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Continuity and Change in Indonesian Foreign Policy

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The notion of nation-states had emerged from the treaty of Westphalia (1648). The era of globalization started in the gleam of nation-states and the establishment of liberal intuitions. Therefore, the study of foreign policy got importance in International Relations. According to some



scholars, a state without “foreign policy” is like a ship in the deep sea without any direction. The Foreign Policy of Indonesia reflects the freedom and independence of the state. The state’s policy is based on the principles of Pancasila. The policy is formulated to achieve national goals, strategies and maintain peaceful co-existence. Indonesia plays a pivotal role in terms of geo-politics and geo-economic in the Southeast Asian region.

The Transition Period of Revolutionary Leader:

Muhammad Hatta formulated Indonesia’s foreign policy in 1998¹. After that, Soekarno (1994-1966) carries out the national duty of independent and active foreign policy to maintain cordial relations with the superpowers. Moreover, the founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement for major



¹“Foreign Policy.” Accessed April 17, 2021. <https://www.embassyofindonesia.org/index.php/foreign-policy>

reflection in the Eastern and Western block's geo-politics. The confrontation with Malaysia was a laborious period for Soekarno's policy.² In conclusion, Soekarno's policy, concerning the struggle for independence, anti-colonialism, socialism, self-sufficient, multi-party system, and western democracy was as a political weapon for competing for political force³.

Suharto Reformation in Economic Development:

The New Order of President Suharto replaced the Old Order of Soekarno, and a new development began in Indonesia's foreign policy towards geo-economic. The regional integration started in the context of the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) in 1967. Such a stance provided more opportunities, confidence, and economic stability to the nation. Furthermore, the regional cooperation joined the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1989. In the golden period of regional cooperation, Indonesia hosted a Non-aligned Movement (NAM) summit and (APEC) meetings.⁴ One of Indonesia's best achievements was elected to the United Security or a non-permanent member in 1995 from the Asian region. Suharto has its influence in the business sector and



² BATABYAL, ANINDYA. "Change and Continuity in Indonesian Foreign Policy: From Sukarno, Suharto to Megawati." *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations* 6, no. 1 (June 2002): 29–44.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0973598402110004>.

³Yani, Yanyan Mochamad. "CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN INDONESIAN FOREIGN POLICY." *Sosiohumaniora*, jurnal.unpad.ac.id/sosiohumaniora/article/view/5575/2936.

⁴ Ibid

political affairs. However, he emphasized economic stability and international alliance building for boosting the economy. The foreign policy goals in the Suharto period were focused on nation-building, internal stability, economic development, and Pancasila democracy. It was amid conducive trade policy, private investment, foreign assistance, and regional alignments.

Habibie Transition:

The foreign policy of B.J Habibie (1998-1999) in the transition administration analyzes domestic concerns. It faced many hurdles like economic crisis, political and public security-related issues. This transition government was pressurized from the international entities to reform their economic and political policies.⁵ Overall, the Habibie policies were based on a multi-party system, Pancasila democracy, foreign aid diplomacy, and the democratization of the political system.



⁵ He, Kai. "Indonesia's Foreign Policy after Soeharto: International Pressure, Democratization, and Policy Change." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 8, no. 1 (2008): 47-72. Accessed April 17, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26159435>.

Abdurrahman Wahid Period: Challenges and Transition

The Abdurrahman period (1999- 2001) faced domestic hurdles, particularly disturbed law and order situations, territorial disintegration, and violence. Despite such threats, the organizations supported economic and political goals. The crisis had affected economic and political gain. The foreign policy of Abdurrahman analyzed the separation, multi-party system, and ethnic conflicts.



Megawati Sukarnoputri: Transition Period

Megawati Sukarnoputri period was from 2001 to 2004. She was the first female President of Indonesia. She tackled domestic problems and introduced economic reform. She reinvigorated Indonesia's national unity and underwent a complete change of the democratic reform system. In her period, economic development was witnessed at a broader level by introducing regional autonomy, democratic consolidation, the emergence of Islamic political forces, reformation of foreign policy management, and a new and constructive role.⁶



⁶ BATABYAL, ANINDYA. "Change and Continuity in Indonesian Foreign Policy: From Sukarno, Suharto to Megawati." *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations* 6, no. 1 (June 2002): 29–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973598402110004>.

Democratization Era of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono:

The era of Yudhoyono started from 2004 to 2014. He struggled to bring democratic norms. In his tenure, public opinion got important for the decision-making process and setting foreign policy targets. He focused on free and active foreign policy as a five-year planning program. He brought constructive changes to Indonesia's foreign policy. For example: confidence building, peace-making, problem-solving policies, and regional alignment. The legislation, academia, research, and the role of the House of Representatives became effective in his tenure. Such transformation provided Indonesia with transparency, freedom, nation-building, true Indonesian nationalism, and regional autonomy policies. The reformation period of Yudhoyono was appreciative.



The Contemporary Tenure of Joko Widodo: An Analysis

Joko Jokowi Widodo is the seventh and current President of Indonesia. His era started in 2014. He is known as a 'Man of the People', clean from corruption, human rights advocator, and a visionary leader⁷. His robust foreign policy goals and mechanism reflect that Indonesia is in the right



⁷ He, Kai. "Indonesia's Foreign Policy after Soeharto: International Pressure, Democratization, and Policy Change." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 8, no. 1 (2008): 47-72. Accessed April 17, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26159435>



direction to achieve desired goals and prosperity. Due to his visionary ideas, diplomacy promotes Indonesia's national identity on international platforms. His effective policies have paved the way for enhancing the role of multilateralism via regional alignments, economic cooperation, and a strong and decisive role in the ASEAN and Indo-Pacific region.⁸ The foreign policy of Indonesia is concerned with external relations, the ideology of Pancasila, the nature of policy transformation in the form of cooperation and mutual activities. The ongoing phase in Indonesia has set its status to be third Asia's giant economy in the near future.

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⁸ Lundry, Chris. "Assessing Indonesia's Foreign Policy under Jokowi." *Asia Policy* 25, no. 4 (2018): 30–35. <https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2018.0058>.