foreign policy, grounded in its “free and active” approach, enables it to balance relationships with both major powers while straightening its defense posture and ensuring domestic stability. Several prominent examples underscore Jakarta's intention of not putting all its egg in one basket by engaging with both American-led and Chinese sponsored multilateral frameworks. While standing out as the only ASEAN member of G20, the archipelagic nation is also pursuing membership in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).⁵⁰ Nonetheless, Indonesia continues to spearhead the Non-Aligned Movement and has become part of BRICS in early 2025.⁵¹ In other words, Jakarta's greatest strength lies not in choosing sides, but in keeping its options open.

Nevertheless, enduring skepticism over China's long-term strategic intentions continues to condition the trajectory of bilateral engagement. As such, Indonesia's growing military modernization must be understood in the context of China's assertiveness in regional politics, particularly the South China Sea. The militarization of the Natuna Islands underscores Jakarta's strategic anxieties, even though both countries have shown their willingness to mediate bilateral disputes.

Therefore, two main conclusions emerge regarding Indonesia's position in the U.S.-China rivalry. First, given the centrality of economic interests and barring any aggressive move by Beijing to assert control over the South China Sea by force, Indonesia is likely to maintain a cautious balancing. Second, while Jakarta will avoid formal alignments, subtle tilts toward the U.S.—particularly in the areas of security and defense cooperation—can be expected. Closer alignments on security matters are unlikely to jeopardize sensitive Indonesian national security interests, such as territorial claims or ethnic minority concerns, as Washington does not pose a threat to the countries' strategic imperatives. This final consideration could be crucial in shaping Indonesia's preferences, particularly if it is forced to choose between the U.S. and China in the event of a regional fallout.

Author –

Alexandre Brans is a visiting researcher at the Free University of Brussels (ULB). An international relations graduate from University La Sapienza in Rome, Alexandre took a postgraduate MBA in economic intelligence from the Paris School of Economic Warfare (École de Guerre Économique) in 2022. He has previously completed a postgraduate course in Homeland Security from the Italian Society for International Organization (SIOI) and has a master's degree in Geopolitics and International Security from La Sapienza.

The Institute for Security and Development Policy is an independent, non-partisan research and policy organization based in Stockholm dedicated to expanding understanding of international affairs.

For enquiries, please contact: info@isd.eu

No parts of this paper may be reproduced without ISDP's permission.

Disclaimer: *The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of ISDP or its sponsors.*

Endnotes

- 1 Rachael Diprose, Dave McRae and Vedi R. Hadiz, "Two Decades of Reformasi in Indonesia: Its Illiberal Turn," *Journal Of Contemporary Asia* 49, no. 5 (2019): 691–712.
- 2 World Bank, "Indonesia GDP growth (annual %) – 2013–2023," World Bank Open Data, 2024, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=ID>.
- 3 U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), "Indonesia - International – Analysis," 2021, <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/IDN>.
- 4 World Bank, "Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (% of GDP) – Indonesia," 2023, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?locations=ID>.
- 5 International Trade Administration, "Indonesia – Critical Minerals," U.S. Department of Commerce, 2023, <https://www.trade.gov/market-intelligence/indonesia-critical-minerals>.
- 6 Invest Indonesia, "Manufacturing still the largest contributor to GDP," February 6, 2025, <https://investindonesia.co.id/2025/02/06/manufacturing-still-the-largest-contributor-to-gdp/>.
- 7 A. Natalegawa, and G. B. Poling, "U.S. and Chinese soft power and influence in Southeast Asia," Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 14, 2024, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/us-and-chinese-soft-power-and-influence-southeast-asia>.
- 8 Ang Cheng Guan, "United States-Indonesian Relations: The 1965 Coup and After," *War & Society* 21, no. 1 (2003): 120.
- 9 Ann Marie Murphy, "US Rapprochement with Indonesia: From Problem State to Partner," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 32, no. 3 (2010): 362–387.
- 10 Voice of America, "Documents Show US Supported 1975 Invasion of E. Timor," October 28, 2009, <https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-a-2001-12-08-25-documents-66969317/378447.html>.
- 11 Frega Wenas Inkiriwang, "The dynamic of the US-Indonesia defence relations: the 'IMET ban' period," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 74, no.4 (2020): 377–393.
- 12 Ann Marie Murphy, n. 9.
- 13 Charles "Ken" Comer, "Leahy in Indonesia: Damned if You Do (and Even if You Don't)," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 37, no. 2 (2010): 53–70.
- 14 Maesy Angelina and Ricky Gunawan, "Eleven years after the May riot: We have not forgotten," *The Jakarta Post*, May 12, 2009, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/05/12/eleven-years-after-may-riot-we-have-not-forgotten.html>.
- 15 Ann Marie Murphy, n. 9.
- 16 Anthony L. Smith, "U.S.-Indonesia Relations: Searching for cooperation in the War against Terrorism," *Asia-Pacific Security Studies* 2, no. 2 (May 2003): 4.
- 17 Richard W. Baker, "U.S-Southeast Asia Relations: In the Shadow of Iraq," *Comparative Connections* 5, no.3 (2003): 56–66, <https://cc.pacforum.org/volumes/5-1/>,
- 18 Anthony L. Smith, n. 16, 2.
- 19 Anthony L. Smith, n. 16, 3.
- 20 Frega Wenas Inkiriwang, n. 11.
- 21 John McBeth, "Abusive Indonesian unit back in America's good graces," *Asia Times*, June 14, 2019.
- 22 Gusty Da Costa, "Super Garuda Shield flexes multilateral, all-domain capabilities," Indo-Pacific Defence FORUM, September 1, 2024.
- 23 Meidyatama Suryodiningrat, "US Rapprochement with Indonesia: From Problem State to Partner – A Response," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 32, no. 3 (2010): 388–394.
- 24 Al Jazeera, "Profile: Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono," July 4, 2004, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2004/7/4/profile-susilo-bambang-yudhoyono>.
- 25 Elizabeth Susanti Gunawan, "The Growing Interest of Indonesian Students Studying in China Post Suharto Era," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 14, no. 1 (2018): 115–132.
- 26 Felix Da Silva, "The Chinese Minority in Indonesia," *Hohonu A Journal of Academic Writing* 8 (2010): 61–63.

- 27 Tsai Chutung, "The Chinese Nationality Law, 1909," *American Journal of International Law* 4, no. 2 (1910): 404–411.
- 28 Albert H. Y. Chen, "The Evolution of Modern Chinese Nationality Law: A Historical Perspective," *The China Review* 23, no. 2 (May 2023): 123–147.
- 29 Ang Cheng Guan, n. 8.
- 30 Chong Wu Ling, "Rethinking the Position of Ethnic Chinese Indonesians," *Sejarah* 25, no. 2 (2016): 96–108.
- 31 Mély G. Tan, "The Role of Ethnic Chinese Minority in Development: The Indonesian Case," *Southeast Asia Studies* 25, no. 3 (1987): 363–382.
- 32 Felix Da Silva, n. 26.
- 33 Wiwi Tjiook, "Pecinan as an inspiration: The contribution of Chinese Indonesian architecture to an urban environment," *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* 18, no. 2 (2017): 556–580.
- 34 Sheany, "Understanding the 212 Movement," *Jakarta Globe*, April 17, 2018.
- 35 Charlotte Setijadi, "Anti-Chinese sentiment and the 'return' of the *pribumi* discourse," in Greg Fealy and Ronit Ricci (eds), *Contentions Belonging: The place of minorities in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISAES, 2019), 192–211.
- 36 Simon Butt, "Why is Ahok in prison? A legal analysis of the decision," Indonesia at Melbourne, June 6, 2017, <https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/why-is-ahok-in-prison-a-legal-analysis-of-the-decision/#:~:text=Ahok%20was%20found%20guilty%20of,to%20two%20years%20in%20prison.>
- 37 Charlotte Setijadi, n. 35.
- 38 Emirza Adi Syailendra, "Understanding Prabowo's Natunas gambit with China," Lowy Institute, November 27, 2024.
- 39 Bill Hayton, "The Modern Origins of China's South China Sea Claims: Maps, Misunderstandings, and the Maritime Geobody," *Modern China* 45, no. 2 (2019): 127–170.
- 40 Fernandes Simangunsong and Imelda Hutasoit, "A study of the development of Natuna Regency as a key site on Indonesia's Outer Border with particular regard to national defense and security issues in the South China Sea," *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures* 7, no. 2 (2018): 63–73.
- 41 Felix K. Chang, "Indonesia's New Military Bases in the South China Sea: Preparing for Friction," Foreign Policy Research institute, July 11, 2024.
- 42 Fauzan Malufti, "Indonesia and France Discuss Key Details on Scorpène Evolved Submarines," Naval News, September 20, 2024.
- 43 Fincantieri Press Communique, "Fincantieri Fornirà 8 Unità All'indonesia" [Fincantieri will supply 8 vessels to Indonesia], June 10, 2021, <https://www.fincantieri.com/globalassets/comunicati-stampa/price-sensitive/2021/fincantieri-fornira-8-unita-allindonesia.pdf> (accessed April 19, 2025).
- 44 Ridzwan Rahmat, "Indonesia commissions third Nagapasa-class submarine in 'symbolic' South China Sea ceremony," *Janes*, April 8, 2021, <https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-news/indonesia-commissions-third-nagapasa-class-submarine-in-symbolic-south-china-sea-ceremony>.
- 45 Julian Isaac, "Japan-Indonesia to develop Mogami frigates for maritime security in East and SE Asia," *Indonesia Business Post*, January 25, 2025.
- 46 Dimitris Mitsopoulos, "Indonesia's Merah Putih-class Frigate: What You Need to Know," Naval News, February 11, 2025.
- 47 Renato Cruz De Castro, "The Risk of Applying Realpolitik in Resolving the South China Sea Dispute: Implications on Regional Security," *Pacific Focus* 27, no. 2 (21012): 262–289.
- 48 Mohan Malik, "The East Asia Summit," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 60, no. 2(2006): 207–211; see also Sanae Suzuki, "Conflict among ASEAN members over the South China Sea issue," IDE-JETRO, https://www.ide.go.jp/library/English/Research/Region/Asia/pdf/201209_suzuki.pdf (accessed April 21, 2025).
- 49 E. Z. Bower, "China Reveals Its Hand on ASEAN in Phnom Penh," Center for Strategic & International Studies, July 20, 2012, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/china-reveals-its-hand-asean-phnom-penh>.
- 50 OECD, "Indonesia reaches key milestones in OECD accession process," June 3, 2025, <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/news/press-releases/2025/06/indonesia-reaches-key-milestones-in-oecd-accession-process.html>.
- 51 Sebastian Strangio, "Indonesia Officially Becomes First Southeast Asian Member of BRICS," *The Diplomat*, January 8, 2025.