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International society: the social dimensions of Indonesia's foreign policy

I Gede Wahyu Wicaksana

Abstract Realism has been the dominant conceptual approach to studying Indonesian foreign policy. This article, however, considers realist analyses to be insufficient since their emphasis on the struggle for power and security in the system of states has led to the neglect of the importance of perspectives which focus on order. To fill the gap it then intends to apply the English School perspective which focuses on the concept of international society to trace the nature and function of Indonesian foreign policy. Two cases are examined, including the Asian African Conference and Association of South East Asian Nations, to demonstrate the relevance of international society for policy ideas and action. The central argument is that the Indonesian elite worldview indicates that the creation and maintenance of order in international societies are ones which are prominent objectives legitimizing the conduct of Indonesia's external relations.

Keywords: Indonesian foreign policy; realism; English School; international society; order; Asian African Conference; ASEAN.

Introduction

The subfield of foreign policy analysis of international relations (IR) has long been dominated by the realist perspective. The study of Indonesian foreign policy is no exception. Since the country became independent in 1945, its governmental external action has been associated with realpolitik behaviour and preferences. Scholars interested in the subject of Indonesian international relations have focused their research and analysis on the interplay between domestic politics and the state's external affairs. With the dominance of the realist school, the work of realists, especially Leifer (1983), became popular references for Indonesianists to comprehend the rationale behind the making of foreign policy in the country. The popularity of realism, compared to other theoretical perspectives in IR such as

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liberalism, Marxism and constructivism, is not without reason. Realist proponents are convinced that realism is highly applicable by virtue of its explanatory power which is deemed very close to the reality of the state's international relations. Thus, in a practical sense, realist theories are considered to be able to provide a reliable and feasible source of policy options.

However, the realist accounts are incomplete. This is because they have paid too much attention to the competition for power and security in a world of states. Realism provides almost no space for elaborating on the more social phenomena likely in the discourse of world order. Discussing moral principles and social progress is regarded as irrelevant for international politics where states have to ensure their own survival and can only give little trust to each other, while the creation of order is the domain of domestic politics, enforced by formal authority of the state (Linklater 2005: 86). Contending with realism, states are basically social actors similar to human beings or individuals who live in social environments they construct and are constructed by (Buzan 2004: 8); in effect, there must be social elements – mainly the desire to make order in the society – which contribute to producing a worldview that directs the conduct of foreign policy. Jackson (2000: 158–60) opines that states have to maintain and further their international responsibilities by means of diplomacy. This article favours such a line of reasoning, and gravitates towards the English School perspective which focuses on the concept of international society to trace the nature and function of Indonesian foreign policy. The central argument is that the Indonesian elite worldview indicates that the formation and maintenance of order in international societies are concerns which are prominent objectives legitimizing the conduct of the country's external relations.

The article begins with an emphasis on the need to look at Indonesian foreign policy in a different analytical framework in which the English School's concept of international society is applicable. It then examines the features of international society with reference to an Indonesian elite worldview that has directed the implementation of diplomacy since independence, with special focus on the Asian African Conference and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The conclusion suggests the importance of working within the theoretical perspective beyond realism to advance the study of Indonesian foreign policy.

The English School and the study of Indonesian foreign policy

Alternative approaches to IR have not been part of common intellectual practice in Indonesia's IR community, and in fact, very few academic efforts have been made to acquaint Indonesianists with the English School perspective of analysing foreign policy-making and implementation. This

is despite the fact that top diplomatic officials have begun to recommend looking for another way of explaining the state's international relations. However, it is important to stress here that these ideas should be understood as an entry point to complement what is absent in the realist thinking rather than confronting it entirely.

Former Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja (1977: 72–3), who was a professor of international law, suggested that professional research on Indonesian foreign policy had to be enriched by using more references to diverse theoretical perspectives. Kusumaatmadja (1983: 104–5) further argued that scientific knowledge about the exercise of diplomacy cannot be separable from the commonly held norms and cultural values of society. The idea and practice of Indonesian foreign policy are broader than the realists' recognition in the form of the primacy of the national interest, the anarchical world and the quest for power. The state's behaviour, to Kusumaatmadja's mind (1983: 93), had to reflect the thoughts and feelings of its people, and not be excessively attached to Western political culture and its tradition of realism.

Kusumaatmadja's idea was later reiterated, with more weight given to the moral aspect, by Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, who was a career diplomat. According to Alatas (1999a), '[Indonesia's] foreign policy should always be a principled foreign policy'. He went on to clarify that this meant it was 'not an expeditious one, not a quality of expedience tending with the win or just for the sake of short-term gain, sacrificing basic principles'. This description was founded upon his conviction that there were several factors which determined Indonesian policy towards the outside world. Its policy was not just about material gain, or national interest, but rather it embraced other important components such as international moral obligation, national identity and national role (Alatas 2000). In this way, Alatas wished to convey the necessity for a framework of thinking that appreciated the meaning of a principled foreign policy rather than one of mere pragmatism and the struggle for narrow interests.

Alwi Shihab (2000: 4), Foreign Minister under Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency, agreed with Alatas, and has even coined the term ecumenical diplomacy, which is purported to be a progressivist mindset, comprising a social impulse to go beyond the individualistic course of action based on national interest. Shihab (2000: 6) defines ecumenical diplomacy as 'embracing all states to broaden friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation'. He adopts this feature from the Greek word *oikoumene*, which connotes a movement representing efforts to foster global cooperation and unity among Christian churches. As a personal way of understanding Indonesian external relations through ecumenical diplomacy, Shihab wants to apply an equidistant political attitude towards all states without considering whether their values are incompatible with the philosophy of Indonesia's foreign policy. Therefore, critics say that equidistance may refer to neutrality, and it violates the fundamental rational geopolitical

considerations guiding foreign policy. However, Shihab's apologists contend that ecumenical diplomacy provides an expressive humanitarian vision that a democratic government should have for its international activities (Suryodiningrat 2001). Despite this debate, ecumenical diplomacy is still valued as a framework for understanding international relations. In fact, the former Yudhoyono government declared its keenness to make 'a million friends and zero enemies' when participating in international affairs.

This suggests that there exists at least an unexploited source of narratives, in which the reference to the more social dimensions of the country's external activities needs to be recognized. The claim can be further strengthened by looking at the limitations of the core realist concepts and strategies when empirically employed to study Indonesian international relations.

First, according to realism, the international terrain is presumed to be anarchic. In this environment, states continually contest each other for their security, while there is no universally accepted power above them. Therefore, in pursuit of their own interests, states have to maximize their national power. The three most preponderant components of national power that distinguish capabilities of each state are population, natural resources and geographical size. This assumption has been widely shared among Indonesian scholars and policy-makers especially during the Cold War, when Indonesia was perceived as the most powerful state in Southeast Asia by virtue of its having the largest population, its geographical size as well as, perhaps, its natural resources. However, while these tangible elements give Indonesia a natural advantage, its political and economic instability (from the late 1990s) has proven more influential in determining Jakarta's leadership status in the region. Instead, a more socially nuanced approach to understanding the dynamic posture of Indonesia's regional and also global power is raised, for example, by Evan Laksmana (2011: 157–8), who argues that the manifestation of Indonesia's international profile is shaped primarily by its capacity to boost the applicability of the country's normative values and moral principles at global diplomatic fora. Sustaining the process of democratization coupled with persistent efforts to deal with various domestic challenges and the currently intensive exercise of regional defence diplomacy become complementary factors in the endeavour to promote Indonesian foreign policy in multilateral organizations. This style of argument stresses the importance of the practice of the state's international responsibilities – one which is not present in the realist parlance.

Second, states attempting to operate with an anarchical international arena cannot know what the true intention of other states is because this lies in the heads of the state leaders. Consequently, in the face of the anarchical environment, the best option to survive is by building a self-help mechanism. Since states are rational actors when they are faced with a

security dilemma, they prioritize relative gains over absolute ones, meaning that an increase in one state's security prompts a decrease in another's. This picture of the trait of international politics and foreign policy response suggests that egoism is quite reasonable, and it is highly likely to prevent close cooperation among states. Furthermore, the unresolved mentality of becoming a free-rider and defector can adversely affect any consensus or agreements in place among states, and thus prevent cooperation from occurring (Grieco 1988: 485–507). Since self-help is prescribed to be the right strategy, states have to rely on their own modalities. A state like Indonesia with great potential power – including energy resources, human resources and strategic location – is expected to have the most favourable source of strength to materialize its self-help instruments. It should not need to expand international cooperation on account of its possession of a wealth of resources. Nonetheless, the history of Indonesia's international relations indicates that the country has, in many respects, been dependent on other states for obtaining its basic security interests, although it never gets involved in formal military alliances with great powers. Multilateralism turns out to be Jakarta's most favoured course of action and trajectory in world affairs. Such action would not happen unless the Indonesian leaders had some trust in their foreign counterparts.

The puzzle here is why Indonesia tends to carry out multilateral and institutional options rather than the realist recommendation of self-help. This question uncovers the third limitation of realism to explain Indonesia's foreign policy behaviour. Inherent in the condition of egoism and anarchy, states will react to the rise of a great power by engaging with others in hard military balancing against it to restore the equilibrium of distribution of power in the international system. This is the reason why another great power will always rise (Layne 1993: 5–51). Ironically, realists note that in order for balancing to be workable, intense cooperation among states is required, or at the very least, the existence of consciousness for cooperation – although consensus is impossible. In the case of Indonesian relations with regional and global powers, the country has never taken balancing strategies to counter the rising powers – either China or India. Indeed, Jakarta chooses to incorporate them into its regional cooperation arrangements as can be noticed in the ASEAN Regional Forum.

The above examples of anomaly over the conceptions and prescriptions of realism, if combined together, expose the existence of an unexploited body of knowledge about how Indonesia's external activity is undertaken. To explore it, a new type of inquiry is needed – one which approaches the subject through a different lens. In this light, the utilization of the English School perspective is deemed relevant, and an empirically grounded analysis will be used to contextualize the concept of international society.

As one of the established theoretical perspectives on world politics, the English School centres on the concept of international society (Bellamy 2005: 9). Bull (2002: 13) describes international society as the 'society of

states'. International society is formed by a group of sovereign states which are aware of the presence of common values and interests among them, and therefore, they are willing to construct a certain set of rules to govern the interactions of the members of the community. Bull and Watson (1984: 1) argue that in international society, all members share the same objective, and cooperate to keep the function of institutions they have built together. Bull (2002: 16) further expands on this, explaining the vital position of order in international society. Order is assumed to be established by international activities which are directed to ensure the maintenance of the common interest of all members of the community. The goal of establishing order is to guarantee the implementation of the spirit of commonality of interest. The concept of international society insists on the feasibility of the Grotian view of international law over interstate relations. The Grotians point out that states do not act due to the factor of prudence or expediency, but there are other motives which have a lot to do with the factor of the requirement to comply with collective moral norms (Cutler 1991: 41). This is perhaps a more pressing factor influencing a government's decision-making on foreign affairs, rather than a preoccupation with individual achievement.

Such an assumption regarding international society does not necessarily imply an idealistic or utopian view of the nature of the world political system. Rather, English School theorists are keen to portray the nature of interstate relations as anarchy. In this regard, the task of international society is to safeguard order existing among states for the purpose of achieving their common goal (Dunne 1995). Proponents of the English School agree with realists who maintain that international politics is anarchic. Yet, English School theorists like Wight (1991: 188) reject the realists' prescription of the necessity for the *leviathan* to be present in the society of states to uphold order, as happens in the domestic political system. Developing this argument further still, IR scholars such as Buzan (2004) are convinced that a certain level of order has existed within international society as a product of social and historical processes. States that have interacted with each other many times can gradually shape their defined order. The institutional design of defined order evolves as a result of socialization and accommodation. Rules which sustain order are not based on universal moral norms. They are more likely to be constructed and advocated by virtue of a direct connection between particular values and traditions existing among the members of the international society (Bull 2002: 71).

According to the majority view in IR theory, the English School's notion of international society does not completely reproduce the realists' notion of the anarchical world. At the same time, the English School perspective is different from liberalism with its conviction of the likelihood of a perpetual peaceful world for all humankind (Devlen, James and Ozdamar 2005: 175). Jackson (1992: 271) concludes that the nature of the society of states is the arena where hard elements of power, capability, wealth and interests

cohabit with the normative aspect of human actions such as consensus, justice, association, solidarity and recognition. Agreeing with Jackson, Little (2000: 396) argues that the English School perspective in IR is more nuanced than that of realism and liberalism. The English School perspective offers the *via media* or bridge between the binary opposing theories resulting from the realism versus liberalism debate. International society, in this light, is able to go beyond both the mainstream theoretical streams of IR, specifically when determining the objective of state foreign policy (Buzan 2001: 476).

Employing the English School concept of international society to study Indonesian foreign policy will signify a change in the basic approach to research on the elite worldview. Moving from seeing the international sphere as being dominated by anarchy, conflict and threats, this altered perspective will allow for the inclusion of order, cooperation and common interests. A worldview can be defined as the preeminent view of a nation (usually represented by its elite) on the nature of the international system and the country's position in it (Tan 2007: 147). When worldview is used to analyse foreign policy action, it leads to the perception of what the right function of the conduct of foreign policy is to respond to the perceived external conditions. The most influential work that contributes to the understanding of worldview in the study of Jakarta's external policy is Franklin B. Weinstein's *Indonesian Foreign Policy and the Dilemma of Dependence: From Sukarno to Suharto* (1976). Weinstein elaborates the concept of the hostile world. He claims that the Indonesian elite's worldview from the administration of President Sukarno to that of President Suharto was significantly affected by the dynamics of the international environment that was perceived as exploitative and frequently dangerous. Despite the perception that there were different policy preferences between the two governments, they both continued to envisage the outside world as threatening to the country's survival. In line with Weinstein's conception, Tan (2007: 147) argues that Indonesian leaders see global politics as being controlled by powerful states that create institutions and pursue their own interests.

How such a worldview informs the evolution of Indonesian foreign policy will become apparent when the English School perspective is used as an analytical framework. However, this article does not aim to revisit the explanations of why the worldview during the time of former presidents Sukarno and Suharto could come about. Rather, it accepts and applies this worldview as a basis from which to discover how Indonesian governments act towards international societies. The discourse of international society will be illustrated in the following section of the discussion where evidence is gathered from the ideas and conduct of Indonesian diplomacy within the Asian African Conference and organization of ASEAN. This will illustrate how Indonesia has participated in international society institutions since independence. These cases are chosen for two reasons. First, the

establishment of the Asian African Conference and ASEAN clearly demonstrates the way in which the nature and function of Indonesia's foreign policy have changed over the period of Sukarno to Suharto. Indonesianists recognize the change as fundamental. Second, it is in the two institutions that Jakarta has shown a strong tendency to consistently form and maintain order in face of the dynamics of its external environments.

The feature of international society in the independent and active foreign policy

Indonesia's foreign policy was declared to be *bebas aktif* (independent and active). The independent and active foreign policy was born when the nascent government of Indonesia was faced with international and domestic challenges. On the international front, Indonesia had to cope with the Great Powers' lack of sympathy towards its independence. None of the winners of World War II gave immediate recognition to Indonesia's proclaimed independence. Moreover, the world was being polarized under two ideologically rival blocs of the capitalist United States and the socialist Soviet Union. The so-called Cold War system was unfriendly towards the nationalist movement in Indonesia (Sukma 2003: 26). At the same time, the newly declared postcolonial republic needed resources for social and economic development. Consequently, Jakarta decided to assume impartiality in the Cold War world, with the purpose of reaping economic, financial and technological benefits from both competing powers, while retaining its national security without committing itself to either bloc.

On the position of being impartial Indonesia then projected itself to be a member of an international society institution with the vision of order. The Indonesian government developed foreign relations in favour of diplomacy and international law as the two key institutions of international society. When attending the first Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in March 1947, Indonesia's Prime Minister Soetan Sjahrir (Asian Relations Conference Papers 1947: 239–42) appealed to Asian leaders saying that the objective of his country's foreign policy was to build harmony amidst the tense international system of bloc rivalry. This would be achieved through international cooperation and rules under international law. At the conference, Sjahrir was undertaking a mission to obtain international recognition for Indonesian independence. As the Great Powers had not shown enough goodwill towards the national revolution in Indonesia, the nationalists in Jakarta chose to turn to Asian partners for political support. Sjahrir believed that the anarchical situation confronting Indonesia would not be manageable with the state's weak military capability. Hence, his government developed its international credibility by enlisting the help of the group of nations that made order their policy priority. According to

Sjahrir (1949: 24–5), this policy was the most rational for the country to survive.

Sjahrir's statement was reinforced by Vice President Mohammad Hatta when he addressed the meeting of *Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat* (the Indonesian Central National Committee) held in Yogyakarta on 2 September 1948. Hatta (1953b: 4) stated that Indonesian leaders were aware of the turbulent situation challenging the country, and subsequently, they were desirous to carry out their own foreign policy created by themselves which was free from any external dictates. Furthermore, to Hatta's mind, the most appropriate direction for Indonesian diplomatic conduct was to follow in the line of policy of cooperation, harmony and justice (Hatta 1953a: 9). For this reason, Hatta (1953a: 16) affirmed that his government endorsed international politics constructed on the basis of law enforcement and equal international qualification for common interests. It is clear that the reference to interest in the pronouncements of Sjahrir and Hatta focuses on institutionalization of international society. Therefore, institutionalized interactions among states are the crucial component of Hatta's worldview. Writing in the journal of *Foreign Affairs* (1953c: 444), Hatta delineated the meaning of Indonesian activism for international society as '…the effort to work energetically for the preservation of peace and the relaxation of tension generated by the two blocs through endeavours supported if possible by the majority of the United Nations'.

The *via media* bearing between realism and idealism in Jakarta's foreign policy had in practice been demonstrated by engagement within a multilateral forum. In the early phase of the Indonesian national revolution, the energy of external diplomacy was devoted to meeting twin interests. The first was to defend national identity and the second was to prevent foreign powers – especially the colonial masters – from reimposing their empire in the country (Sabir 1987: 22–4). For this reason, the nationalist government utilized international institutions to attain political support, with the view to maintain sovereignty through the creation of order (Notowidigdo 1958: 43–8). Diplomacy was set up to pave the way for Indonesia to play important roles in the Asian community of states. However, this should not be interpreted as meaning that Jakarta was pursuing a utopian foreign policy. The Indonesian elite's policy, for instance, as expressed by Prime Minister Mohammad Natsir (cited in Harjono 1995: 14–5), believed that international order was the product of rational consensus made by all members of the organization. Agreement on rules was fundamental to upholding interactions that moved towards the perceived common interest. Because Natsir was also an Islamic religious leader, he pointed out the importance of commonality in faith of Muslims as a suitable ground upon which intergovernmental organization was to be established. What can be inferred from the statements of Indonesian nationalist leaders is that there is a connected discourse of international society in their worldview. This kind of outlook persisted throughout the years of Sukarno's presidency.

Interestingly, the vision of international society in the beginning of Jakarta's participation in world affairs represents a coherence of ideas among the ideologically contending political elite's orientations. The history of Indonesian nation-building shows that the contentiousness regarding political ideology of the secular nationalists Sukarno and Hatta, the socialist Sjahrir and the Islamist Natsir caused inner friction within the national leadership. To avert a further setback which would disturb the struggle for independence, those contesting elites agreed to compromise, and as a consequence, the independent and active foreign policy became the middle way solution to bridge the split (Sukma 2003: 23–4). This does not necessarily suggest that Indonesian foreign policy is not genuine in its value since it is devised by the elite's interest to defend their polity. In fact, Hatta, Natsir, Sjahrir and even Sukarno were willing to differ in terms of personal political preferences. When dealing with the outside world, they designated a similar policy direction. The basic idea was to perform foreign policy with a perspective and set of values which contained within it respect for the rule of law, national integrity and freedom. Hence, the language of sovereignty and order was strongly articulated in the Indonesian diplomatic position.

The following cases – the Asian African Conference and ASEAN – show how the independent and active foreign policy was translated into action aimed at establishing and maintaining order through diplomacy in international institutions. They describe a set of dynamics taking place over the successive leaderships of the country.

The Asian African Conference

The decision to engage in an international society scheme of multilateral institutions is taken only when Jakarta feels supported by other members. For Jakarta, agreement is the most important part of international order. Driven by this view, multilateral diplomacy can be accelerated. Together with India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, Indonesia formed the Colombo Power in 1954. This grouping of Asian postcolonial forces set out the goal of advancing cooperation to improve the status of colonized nations. They approved Jakarta's initiative to convene in Bogor by the end of 1954 at which the plan for the first Asian African Conference was discussed. At Bogor, some differences had to be resolved, especially with regard to technical and political issues, the most debated of which was the question of who the invitees to the conference would be. Despite the debates, the Indonesian delegates led by Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo were able to manage the situation. Indonesia hosted the meeting of 29 Asian and African countries in Bandung from 25 to 28 April 1955 (Sastroamidjojo 1955: 2–4). This event, according to Jansen (1966), was the defining moment and apex of Indonesian diplomacy. Jakarta took the most credit

for the largest political gathering after World War II. More importantly, with the Bandung Declaration issued at the conference, Indonesia could announce to the world that Asian African nations demanded equality, justice, independence and peace in the international arena (Agung 1973: 222–4). Jakarta's aspiration for nurturing order in international society was resoundingly declared in the commitment made at Bandung. Indonesian leaders, particularly Prime Minister Sastroamidjojo (1972: 5–6), said that Indonesia's major accomplishment in the Bandung meeting was its significant contribution to the attempt to foster international order amidst the tension between the Western and Eastern blocs. Through the Asian African forum, Jakarta brought anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism to the forefront. It inspired and endorsed nationalist movements in the Third World. Subsequently, and simultaneously with the success of the struggles for independence in other parts of Asia and Africa, membership in the forum increased (Sastroamidjojo 1972: 22–5).

It is undeniable that the expansion of order in the forum of Asian African states had a domestic function as well. Jakarta was the most interested in the rise of the Asian African countries for the sake of the elite's particular political objectives. Sastroamidjojo's National Party was going to run in the general elections scheduled for July 1955. For this reason, the heightening of Indonesian international prestige was highly important for the party to win the people's sympathy to the nationalists (Bandoro 1958). As is the case in many other countries, Indonesian foreign policy often reflects developments in the domestic realm. However, there is a view that underscores the presence of international society, and argues that it is the social dimensions beyond the narrow obsession with individualistic interest in the conduct of Indonesian diplomacy within the Asian African Conference.

Indonesia's original idea regarding the establishment of the Asian African Conference was to consolidate the political power of the colonized and newly decolonized nations in the two regions, and together the two groups helped each other to obtain legitimate status as sovereign states (Anwar 2005). The nationalist leaders wanted to create space between the conflicting superpower blocs for an inclusive and associative community of free Asian and African countries. Senior diplomat and political intellectual, Roeslan Abdulgani (1980: 71), noted that the consistent approach carried out by his government to endorse order drew upon the belief that anarchy was not unmanageable. It could be transformed into cooperation through diplomacy. Abdulgani (1980: 94) further argued that the moral aspect emphasized in such an independent and active foreign policy is a force more powerful than the use of military operations to bring about order. Such a basis for international diplomacy remained salient even when Sukarno enacted a confrontational stance in external affairs. Yet, Sukarno and his exponents claimed that the focus on international society had not been reduced. The Asian African stage was never used to create a new Third World alliance opposing the two superpowers in the Cold

War. Jakarta envisioned the necessity to widen solidarity among Asian and African powers to respond to the ongoing conflict and tension. Foreign Minister Subandrio (1965: 34), for instance, had, on many occasions, spoken of the true mission of the state's diplomatic struggle, saying it was not aimed at destroying the prevailing international system, but to expand justice, harmony and freedom for the colonized world.

Some might observe that the Asian African discourse of Jakarta's external relations is too normative, when expecting the realization of harmony and peace in an anarchical world. This position, however, is not relevant in the case of Indonesian foreign policy. First, Sukarno was aware that the policy towards international order could not be imposed on all political settings. Therefore, in constructing the society of Asian and African states, Indonesia had selectively chosen to whom it offered membership. Jakarta aimed to control contradictions between members of the forum which could jeopardize common interests. The members of the Asian African Conference comprised every state with the policy of respecting the principle of the Bandung Declaration (Soekarno 1963: 19–22). Consequently, participants of the community were not allowed to refer to bilateral and regional disputes at the forum, as a means to eschew unresolved quarrels. Jakarta rejected any attempts to steer the Asian African Conference into becoming a medium for the settlement of internal disagreements. Rather, the grouping was built to express the broader interests of the postcolonial nations. It sent a signal that Jakarta's notion of international society was rooted in prudence and compliance with common rules. Second, Indonesia beseeched the Asian African countries not to raise domestic problems at the forum in order to forestall any external parties becoming involved for their own interests. According to Foreign Minister Sastroamidjojo (1972: 3), the Asian African movement was established as a result of awareness of common interests, and therefore, this common interest had to be preserved through common policy.

ASEAN

In the wake of Suharto's New Order regime, IR scholars have envisaged that there was continuity and change in the behaviour of Indonesian foreign policy. The principle of being independent and active was a persistent guide to the state's international activities, while the content of the policy shifted from political legitimacy to economic development. The replacement of the national leadership influenced the direction of foreign policy (Amal 1974). Nevertheless, what continued and what changed can be interpreted in an alternative way. The discourse of international society remained, but the scope narrowed from the global scale of the Asian African Conference to the regional context of a society of states in Southeast Asia. Suharto's policy towards the establishment of order in the region is

evident in ASEAN. The association is an international society institution for Southeast Asian countries (Narine 2006: 199). To the foreign policy elite in Jakarta, ASEAN was designed to become a society of states with a high level of cohesion. The use of coercive means was unacceptable to maintain order. The founding members define ASEAN's objective as '… the collective will of the nations of Southeast Asia to bind themselves together with friendship and cooperation and, through joint efforts and sacrifices, … secure for their peoples … the posterity and the blessings of peace, freedom, and prosperity…' (ASEAN 1967).

Since the outset, Jakarta has always restricted the prospect of interstate intervention within ASEAN. This is not only about the attempt to protect the region from external powers' intrusion. Indonesia calls for other ASEAN colleagues to take the view that order in the region must be made by Southeast Asians, without any outside interference. The two values of being independent and active that are characteristic of Indonesian foreign policy are translated into the ASEAN code of conduct. When Malaysia planned the Zone of Freedom, Peace and Neutrality (ZOFPAN) in 1970, it hoped that the Great Powers, particularly China, would take part in neutralizing Southeast Asia. This arrangement was objected to by Jakarta – not because of a lack of consultation with fellow ASEAN states, but because the insertion of foreign powers into the regional institution would generate more threats to ASEAN stability. To preserve order in Southeast Asia, Jakarta led ASEAN to prevent the Great Powers from playing such a role as that of fostering establishment of military alliances (Narine 2006: 201). Instead, Indonesia urged ASEAN countries to bring into being their own conception about the region of Southeast Asia – free from external penetration. The ZOFPAN agenda, however, was constituted in the organization following the ASEAN summit in Kuala Lumpur. In fact, ZOFPAN does not serve as a set of rules that bind ASEAN states tightly to a certain mode of interaction. It seems to be a loose commitment to meet the common interest.

Indonesia was able to lay a solid groundwork for ASEAN's normative structure, namely to function as a body that reinforces order. In the aftermath of the American exit from Vietnam, policy-makers in Jakarta and other ASEAN capital cities viewed the situation in Vietnam with alarm. It was felt that Vietnam would be the impending threat to ASEAN's regional society (Narine 2006: 201). Jakarta was eager to strengthen internal collaboration to anticipate an unpredictable situation that might be caused by the rise of Vietnam. An initiative was raised at the ASEAN summit in Bali in 1976 as a brace to the code of conduct for internal and external relations. The ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) was launched at the meeting. It consists of principles such as respect of member states' independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; the right to self-determination; non-interference in the domestic affairs of other members; peaceful conflict resolution and the elimination of the use of force within the Southeast

Asian region. TAC also affirms that ASEAN decisions must be made through consensus (ASEAN 1976). Both ASEAN members and non-members may adopt the TAC as their common rules to uphold good relationships in Southeast Asia. ASEAN's TAC has a special meaning for Jakarta, for it endorses Indonesian values of international relations.

In December 1978, Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia and seized power from the Khmer Rouge. The country was soon embroiled in an internal conflict. The event was viewed by Jakarta as creating opportunity for the Great Powers, especially China and the Soviet Union, to enlarge their roles in Indochina. In response, Jakarta concentrated its diplomatic endeavours on persuading Hanoi to adopt a reconciliatory policy towards the Cambodian conflict. Foreign Minister Kusumaatmadja (1985) revealed that it was very important for ASEAN to uphold order by referring to the TAC principle of peaceful dispute settlement. Singapore and Thailand, however, refused to accommodate Vietnam on account of the latter's immense enmity towards the rest of the region. Jakarta was faced with a dilemma between appealing to Vietnam or internal resistance among members of ASEAN. Despite the fact that Hanoi did not react satisfactorily to ASEAN's diplomatic approach, Jakarta carried on endeavouring to promote dialogue (MacIntyre 1987: 515–30). The realist view of this issue is that Jakarta was encouraged by Washington to arrange for talks with Vietnam (Sutopo 1991: 84). However, the Indonesian Foreign Ministry insisted that Jakarta's participation in the peace effort was underpinned by the intention to impose order in Indochina, and it was the duty mandated to the conduct of the independent and active foreign policy (Alatas 1993: 34).

Following the collapse of the Cold War system, some observers argued that ASEAN would lose its saliency and would soon be redundant since it had been shaped to contain the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia. However, such scepticism does not apply to Indonesian foreign policy. ASEAN is continually relevant for the development of international society in the region. The policy of upholding order remains the priority for Jakarta's ties with ASEAN states. In addition to continuing the diplomatic effort to make peace in Cambodia, Jakarta was active in searching for a peace settlement to end the conflict in the Southern Philippines. Jakarta's proposal was initially discussed with the Philippines government in the mid-1980s. However, President Marcos did not respond to it favourably. The proposal obtained a favourable response only later, by the government of President Aquino. With the spirit of maintaining regional order from the threat of instability instigated by prolonged internal conflict, Jakarta engaged in six mediation rounds to resolve the conflict in the Southern Philippines. A peace agreement was eventually signed by the parties in dispute, i.e. the central government and the secessionist Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), in 1996 (Shidarta 2002).

According to the senior diplomat and chair of the Indonesian peace team, Wiryono (cited in Sudrajat 2003: 37), the peace process for Moro

was crucial for Jakarta and specifically its objective to keep ASEAN stable and united. This policy clearly demonstrates that order in Southeast Asia is the goal of diplomacy even after the ideologically driven war ended after the Great Powers reduced their interest in the region.

In response to new challenges to its ongoing legitimacy, membership rules were changed to allow Indochina states to join ASEAN. In spite of misgivings on the part of some in the international community regarding the future of ASEAN, in particular with the admittance of Myanmar, Jakarta pressed ahead to defend the ASEAN 10. Foreign Minister Alatas (1999b) said at an ASEAN ministerial meeting that the 10 members had been bound to TAC, and therefore, they were conscious of the meaning of common interest and the institution to reinforce order in the region. With the addition of the Indochina states, it would be easier for ASEAN governments to cooperate and overcome differences between them in line with the regional code of conduct.

However, Indonesian commitment alone is not strong enough to ensure that order is maintained well in ASEAN. The issue of human rights violations directed at Myanmar's military junta has in fact prompted incoherence among ASEAN countries. Jakarta was actually late to respond properly to Myanmar's human rights issue. Others in ASEAN have debated the need for a firmer attitude towards Myanmar. Indonesia was trapped in the dilemma between non-interference and human rights protection. The procrastination was resolved by Jakarta pursuing a policy to approve flexible engagement with the military junta in Myanmar so that the latter was willing to revise its repressive acts against Myanmar's democratic movement, while at the same time securing ASEAN cohesiveness (Cipto 2007).

Regardless of critiques of the efficacy of ASEAN's flexible engagement, Jakarta has succeeded in countering external pressure on Myanmar and ASEAN over the human rights issue. First, Jakarta's policy is to comply with common rules on ASEAN as an institution of sovereign states. Hence, every disagreement that arises in the community should be resolved with respect to each other's sovereignty. Second, the regional society of ASEAN has been equipped with an internal conflict management mechanism, for example, as noted in the ASEAN Political and Security Community Declaration (ASEAN 2004). Therefore, any involvement by a foreign party in ASEAN affairs will undermine this regional commitment to creating order.

Conclusion: the importance of the use of English School perspective to study Indonesian foreign policy

This survey on Indonesian policy with the Asian African Conference and ASEAN describes how the discourse of international society is present in

the outlook and conduct of Indonesia's external relations. Some important arguments have been reviewed, and the use of the *via media* perspective of the English School of IR illuminates three important points on the study of Indonesian foreign policy.

First, the English School theoretical approach can help open up new understandings of overlooked ideas and processes of diplomacy in Indonesia. The phenomena explored here of the making of international society within the Asian African Conference and ASEAN can be followed up with a further area of inquiry which in turn will enrich the topic of research on the conduct of Indonesian diplomacy.

Second, the application of the dominant theoretical perspective of realism has resulted in a single-minded focus on the primacy of national interest as the key driver of Indonesia's foreign policy. Meanwhile, the social dimensions of the country's policy discourses have been downplayed. Scientific parameters referred to by most Indonesianists indicate overgeneralization of the state's international behaviour. In contrast, the foreign policy orientation towards social ideas and practices is better accommodated by utilizing an alternative analytical framework such as that of the English School's concept of international society. The case of Indonesian membership in the international society of Asian African states and ASEAN exemplifies the role of the Indonesian worldview in setting up multilateral diplomacy, with an emphasis beyond national interest with an objective to create and maintain order through a common institution.

Third, in relation to the long-standing suggestion, expressed especially by some leading diplomatic figures, that there is a need to find a more creative framework for analysing Indonesian foreign policy, the argument developed in this article could provide some knowledge to fill the gap between the intellectual and practical realm.

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