

Islam and Global Geopolitics: The Relationship between Religion, Power, and Indonesian International Politics

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the relationship between Islam and power dynamics in Indonesian international politics, highlighting how Islamic values interact with national interests and global geopolitical structures. This study begins with a critique of the view that positions religion, particularly Islam, solely as a source of conflict in international relations. Instead, this study views Islam as a normative and strategic element that plays a role in shaping the orientation and practice of Indonesian foreign policy. This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive-analytical methods. Data were obtained through a literature review of academic books, reputable journal articles, and an analysis of foreign policy documents, official speeches, and diplomatic statements by the Indonesian government. Data analysis was conducted using a content analysis approach to identify patterns of relations between Islamic identity, national interests, and Indonesia's geopolitical strategy. The results show that Islam functions as a source of moral legitimacy and an instrument of soft power in Indonesian foreign policy. This is reflected in the promotion of a moderate Islamic identity (wasathiyah), humanitarian diplomacy, conflict mediation in Muslim countries, and Indonesia's active role in multilateral forums such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). However, Islam's role is contextual and not deterministic. Indonesia continues to prioritize national interests, state sovereignty, and geopolitical rationality, in line with the principles of an independent and active foreign policy. This study concludes that Indonesian foreign policy represents a pragmatic integration of Islamic values, national interests, and global power dynamics. Islam is not positioned as an expansive ideology, but rather as a non-material diplomatic asset that strengthens Indonesia's bargaining position at the regional and international levels.

Keywords

Islam, Indonesian foreign policy, soft power, geopolitics, international relations

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1. INTRODUCTION

Global geopolitical developments in the 21st century demonstrate that international relations are determined not only by economic and military factors, but also by identity, ideology, and religion (Yani & Montratama, 2015). Religion, particularly Islam, increasingly occupies a prominent position in global political dynamics, both as a source of values, collective identity, and as an instrument of power. This phenomenon is evident in various international conflicts, interstate diplomacy, and the formation of



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global alliances involving countries with strong religious backgrounds (Maghfiroh, 2023).

Islam, as the religion practiced by more than a quarter of the world's population, has a significant influence in shaping the global geopolitical landscape. In the context of international politics (Budiman, 2014), Islam is often perceived in various ways, ranging from a source of peaceful values to a factor in conflict. These differing perceptions influence how Muslim countries interact with global powers and how Islamic identity is used in formulating foreign policy (Rois & Masrury, 2023). Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, holds a strategic position in global geopolitics (Nashir, 2023). Although not a religious state, Indonesia embraces moderate Islamic values as part of its national identity, influencing the direction of its foreign policy. Indonesia's principle of independence and active participation allows it to act as a bridge between the Islamic world and the wider international community (Mulyono, 2017).

The relationship between Islam and power in Indonesian international politics is inextricably linked to domestic and global dynamics. Domestically, Islam plays a role as a social and political force influencing public opinion and legitimizing foreign policy (Haikal, 2024). Meanwhile, globally, Indonesia's Islamic identity is utilized as soft power to build a positive image as a democratic, tolerant nation committed to world peace (Alkawy, 2019). In international political practice, Indonesia is actively involved in various global forums and international organizations, such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the United Nations (UN), and the Non-Aligned Movement (Mardenis, 2012). This involvement demonstrates how Islamic values and national interests interact in shaping Indonesian foreign policy, particularly on humanitarian issues, conflicts in Muslim countries, and peace diplomacy (Sadewa & Hakiki, 2024).

The study of the relationship between religion and geopolitics has long been a focus of international relations studies. This debate emerged with the increasing role of non-material identities and values in post-Cold War global political dynamics. Religion is no longer viewed solely as a private matter but also as a factor that can influence state behavior and the configuration of international power. Huntington (2020), through his "clash of civilizations" thesis, positions Islam as a key factor in global geopolitical conflict, emphasizing civilizational differences as a primary source of international tension. However, this approach has drawn criticism for oversimplifying the role of religion and ignoring the more complex social, political, and national interests of states. In response to this view, Esposito (2002) and Haynes (2013) emphasized that Islam is not always a source of conflict but can also function as a normative and political force. Islam is seen as capable of influencing foreign policy, diplomatic processes, and global power relations through the values of justice, peace, and solidarity. This literature positions religion as a crucial variable in understanding contemporary geopolitics.

Other research highlights Islam as an instrument of soft power in international politics. Nye (2004) explains that values, identity, and moral legitimacy—including religious values—can be utilized by states to build global influence without coercion. In the context of the Islamic world, Mandaville (2007) and Hurd (2024) demonstrate that Islam plays a role in shaping transnational political identities and influencing the position of Muslim states in the international system, particularly on issues of peace, conflict, and global solidarity. Although various studies have examined the role of Islam in international politics, most of these studies remain normative or focused on issues of conflict and identity, and have not comprehensively linked Islam to power dynamics and global geopolitical strategies. Furthermore, studies that focus on countries with large Muslim populations outside the Middle East, such as Indonesia, are still relatively limited. Therefore, there is a research gap in understanding how Islam interacts with national interests, power structures, and global geopolitical configurations in Indonesian

international politics. This study seeks to fill this gap through a qualitative approach with literature and policy analysis, in order to provide a more integrative understanding of the relationship between Islam, power, and global geopolitics.

Thus, this research is expected to make theoretical and practical contributions to the study of international relations and Islamic studies. Theoretically, this research enriches understanding of the role of religion in global geopolitics. Practically, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for policymakers in formulating an Indonesian foreign policy strategy that is based on values, oriented toward national interests, and responsive to global challenges.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method to understand the relationship between Islam, power, and global geopolitics in the context of Indonesian international politics. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on the analysis of meanings, concepts, and socio-political dynamics that cannot be measured quantitatively but rather require an in-depth understanding of phenomena, discourses, and policy contexts (Rukin, 2019). The research data are sourced from secondary data obtained through literature studies, including academic books, reputable scientific journal articles, international agency reports, and official Indonesian foreign policy documents. Furthermore, this study utilizes state speeches, official government statements, and relevant diplomatic documents to capture the representation of Islamic values in Indonesian international political practices. The data analysis technique is carried out through content analysis with the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The analysis is aimed at identifying patterns of relationships between Islamic values, national interests, and Indonesia's geopolitical strategy at the global level. With this method, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the role of Islam as a normative and strategic element in Indonesian international politics.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Islam and the Dynamics of Power in Indonesian International Politics

The relationship between Islam and power dynamics in Indonesian foreign policy reflects the state's efforts to balance domestic identity with global strategic interests. As a predominantly Muslim nation, Islamic values play a significant role in shaping the moral orientation of foreign policy, particularly regarding issues of humanity, peace, and international justice. These values are often used as an ethical foundation in responding to global conflicts, particularly those involving Muslim countries, thereby strengthening the legitimacy of foreign policy in the eyes of the domestic public. However, the role of Islam in Indonesian foreign policy is not deterministic, but rather contextual and strategic. The state continues to position national interests as a primary consideration in decision-making, particularly in the face of global geopolitical pressures and international power dynamics. In this context, Islam serves as a source of moral legitimacy that complements, rather than replaces, political calculations and the state's strategic interests. The following are the key points of this dynamic:

- **Identity as Soft Power**

Indonesia leverages its identity as the world's most populous Muslim nation as a source of soft power in international politics. From Joseph S. Nye's perspective (2004), soft power refers to a country's ability to influence other actors through appeals to values, culture, and moral legitimacy, rather than through coercion or military force. Indonesia's moderate Islamic identity (wasathiyah), inclusiveness,

and compatibility with democracy serve as symbolic capital that strengthens Indonesia's position in global relations, particularly amidst increasing negative stereotypes of Islam following the global terrorist attacks.

From a constructivist perspective in international relations, identity and norms play a central role in shaping a state's interests and behavior (Wendt, 1999). Indonesia actively constructs its identity as a peaceful and tolerant Muslim nation through normative diplomacy. This approach positions Islam not as a confrontational political ideology, but as a source of public ethics emphasizing peace, justice, and dialogue. Thus, religion functions as an instrument for shaping meaning and legitimacy in foreign policy, rather than as a factor of conflict as assumed by the classical realist approach.

In the context of multilateral diplomacy, Indonesia's role in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) reflects the practice of religious soft power as proposed by Haynes (2016), namely the use of religion as a source of non-material influence in international relations. Indonesia frequently takes moderate positions on sensitive issues in the Islamic world, such as the Palestinian conflict, Islamophobia, and extremism, emphasizing a dialogical approach and international cooperation. This role strengthens Indonesia's role as a bridge-builder between Muslim countries and the broader global community, while simultaneously enhancing the credibility of Indonesian diplomacy.

However, the effectiveness of Islam as Indonesia's soft power depends heavily on the consistency between its normative identity and foreign policy practices. Challenges such as the politicization of religion, the dynamics of great power rivalries, and the inconsistency of domestic democracy have the potential to weaken the appeal of Indonesia's moderate Islamic identity. Therefore, strengthening Islam-based soft power requires the continued integration of religious values, democratic governance, and adaptive geopolitical strategies.

- **Islamic Solidarity vs. National Sovereignty**

Indonesia's foreign policy is consistently based on the principle of Freedom and Active, namely the freedom to determine one's position without being tied to any power and actively participating in maintaining world peace. Within this framework, Islamic solidarity is a normative dimension that influences foreign policy orientation, but it is not a determinant. Indonesia's support for issues within the Islamic world, such as the Palestinian independence struggle, is better understood as a manifestation of its constitutional commitment to humanitarian values and international justice as stated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, not merely an expression of religious sentiment.

From the perspective of moderate realism theory, the state remains viewed as a rational actor that prioritizes national interests and sovereignty in foreign policy decision-making (Morgenthau, 1985). In this context, Islamic solidarity functions as a supporting variable, not the primary objective of policy. Indonesia demonstrates a selective attitude in responding to issues within the Islamic world, while still considering regional stability, economic interests, and diplomatic relations with non-Muslim countries. This confirms that religion does not displace the state's role as the final determinant of foreign policy direction. Meanwhile, the constructivist approach views Indonesian foreign policy as the result of a negotiation between normative identity and material interest structures (Notanubun, 2020). Islamic solidarity is part of Indonesia's collective identity as a Muslim-majority nation, but this identity is framed within the framework of nationalism and pluralism. Thus, Islam is not articulated as a transnational ideology challenging state sovereignty, but rather as a source of ethical values aligned with national interests and the principles of international law.

The tension between Islamic solidarity and national sovereignty demonstrates the maturity of Indonesian diplomacy in managing identity politics at the global level. In line with the view of

Ramadhan (2018), Muslim countries that are able to integrate religious values with state rationality tend to have greater diplomatic flexibility. In this regard, Indonesia has successfully positioned itself as an actor that consistently supports issues in the Islamic world, without sacrificing the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, and national interests as the main foundations of foreign policy.

- **Humanitarian Diplomacy and Mediation**

Indonesia's role in humanitarian diplomacy and conflict mediation reflects the utilization of Islamic values as a source of moral legitimacy in international politics. Indonesia's involvement in the peace process in Afghanistan and the conflict in the Southern Philippines (Mindanao) demonstrates that a dialogical, inclusive, and non-coercive approach is a key characteristic of Indonesian diplomacy. Islamic values such as peace (sulh), deliberation (shura), and justice ('adl) are articulated in diplomatic practices that emphasize reconciliation and peaceful solutions, rather than military intervention.

From the perspective of normative power theory, a state can build international influence by disseminating norms and values deemed morally legitimate (Manners, 2002). Indonesia leverages its identity as a moderate Muslim nation to offer a model for conflict resolution based on humanitarianism and dialogue. This role strengthens Indonesia's position as an honest broker acceptable to various parties, both state and non-state actors, particularly in conflicts with complex religious and ethnic dimensions.

Furthermore, Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy aligns with the concept of middle power diplomacy, where states with limited material power maximize their influence through mediation, multilateral coalitions, and normative leadership (Cooper, Higgott, & Nossal, 1993). Indonesia's involvement in peacemaking issues in the ASEAN region reinforces its role as a regional leader oriented toward stability and human security. This strengthens Indonesia's credibility in regional and global forums, while enhancing its diplomatic bargaining power.

Thus, the use of Islamic values in humanitarian diplomacy serves not only as an ethical foundation but also as a rational geopolitical strategy. This approach demonstrates that religion can be constructively integrated into international politics to strengthen regional and global leadership without sacrificing the principles of state sovereignty and national interests. These findings confirm that values-based diplomacy can be an effective instrument for Indonesia in building influence and reputation as an international peace actor.

- **Economic and Energy Dynamics**

The dynamics of power in Indonesian international politics are inextricably linked to economic and energy relations with Middle Eastern countries, particularly the Gulf states. This region holds a strategic position as a global energy supplier and source of foreign direct investment for Indonesia. This relationship demonstrates that interactions between countries are not solely built on shared religious identity, but also through calculations of strategic economic interests and energy security.

From the perspective of the political economy theory of international relations, state power is shaped by the ability to manage economic dependency and strategic resources (Gilpin, 2016). Indonesia, as a country with significant energy needs and a large domestic market, is in a unique bargaining position in establishing cooperation with Gulf states. Islamic identity serves as social and cultural capital that facilitates diplomatic relations, but negotiations remain within the framework of national interests and economic rationality.

Beyond the energy and investment sectors, the management of Hajj quotas is also a crucial arena where religious identity intersects with negotiations of economic and political power. As the country with the largest number of Hajj pilgrims in the world, Indonesia has a significant stake in diplomacy

with Saudi Arabia. Issues regarding Hajj quotas, the organization of pilgrimages, and the protection of pilgrims reflect an asymmetrical relationship that requires high diplomatic skills, where the state must balance domestic religious aspirations with the realities of international power structures.

Thus, economic and energy dynamics demonstrate that Islam in Indonesian foreign policy does not operate merely symbolically, but rather is integrated into concrete power negotiations. Religious identity serves as an enabler of diplomacy, while economic interests remain a primary determinant in decision-making. These findings confirm that Indonesian foreign policy reflects a pragmatic and contextual blend of global values, interests, and power structures.

3.2 Islam in Indonesia's Global Geopolitical Strategy

Indonesia's geopolitical strategy pragmatically positions Islam as a source of normative legitimacy and a soft power asset, rather than as an expansive, confrontational ideology. Within the framework of an independent and active foreign policy, Islam is positioned as a value that supports the agenda of peace, dialogue, and international cooperation. This approach aligns with Nye's concept of soft power, where the appeal of values, identity, and moral credibility are crucial instruments in building global influence without the use of coercive force. Thus, Islam serves as an ethical basis that strengthens Indonesia's diplomatic narrative amidst increasingly complex geopolitical dynamics.

As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia leverages this identity to enhance its bargaining position in various international forums, both regionally and globally. Its image as a moderate, democratic, and pluralist Muslim nation enables Indonesia to act as a bridge-builder between the Islamic world and the international community. This identity not only strengthens Indonesia's legitimacy in humanitarian and peace issues but also provides strategic space for Indonesia to contribute to conflict resolution and strengthening multilateral cooperation. The following are the main pillars of Islam in Indonesia's geopolitical strategy:

- **Moderate Islam (Wasathiyah) as a Global Identity**

Indonesia consistently promotes the concept of Moderate Islam as a global identity in its foreign policy. Moderate Islam emphasizes the values of balance, tolerance, justice, and the rejection of extremism, thus creating a peaceful and inclusive image of Islam. This narrative is crucial in the global context, given that Islam is often negatively portrayed through conflict, radicalism, and violence in the Middle East. By prioritizing moderate Islam, Indonesia seeks to differentiate itself from this image and build a positive international identity as a stable and democratic Muslim nation.

Furthermore, the promotion of Moderate Islam also demonstrates that Islam and democracy are not mutually exclusive entities. Indonesia's experience as a democracy with a Muslim majority population provides empirical evidence that Islamic values can coexist with the principles of democracy, pluralism, and respect for human rights. In this context, Indonesia is positioned as a model country offering an alternative for other Muslim countries, particularly in facing the challenges of political transition, identity conflict, and ideological polarization. This narrative strengthens Indonesia's legitimacy in various international forums as a normative actor promoting values of moderation and stability.

For Western countries, the Wasathiyah Islam promoted by Indonesia serves as a strategic instrument in fostering dialogue between civilizations. Indonesia positions itself as a bridge builder capable of bridging the gap in perceptions and interests between the Islamic world and the West. Through value diplomacy, interfaith dialogue, and active participation in multilateral forums, Indonesia offers a cooperative approach in responding to issues of terrorism, intolerance, and identity-

based conflict. Thus, the narrative of moderate Islam serves not only as a cultural identity but also as a diplomatic strategy that strengthens Indonesia's role and position in the global political order.

- **Peace Diplomacy in Conflict Areas**

Islamic identity serves as an important source of moral legitimacy for Indonesia in conducting peace diplomacy in conflict areas involving Muslim countries or groups. As a predominantly Muslim nation yet not caught up in Middle Eastern geopolitical rivalries, Indonesia is viewed as relatively neutral and acceptable to various parties. This position provides a diplomatic advantage not always enjoyed by Western countries, which often face resistance due to their history of colonialism, military intervention, or perceived biased strategic interests. In this context, Islamic identity serves as normative capital that strengthens Indonesia's role as a peacemaker.

In the case of Afghanistan, Indonesia utilized a religious diplomacy approach through inter-religious dialogue as part of its efforts to promote reconciliation and stability. The involvement of Indonesian religious scholars in dialogue forums with Afghan religious leaders demonstrated that Islamic values can be used as an effective medium for political communication. This approach emphasizes the importance of brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah), peace, and the rejection of violence, thus opening up space for dialogue amidst political deadlock and armed conflict. This faith-based diplomacy demonstrates that Islam serves not only as an identity but also as a practical instrument in conflict resolution.

Meanwhile, Indonesia's support for Palestinian independence has strong normative and constitutional dimensions. The mandate of the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, which rejects all forms of colonialism, is the primary foundation of Indonesia's foreign policy stance on the Palestinian issue. However, this support also has strategic significance in maintaining solidarity with the Arab world and member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Through this consistent stance, Indonesia strengthens its image as a nation committed to international justice and defending the rights of oppressed peoples, particularly in the Islamic world.

More broadly, Indonesia's peace diplomacy in conflict regions demonstrates the integration of Islamic identity, national interests, and geopolitical strategy. Indonesia's involvement in the Afghanistan and Palestine issues reflects not only religious solidarity but also efforts to build moral leadership at the regional and global levels. By playing a role as a mediator and supporter of peace, Indonesia strengthens its bargaining position in international politics and affirms that Islam can be a constructive force in creating stability and global peace.

- **Leadership in the Islamic World (OIC)**

Indonesia's membership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is a crucial instrument in building Indonesia's leadership and influence in the Islamic world. As the world's largest Muslim country with a democratic political system, Indonesia possesses strong symbolic and political capital to play a strategic role in the OIC. Through this forum, Indonesia not only participates as a member but also seeks to mobilize the collective strength of Muslim countries in responding to global issues that directly impact Muslims. This position allows Indonesia to expand its geopolitical influence beyond Southeast Asia.

On the issue of Islamophobia in Europe, Indonesia has consistently encouraged the OIC to take a collective stance emphasizing the protection of human rights, religious tolerance, and dialogue between civilizations. This approach demonstrates that Indonesia prioritizes not confrontation, but rather a normative diplomatic strategy aligned with the principles of moderate Islam (wasathiyah). By utilizing the OIC platform, Indonesia plays a role in framing the issue of Islamophobia as a global problem that

must be resolved through international cooperation, rather than simply as a conflict between the West and the Islamic world.

Furthermore, Indonesia's leadership in the OIC is also reflected in its advocacy for the protection of Muslim minorities, such as the Rohingya ethnic group in Myanmar. Indonesia actively promotes humanitarian and diplomatic solutions through the OIC, including humanitarian assistance, dialogue with the Myanmar government, and cooperation with international institutions. This effort strengthens Indonesia's image as a peace- and humanitarian-oriented actor, while simultaneously increasing its geopolitical influence globally. Thus, the OIC serves as a strategic platform for Indonesia to integrate its Islamic identity, national interests, and leadership role in international politics.

- **Sharia and Halal Economic Diplomacy**

Sharia and halal economic diplomacy is a crucial part of Indonesia's geopolitical strategy to leverage its Islamic identity as a source of economic strength and international influence. With the world's largest Muslim population, Indonesia possesses the demographic capital and a large domestic market to develop a sharia-based economy. Efforts to establish Indonesia as a global center for the sharia economy are not only oriented towards national economic growth but also aimed at strengthening Indonesia's bargaining position in the international economic and political arena.

In the halal industry sector, Indonesia is leveraging the size of the growing global Muslim market to increase the export competitiveness of halal products, such as food and beverages, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and the Muslim fashion industry. Halal standardization and certification are important instruments in building international market confidence. Through trade diplomacy and bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Muslim countries, Indonesia seeks to expand market access and position itself as a key player in the global halal industry supply chain.

Meanwhile, in the field of sharia finance, Indonesia is using sharia-based financial instruments as a means to attract investment from Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Investment cooperation through sukuk, Islamic banking, and Islamic investment funds reflects the intersection of religious identity and strategic economic interests. This approach not only strengthens the stability of the national financial sector but also opens up space for relatively stable long-term capital flows from the Middle East.

Overall, Islamic and halal economic diplomacy demonstrates that Islam in Indonesia's geopolitical strategy is positioned not as a political ideology, but as an economic and diplomatic asset. The integration of the halal industry, Islamic finance, and foreign policy expands Indonesia's role in the global economy while strengthening its influence in the Islamic world. With this strategy, Indonesia is able to combine Islamic values with market logic and national interests within a pragmatic international political framework oriented toward peace and prosperity.

- **Counterbalancing Great Power Influence**

Indonesia utilizes Islamic identity as a strategic instrument to maintain its autonomy in the face of great power competition, particularly between the United States and China. In an increasingly polarized global geopolitical context, Indonesia seeks to avoid excessive dependence on any one great power by implementing the principle of an independent and active foreign policy. Islamic identity provides additional space for Indonesia to build alternative networks outside the traditional power axes of the West and East Asia.

By strengthening relations with Muslim countries in the Middle East and North Africa, Indonesia is expanding its options for economic, political, and diplomatic cooperation. These relationships include energy cooperation, investment, trade, and political support in multilateral forums. By leveraging

shared religious identities, Indonesia is able to build trust and a relatively more egalitarian political rapport, thereby strengthening its bargaining position in international negotiations.

This strategy functions as a non-confrontational balancing mechanism. Rather than choosing sides with any of the major powers, Indonesia uses its global Islamic network as a source of strategic leverage to maintain foreign policy flexibility. This approach aligns with the concept of hedging in international relations, where a country balances geopolitical risks by building multi-stakeholder relationships to protect its national interests. Thus, Islam in Indonesia's geopolitical strategy serves as a supporter of strategic autonomy, rather than a tool of ideological confrontation. Strengthening relations with the Muslim bloc allows Indonesia to play the role of a relatively independent middle power, capable of interacting constructively with various centers of global power without losing its political sovereignty and foreign policy direction.

4. CONCLUSION

Islam plays a strategic role in Indonesian geopolitics and international politics, not as an expansive ideology, but as a source of values, identity, and an instrument of soft power. Indonesia uses its Islamic identity—particularly the narrative of moderate Islam (wasathiyah)—to build its image as a democratic, tolerant, and peace-oriented Muslim nation. This strengthens Indonesia's moral legitimacy in various international forums and distinguishes it from the narrative of conflict and radicalism often associated with the Islamic world. Furthermore, the relationship between Islam, power, and national interests in Indonesian foreign policy is dynamic and contextual. Indonesia is able to balance Islamic solidarity with the principle of national sovereignty through an independent and active foreign policy. Indonesia's role in humanitarian diplomacy, conflict mediation in Muslim regions, leadership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the development of sharia econ and national interests. At the global level, utilizing its Islamic identity also contributes to Indonesia's efforts to maintain strategic autonomy amidst great power competition. By strengthening relations with Muslim countries in the Middle East and North Africa, Indonesia is expanding alternative political and economic networks, thus avoiding dependence on a single global power axis. Thus, Islam functions as a geopolitical asset that strengthens Indonesia's bargaining position as an active, independent, and peace-oriented middle power in the international political system.

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