



Special Issue

Indonesia's 'Great Power' Aspirations: A Critical View

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Abstract

Indonesia is readying itself for a return to a diplomatic assertiveness not seen since the early 1960s. Partly, this reflects the approach of 0050 resident Joko Widodo and his government, but it also reflects growing aspirations among the wider circles of Indonesia's elites for their country to act as, and be acknowledged as a 'big country' – negara besar. This constitutes a significant shift from the traditions of low-key diplomacy of the New Order and Reformasi eras. Several factors are pushing this shift. Indonesia's growing economic weight will, over time, provide more of the foundations of national power than it has had hitherto. The changing regional strategic and political order will make it harder for Indonesia to take its place in Asia for granted and to assume that its intentional interests can be protected primarily through ASEAN. And domestically the trend to rising nationalism will provide political incentives to greater assertiveness. On the other hand, Indonesia still has big hurdles to overcome before it can act as an effective major power in Asia. Its economic trajectory remains uncertain, its military is weak, its diplomatic capacities are underdeveloped, and it lacks a clearly articulated set of policy objectives to pursue. So, it remains to be seen whether Indonesia's aspirations to major power status will be realised.

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1. Evoking Past Glories

Indonesia is readying itself for a return to a diplomatic assertiveness not seen since the early 1960s. Joko Widodo's Government, and indeed much of the political elite, is increasingly given to assertions that Indonesia is already a major power in world affairs. This was symbolised in Jokowi's insistence at the November 2014 APEC Summit in Beijing that he sit beside presidents Obama, Putin and Xi in the middle of the table at a formal dinner and not at the end, as requested by summit organisers. In relating this story to the press, Jokowi said he was a 'big nation' (*negara besar*) and that he, as its president, should be placed with the leaders of other important countries and not marginalised (Kompas 2015a). Jokowi has also made it known that when he visits the United States of America later this year, he should be invited to address Congress, just as other leaders of 'great nations' had carried out. This declaratory and entitled tone to Indonesia's recent diplomacy marks a departure from that of preceding governments.

Indonesia's international personality has been broadly consistent for the past 50 years, during both Soeharto's New Order (1966–1998) and the Reformasi era (1998 till present). Over this time, Indonesia has rarely sought overt leadership roles, either globally or regionally, and when it has performed so, it has seldom played an agenda-setting role. It has been willing to punch below its weight, defining its international posture primarily through ASEAN. It

accepted a position as one among equals in ASEAN's membership and exercised such leadership as it has sought only indirectly and covertly.

This has contrasted strongly with Indonesia's posture under President Sukarno in the 1950s and early 1960s. He asserted a leading role for Indonesia globally, particularly among newly independent nations. He hosted the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, the first such meeting of 'developing' nations (The 60th anniversary of this event was marked in lavish fashion by the Jokowi Government in late April of this year, as if to celebrate Indonesia's previous international leadership.). Sukarno later cast himself as a leader of what he termed the 'New Emerging Forces' and was a co-founder of the Non-aligned Movement in 1961. He asserted a clear leadership role for Indonesia regionally, for example through his support for the MaPhilIndo concept of a Greater Malay Confederation, and launched a military confrontation against the British-sponsored formation of Malaysia in 1963. We can see the understated New Order-early Reformasi posture as a reaction against this assertiveness.

One key question for Indonesia and its neighbours is whether, how far and in what directions Indonesia's international posture is moving away from the modesty of the past 50 years. It is important to recognise that this need not by any means suggest a return to the swashbuckling style of Sukarno. But much of the political elite in Indonesia see their country as on the cusp of becoming an Asian 'Great Power', and a number of critical new factors in Indonesia's situation suggests that there will be both opportunities and imperatives for Indonesia to start taking a bigger and more assertive role, if not as a classic 'Great Power' then at least as a major regional power. We will critically evaluate the prospects for this.

2. Forces for Change

Three sets of factors suggest that Indonesia's international posture over coming decades could become much more active as it evolves from being a self-effacing and under-performing

player, even as a middle power, to becoming a major regional power.

The first is its growing economy. Remarkably, steady growth since the late 1990s has already seen Indonesia rise quite swiftly up the world economic rankings. For example, according to one recent study by PricewaterhouseCoopers based on IMF figures, Indonesia's GDP already in 2014 ranked 9th in the world in purchasing power parity terms, which is arguably the best measure for comparing strategic weight (PwC 2015). That places it just behind Brazil and France, and ahead of the UK, Mexico and Italy – and well over double Australia. But even more strikingly, the PwC study estimates that by 2030 – just 15 years from now – Indonesia will have the world's fifth biggest economy, lying just behind Japan. And by 2050, it will have overtaken Japan to become number four, behind only China, America and India. On these estimates, its economy will then be 50 per cent larger than Japan's, almost twice the size of Germany's, and more than four times Australia's. Nor is this just a result of the purchasing power parity measurement methodology. PwC estimates that even measured in market exchange rates terms Indonesia's GDP will still be the world's fourth biggest in 2050.

Of course long-term predictions like this are far from infallible. But it is striking that the PwC estimates are based on rather conservative projections of Indonesia's economic growth at an average of 5.7 per cent in market exchange rates terms out to 2050, which is well behind the study's estimates for many other emerging economies. This conservatism is justified by the immense challenges that Indonesia has yet to overcome if it is to realise its economic potential, including chronic infrastructure problems, weak regulatory institutions and still-rampant corruption. The so-far disappointing performance of the new Jokowi administration is a timely reminder of just how hard it is for Indonesia's political system to create governments capable of sustained and effective efforts to deliver the reforms that Indonesia needs. Moreover, it is hard to see how Indonesia could maintain 5.7 per cent real growth unless at least some of these reforms are undertaken, and

that cannot be taken for granted. Its growth is currently 4.7 per cent, and many economists predict this will fall further this year to well below the government's 5.4 per cent target for 2015 (The Economist 2015). So, we cannot take it for granted that PwC's forecast will prove correct. But neither can we take it for granted that it will be overly optimistic. It can be all too easy to dismiss projections that suggest a future world which is very different from the one we now know: after all, until recently very few took seriously projections that China's economy would overtake America's, and yet here we are. So, any prudent consideration of Indonesia's future international posture has taken into account of the clear possibility that it will become, in the not too distant future, a very wealthy country indeed.

For Indonesia to become the world's fourth richest nation would of course be a remarkable thing, overturning both Indonesia's vision of itself and the way the rest of us see it. But if, as seems likely, the hierarchy of the world's leading economies stabilises as the size of their GDPs become increasingly tied to the size of their populations, then Indonesia, as the world's fourth biggest country by population, could look forward to a long period well among the richest, most powerful countries. Of course the relationship between wealth and power is complex, but it is direct. If Indonesia does indeed move up the global and regional economic tables, its position in the power hierarchy will move the same way. Becoming the world's fourth largest economy would not necessarily make Indonesia a 'global power' in the sense in which that term has been used in the recent centuries, because power is going to be distributed so much more evenly around the globe in the future. It would not even guarantee it a place among Asia's 'great powers', in the sense of a power strong enough to shape the entire order of which it is part, because economically it will be a long way behind India in third place. But it will give Indonesia options and opportunities to play roles that have not been open to it before.

The second factor that might cause Indonesia to adopt a more active international posture over coming decades is a shift in its regional

strategic environment. During both the New Order and Reformasi eras, Indonesia's approach to international affairs was strongly influenced by the specific strategic circumstances of its region. From the mid-1960s Southeast Asia emerged from the turbulence of the immediate post-war decades, characterised by intense rivalry within the region by major powers from outside it – especially China on the one hand, and the USA and UK on the other. By 1972, this period was over with China accepting US primacy as the basis for regional order. This transformed the entire Southeast Asian strategic system, reducing both major power rivalry from outside the region and the risks of conflict within it. In this setting, Indonesia could and did remain confident that the regional order would be congenial, and that serious external threats to its security or independence would be very unlikely indeed. That meant Indonesia had no need to expend resources or manage relationships to shape the wider Asian order in its interests. It could afford to take a low profile. Moreover, this wider regional context allowed ASEAN to flourish and provided a way for Indonesia to manage its relationships with its Southeast Asian neighbours without asserting itself too overtly.

Today, these features of Indonesia's regional environment are changing in several ways. First, the wider regional order is shifting from one based on uncontested US primacy to one whose roles and structures are quite strongly contested between the USA and China and in which the roles and positions of other powers, especially great powers, are increasingly uncertain. While escalating rivalry and conflict are by no means inevitable, these risks are likely to grow over coming decades. That means Indonesia will be less able to rely on US primacy to protect its security and its interests in the evolution of Asia's order, and hence will face stronger imperatives to play a larger role itself. Second, ASEAN may become less effective as an instrument for managing Indonesia's relations with its neighbours and promoting Indonesia's interests more broadly if, as seems likely,

escalating rivalry between the region's great powers erodes ASEAN's cohesion. This too may impel Indonesia to take a bigger role in regional affairs.

Thirdly, there are domestic political factors at work. Indonesians themselves want their country to play a larger role as its relative power grows. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of fervent nationalist sentiment (see the article by Edward Aspinall in this volume), which reached a crescendo in the 2014 presidential election campaign. Both Jokowi and his rival, Prabowo Subianto, made national sovereignty and international leadership central themes in their platforms. They argued repeatedly that Indonesia was being exploited by foreign interests and that previous governments had performed too little to protect the nation from predatory Western interests. Jokowi, for example, stated that 'Our wealth is controlled by foreign hands, foreign countries, so the wealth flows out of the country. Indonesia's wealth must be controlled by our own country. Every country has barriers... [we can] make it more difficult for foreigners' (Nangoy & Thatcher 2014). Prabowo was even more emphatic, declaring that 'There are signs that our Indonesia is nurtured by foreign forces like a cow, a milch cow (*sapi perah*). Until now we have been willing to be squeezed, to have our natural wealth taken. Our people have become cheap workers. We have to buy the products of foreigners. We need to become a strong nation...and have leaders who don't quake when they confront the foreigners' henchmen' (Kompas 2014). Since Jokowi's inauguration in October 2014, this nationalist tone has become a hallmark of his government's statements. For example, illegal foreign fishing vessels are now sunk with great fanfare, a growing list of foreign products from offal, to second-hand clothing to smartphones are subject to import restriction, and unachievable policies for national food self-sufficiency are propounded despite evidence they will drive up domestic prices and lower the quality of what is available.

Such nationalist sentiment has long been present in Indonesia; what has changed in recent years is the belief that the nation now

has the economic and strategic clout to assert itself. Former Trade Minister Gita Wiryawan boasted to a senior Australian diplomat several years ago that 'Indonesia used to be a price-taker; now it's a price setter', referring to how his country felt it could dictate terms on international issues and no longer had to do what foreigners wanted.¹

Political discourse is increasingly dominated by statements that Indonesia is now a major power and should act like one. Many contentious diplomatic and economic issues are accompanied by declarations that Indonesia must, above all else, not give in to foreign pressure. Jokowi, for instance, has come to see the international protests over Indonesia's execution of foreign convicted drug dealers not so much as a moral or legal issue but as a test of his country's steadfastness. The more trenchant the criticism from abroad, the more certain Jokowi is that he must defend national sovereignty and dignity by not compromising. Similarly, a professor of international law and sometime advisor to the Jokowi Government, Hikmahanto Juwana, stated that his country would become the global 'laughing stock' if it buckled to pressure and halted the executions. He argued it was time for Indonesia to show the world 'it could not be bullied' (The Jakarta Globe 2015).

3. Will Indonesia Succeed?

There are several factors that will influence whether Indonesia does indeed emerge as a major power in Asia, and what kind of major power it might be.

3.1. Military Capabilities

One key factor is how Indonesia develops as a military power. This is a complex question. Under Suharto and his successors, Indonesia's armed forces remained heavily focused on internal security functions. This reflected several factors. Most obviously, concerns about internal security were very real, and TNI both

1. Interview with an Australian diplomat in Jakarta, May 2014.

in its military and political roles was seen to be essential to dealing with them. Money was an issue too; maritime (air and naval) forces designed for conventional conflict against foreign armed forces would have cost a lot more than Indonesia wanted to spend. But also, the strategic environment from the mid-1960s onwards allowed Jakarta to be very confident that it would face no serious external threats, which allowed it to give very low priority to developing the maritime capabilities which would have been required to defend the archipelago. By the same token, Indonesia had no reason to think it might need to use its armed forces to influence regional developments beyond its own territory, so it gave no priority to developing power projection forces, which would also of course have to be a maritime.

Indonesia's capability to operate as a major power in Asia commensurate with its growing economic weight will depend in part on whether, and how far, it develops the military capability both to defend its own territory and to be able at least to contribute significant forces to regional coalitions elsewhere in Asia. This would be a very big challenge. Indonesia has begun to acquire some modern air capabilities in small numbers, but these are very modest compared with the air and naval forces that would be needed. Systems and platforms able to operate effectively against those of other significant maritime powers in Asia in future would need to be very sophisticated and maintained in large numbers. Building, maintaining and operating such forces would require a very different kind of military with a very different mission and mindset. For a start, it would require a basic shift in priorities and outlook from land to naval and air forces, which would obviously meet stiff resistance from the Army. It would also require substantial increases in TNI's technical capacities. This is not impossible. China offers a good example of how these challenges can be met and overcome. Twenty five years ago the PLA's air and naval forces were weak, its organisational culture was strongly oriented towards the Army, and its technical capacities were poor. Today, it operates large and highly

capable maritime forces that are successfully challenging America's maritime position in Asia. So, such transformations as Indonesia would have to undertake can happen.

Of course, they cost much money. Building the military weight of a major power would require large and sustained increases in defence spending. Indonesia today spends about 0.8 per cent of GDP on defence. The 2010 Strategic Defence Plan sets out ambitious plans for a minimum essential force by 2024, which required 1.5 per cent of GDP to spent on force expansion and upgrading. This was particularly aimed at boosting naval and air force capacity to allow more effective border defence against perceived growing external threats. The fact that barely half of the required GDP is currently allocated to the military indicates that Indonesia will fall well short of achieving its minimum essential force target in 2024. Further, compounding Indonesia's defence problems is the flawed and often deeply corrupt procurement program. Many of the acquisitions have low compatibility with existing hardware and frequently lack the accompanying weapons systems to ensure high potency. TNI also has limited ability to maintain its more sophisticated weaponry to a high level. In his 2013 study of TNI capability, Benjamin Schreer (2013) concluded that Indonesia's military was unlikely to substantially raise its effectiveness in the next decade. A final problem for Indonesia's defence planning is that under Jokowi TNI is seeking to return to key aspects of its pre-Reformasi role. The appointment of ex-general Ryamizard Ryacudu, one of the most conservative army officers of the late Suharto period, has reduced the emphasis on developing naval and air capacity and bolstered the Army's claim on resources vis-à-vis the other services. Moreover, Ryamizard, with TNI commander General Moeldoko, is leading TNI out of the barracks and back into social and political roles, such as village development and welfare, domestic security functions and ideological training of citizens. This is not a return to the full-blown political role that TNI played during the Suharto years, but it does signal a renewed focus on domestic affairs that runs counter to the Indonesian

Government's official policy of greater external defence capability. Jokowi's recent nomination of the current hardline army chief Gatot Nurmantyo to be the next TNI commander breaks the Reformasi convention of rotating armed forces' leadership between the three services and further privileges the army at the expense of the navy and air force.

Even with a steadily growing economy, Indonesia would need to boost spending to two or three times its current proportion of GDP defence expenditure to have any chance of acquiring and sustaining the kinds of forces that would be needed to make it a major power in Asia. This is not impossible. That would be comparable with the share of GDP spent by countries like India, South Korea, Turkey, France and the UK, and with Australia's defence spending in the 1980s, and it is much less than the proportion that Singapore spends. For Indonesia to achieve its ambition of rapidly improved military capability, it would need to spend dramatically larger sums, clean up and discipline its procurement programs and have a clear sense of why it was important for Indonesia to acquire and maintain a very different kind of armed forces.

Perhaps most importantly, it would require Indonesia to develop a coherent strategic policy. It would need to understand what its armed forces were being built to do, which would mean deciding what Indonesia's wider political and strategic objectives should be, how military operations can best support those objectives, and what kinds of armed forces can deliver them most cost-effectively. These are not easy questions for any country to grapple with, but there is little sign yet that they are being seriously debated or considered in Indonesia. Jokowi has spoken, somewhat grandly, of Indonesia creating a 'global maritime axis' (*poros maritim global*) within the Indian-Pacific region, which would deliver growing prosperity to his own citizens as well as to neighbouring nations. But scholars who have sought details of the concept and how it is to be realised have found little evidence that either Jokowi or relevant ministries have developed a systematic and well thought-out plan of action (Damuri &

Day 2015).² Increasingly it is the case that Jokowi's vaulting rhetoric on development issues is not matched by careful policy preparation. It is unlikely that Jokowi will succeed in making Indonesia a real maritime power in the Asian Century. This all suggests that while Indonesia will quite probably develop the underlying economic weight to become a major power in Asia over coming decades, and it could in theory build the armed forces that would be needed to realise that goal, at best this would take several decades, and it is far from sure that it will happen at all.

3.2. Diplomatic Capacity

Of course, armed force is only one of the instruments of major power. Indonesia has had some notable diplomatic successes, but overall its foreign policy machinery is poorly equipped to play a much larger role. The Foreign Affairs Department has a track record of misplaced priorities and sluggish, inept responses to diplomatic disputes. Some of its biggest areas of regional staffing are Europe and North America, while many of its Asia Pacific sections are under-resourced. It reportedly has just one person on its China desk and only a few fluent Mandarin speakers, despite trade with China to the value of \$66 billion in 2013 and growing regional tensions over China's claims to the South China Sea. Foreign Affairs has no Hindi speakers and pays scant attention to South Asia issues, much to the irritation of the Indian Government (Ward 2015). President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono complained frequently to staff that Foreign Affairs often ignored his instructions or dragged its feet on policy implementation. Ex-Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa had similar frustrations with his Ministry and was often angered by the dilatory attitude of his officials. In short, Foreign Affairs shows little sign of being able to rise to the challenges

2. For a more sympathetic view, see Vibhanshu Shekar and Joseph Chinyong Liow, 'Indonesia as a Maritime Power: Jokowi's Vision, Strategies and Ocstacles Ahead', *Brookings*, November 2014.

posed by Indonesia's growing diplomatic prominence and, indeed, remains one of the poorer performing major nation foreign services in the region.

Moreover, the Jokowi Government has dramatically reoriented foreign policy away from the diplomatically expansive role pursued by Yudhoyono. Whereas his predecessor actively pursued involvement in international initiatives and fora, and enjoyed playing the globe-trotting statesman, Jokowi made clear from the outset that his focus would be domestic, rather than external affairs. He has made no secret of the fact that he has little background or interest in international matters, and primarily views diplomacy as a means to achieve his ambitious economic goals for the nation. He has told diplomats that their main priority is now 'economic diplomacy', particularly to improve the wealth of ordinary Indonesians. Ambassadors have been warned that their performance will be judged on how much they are able to increase Indonesian exports and attract investment. Jokowi is not helped by having a Foreign Minister, Retno Marsudi, who is short on Asia experience (her postings have been to Western nations) and lacks a well-conceived view of strategic affairs, unlike her predecessors Marty Natalegawa and Hassan Wirajuda. Judging by her public statements, Retno seems content to mimic her president's lines. She recently told the media 'All Indonesian diplomats have to think like merchants', and added that they should be 'spending their time at trade shows' and helping investors instead of focusing on diplomatic meetings (Sihite & Christy 2015). There are few other ministers in cabinet with much interest in or understanding of international issues and Jokowi relies increasingly on his foreign affairs advisor, Dr Rizal Sukma, and chief of staff, ex-general and former ambassador to Singapore, Luhut Panjaitan, for guidance on external matters. Sukma and Panjaitan, despite their expertise on international and strategic matters, struggle to counteract the inwardly focused and sometimes overtly anti-foreign proclivities of the Jokowi cabinet and ruling coalition. Thus, under Jokowi, Indonesia's foreign policy objectives are at risk of becoming

the narrowest of any period in the country's history.

3.3. *Domestic Politics*

Finally, there are big questions about how Indonesia's domestic political culture is generating conflicting tendencies in the nation's foreign policy settings. On the one hand, there is a growing, even over-weening, confidence that Indonesia, by virtue of its large population, its strategic location astride some of the world's busiest trade routes, and its rapid economic growth is now a significant power and should act accordingly. Increasingly, Indonesia's ministers and senior politicians respond to diplomatic tensions with neighbours by referring to their nation's growing status in the world. For instance, at various times over the past decade, political leaders have derided Singapore and Malaysia as much less significant countries than their own, and similar comments can be found in more recent times when prominent figures have declared they can now ignore Australian protests on issues such as the execution of the two Bali because Indonesia increasingly overshadows Australia. Such remarks give the impression that Indonesians look forward to playing a much larger role in global affairs.

On the other hand, Indonesia also betrays symptoms of vulnerability. The nationalism that wants to see Indonesia striding the world stage, also wants to keep the world at bay and to protect the country against the perceived predations of global capital and larger Western powers. Support for protectionist policies is strong, and the Jokowi Government has obliged by imposing a wide range of import restrictions and clamps upon expatriate activities. At the same time as welcoming foreign investment, the government is placing growing obstacles in front of foreigners who seek to bring in capital, live and work in Indonesia. Anti-globalisation rhetoric is also widespread and it often accompanied by accounts of how the moral decadence of 'The West' is penetrating traditional culture and contaminating the lives of younger Indonesians.

Even small measures, such as new regulations forcing dozens of 'international schools' to change their names to 'intercultural schools' are revealing of this suspicion of things 'foreign'.

In terms of diplomatic policy, this ambivalence over engaging with the world often leads to contradictions. Indonesia is proud of its involvement in high-level multilateral fora such as G20 and APEC, and often irritates its ASEAN neighbours by boasting that it is the only regional power in the G20. Yet, it has been wary of using its position in these fora to advance new initiatives or to advocate strongly for Southeast Asian or middle-power agendas. At the 2015 Asia-Africa summit, Jokowi and other Indonesian leaders repeatedly criticised Western nations for their hegemonic or unjust behaviour, and yet no such remarks have been made to G20 and APEC meetings (Kompas 2015b). Jokowi's highly pragmatic foreign policy orientation would seem to enjoy more public support than Yudhoyono's diplomatic activism, but it is unlikely to lead to outcomes favourable to Indonesia's longer-term national interests or its aspiration for major power status.

4. What Might Indonesia's Aims be as a Major Power?

Finally, it is perhaps worth touching very briefly on the question of how Indonesia might behave if or as it acquires the position of a major power in Asia. Perhaps, the best way to do that is to think about how Indonesia might operate in an Asian strategic order rather different from that which we have known – one in which the USA plays a much smaller role, and the primary actors in Asia's strategic order are the region's great powers. It seems almost impossible that in coming decades Indonesia would be big enough to compete directly with India and China as a rival with them for overall primacy in Asia, given its relatively low defence spending and lack of military projection capability. Indeed, Indonesian leaders, despite their sometimes hyperbolic rhetoric about becoming a major power, appear to have

no well thought out vision of the role their country might play in the region or globally.

More likely is that Indonesia will pursue a similar path to Japan, in seeking to minimise the impact of major power rivalry between the China and India on its own interests, and maximise its freedom to manoeuvre whichever of them came out on top, if either did. It might therefore aim to function as a classic balancing power, siding with the weaker power against the stronger power. It might also aim to exclude either power from maritime Southeast Asia, and perhaps establish a sphere of influence of its own in this neighbourhood. This kind of posture from Jakarta would obviously pose both risks and opportunities for Indonesia's smaller neighbours, including Australia.

5. Conclusion

As so often with Indonesia, we are left with something of a paradox. On the one hand, Indonesia over the next few decades seems likely to acquire many of the attributes of a major power in the Asian strategic system. It is already, and will remain, Asia's third-largest country by population and fourth in the world. Its territory is large and covers an immense sweep of the Earth's surface in a very significant location. Above all, perhaps, its economy will probably grow fast enough to make Indonesia one of the richest countries in the world, providing the material foundation essential for a great power. It would be unusual, and indeed almost unprecedented, for a country with these great power elements for Indonesia to retain the relatively modest and almost self-effacing international posture that has satisfied Jakarta since the mid-1960s.

Moreover, Indonesia's international environment seems set to change in ways that will push it towards a more active foreign policy. If, as seems likely, America's relative power and influence declines as China's and other countries' grow, the stable Asian order of recent decades based on uncontested US primacy will be replaced by a more contested order characterised by more traditional great-power rivalries. Indonesia will be less able to assume that its security from strategic threats will be

underwritten by US maritime predominance, and it might well feel impelled to try to expand its own regional influence and shape the wider regional order to suit its interests. At the same time, ASEAN would become less effective as an instrument through which Jakarta could work in order to achieve its diplomatic and strategic objectives. These external factors, too, therefore seem to push Indonesia towards a very different and much bigger international role in coming decades.

And finally, on this side of the ledger, there is the clear trend among Indonesians themselves to see their country as a 'negara besar', reflected in the growing nationalism of recent years and Jokowi's determination to assert Indonesia's pre-eminence.

But equally, on the other side of the ledger, there remain very significant hurdles to be overcome before Indonesia could effectively function as a great power in the Asian strategic system. Its armed forces remain overwhelmingly focused on internal security and seem, under Jokowi, less focused on building up external capabilities. The development of the high-technology air and naval capabilities necessary to give it the military heft of a great power in Asia over coming decades would require a major effort of which there is as yet little significant sign. The Jokowi Government and much of the country's political elite are more concerned at present with funding massive infrastructural development than they are with building up defence forces. Indonesia's diplomatic capacities likewise remain substantially underdeveloped, not just in the quality of their operations but in the conceptual foundations required for the effective and sustained exercise of international influence. Nor is this true only of the Foreign Ministry itself. Even as they cultivate nationalism and assert their country's international status, Indonesia's political leaders and the wider political class show little sign of developing any coherent ideas about what Indonesia might want to do, or need to do, with its growing power. Without a coherent set of aims, and realistic strategies to achieve them, it is hard to see how

Indonesia's potential as a major power can be realised.

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