

INDONESIA'S ROLE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFGHANISTAN THROUGH SOFT POWER

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Abstract : This research focuses on Indonesia's role in resolving the conflict in Afghanistan through soft power, specifically through cultural and religious equality approaches. The study highlights that the conflict in Afghanistan has had a negative impact on the country's development and stability. Indonesia's special attitude towards foreign policy activities involving Muslim countries is influenced by its large Muslim population and ties with other Muslim countries. The study utilizes qualitative methods, specifically a descriptive-analytic approach, to analyze the subject matter. The research subjects range from books, documents, regulations, meeting minutes, diaries, and historical artifacts. The findings indicate that Indonesia's soft power approach through cultural diversity and tolerance, as well as religious similarity, have contributed to its role as a mediator in the Afghan conflict. The research highlights the Indonesian government's efforts as well as the involvement of Afghan people in Indonesia and moderate Islamic organizations such as the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. Overall, this study sheds light on Indonesia's significant role in resolving the conflict in Afghanistan through soft power approaches.

Keywords: Indonesia; Afghanistan Conflict; Soft Power; religious similarity; culture

INTRODUCTION

Foreign policy is a strategy or plan of action implemented by the decision-making state in a controlled international political unit to achieve national objectives or more specifically the national interest. One of the things that are done to understand foreign policy is to separate it into two components, namely; political and foreign¹. Politics is a form of policy that serves as a guideline or attack of actions shown to achieve a predetermined goal. Foreign policy is a national system that cannot be separated from domestic politics. Indonesia's political policy is free and active politics. This is in line with that contained in the preamble to the 1945 Constitution in the fourth paragraph, which reads: "... to participate in carrying out world order based on freedom, lasting peace, and social justice". This is proof that Indonesia participates and is active in world peace.

Indonesia has a Muslim population spread throughout the country. With this identity, Indonesia has a special attitude towards foreign policy activities, especially those involving Muslim countries. This is because the population of Indonesia is mostly Muslim and has ties to other Muslim countries ². Islam in Indonesia can be said to be an Islam that upholds tolerance and teaches the existence of dialogue, this is one of the things taught by Islam as a form of an image from Muslims. Given this situation, the Muslim population of the world fully believes in the importance of the role of the clergy in advancing the values of peace. ³ In this case, Indonesia has a role to promote initiatives including holding an ulama conference as one of its efforts. Indonesia is close to Afghanistan because the two countries have similar identities, namely the majority of Muslims. Lessons learned from the conflict in Aceh can benefit from the incident as well as in conflict resolution. Afghanistan has been in conflict for 40 years which is a long period. The afghan people recognize that Aceh has experienced a long

¹ Robi Sugara, "Upaya Dan Kontribusi Indonesia Dalam Proses Perdamaian Di," *MUKADIMAH: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sejarah, dan Ilmu-ilmu Sosial* 5, no. 1 (2021): 27-38.

² Lely Andriasti, "Identitas Islam Moderat Dalam Kebijakan Luar Negeri Indonesia;" (2014).

³ EA Cohen, "Tongkat Besar: Batas Kekuatan Lunak Dan Kebutuhan Kekuatan Militer" (2017).



period of conflict and the lessons learned in dealing with the conflict that occurred in Afghanistan. Some of the factors that cause conflict in Afghanistan are political factors and religious factors ⁴. Meanwhile, as the world's largest Islamic country with a distinctive Muslim community, Indonesia has aroused Afghanistan's interest in learning how to build moderate Islam and religious tolerance. Furthermore, campaigns in the fields of education, agriculture, trade, rural industry, and counter-terrorism.

Since 1978, the Afghan conflict has been a collection of violent and extremist conflicts. The conflict has slowed Afghanistan's national development and stability. Afghanistan is the second most conflict-prone country, according to Guardian data from 2014, with a value of 3.42. ⁵. With the postponement of the inauguration of the controversial Afghan president, a new political conflict has emerged and escalated. Ashraf Ghani was elected President of Afghanistan in the September 2019 presidential election. However, Abdullah as a contender refused to accept the victory and claimed himself as the winner. As a result, the inauguration ceremony of the president-elect was delayed. In the end, Ghani's independent electoral commission (IEC) was declared and endorsed as the president-elect who won the election on February 18, 2020. ⁶. Afghanistan-Indonesia Intensive Communication Cooperation has been established in April 2017, when Afghan President Ashraf Ghani made a historic visit to Indonesia, and then Jokowi returned to Afghanistan in January 2018 to fulfill the Afghan government's request, which is to help Afghanistan get out of the escalation of the civil war. During Ghani's visit to Indonesia, he also conveyed the purpose of Indonesia's role in the Afghan peace process, as well as five Memorandums of Understanding covering education, agriculture, fiscal policy, statistics, and public administration reform. Simultaneously, Jokowi agreed to Ghani's request to commit to promoting peace in Afghanistan,

⁴ Arief Rachman, "The Analysis of Indonesia'S Important Role To Keep Peace in Afghanistan Using a System Dynamic Concept Approach," *Journal Asro* 11, no. 03 (2020): 125.

⁵ Khurun'in, ""Tantangan Binadamai: Kegagalan Demokratisasi Pasca Konflik Sipil Di Afghanistan.," *Jurnal Transformasi Global* 3 (2016).

⁶ A. H. Mustaqim, "Konflik Politik Terus Berlanjut, Pelantikan Presiden Afghanistan Ditunda." Diakses Dari SindoNews.Com:" (2020).



which was followed up on President Jokowi's visit to Afghanistan in 2018. Mohamad Zakaria Al Ansari wrote the dissertation *The Role of Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy*⁷. The purpose of this work is to investigate the extent to which Islam influenced foreign policy in the post-Suharto era, focusing on the environment that made Islam influential and the environment that reduced the influence of Islam in foreign policy. Issues discussed included Indonesia's policy towards Iran's nuclear program, Kosovo's independence, and the establishment of a Palestinian state, with a focus on the Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono administration. The relationship between Muslim groups and the government's foreign policy is the focus of this research. Islam is increasingly important in foreign policy in this era, but interests are accommodated as long as they do not conflict with Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, or national interests.

The commitment of the Government of Indonesia in participating in peace in Afghanistan has begun to be implemented, and one of the efforts made is to use *soft power*⁸ *Soft power* as an effort for peace in Afghanistan and as a bridge for peace in the eyes of the international community. The situation is of course beneficial to Indonesia's role in the world, both in the fields of politics, economy, ideology, society, and culture as well as defense and security. *Soft power* is the ability to persuade others to do what you want without using coercion or payment. Soft interest comes from the values, culture, and policies of a country. Public diplomacy is one way to increase *the soft power* of a country⁹ There are many ways to influence people, including coercion through threats, persuasion through people, or attraction and diversion to make the other party want the same. The ability to change the preferences of other countries is central to the success of *soft power*¹⁰. Soft power is associated with attractiveness and seduction at the individual level. *Soft power* in the context of an organization or company can

⁷ Arief Rachman, "Soft Power Policy In Indonesia's Overseas Politics for Peace in Afghanistan," *Komunitas* 13, no. 1 (2021).

⁸ B A B Iii et al., "Konsep Soft Power" (2016): 39–60.

⁹ Safril Hidayat, "Proxy War and Indonesia's National Security: Victoria Concordia Crescit," *Jurnal Pertahanan & Bela Negara* 7, no. 1 (2017): 1–21.

¹⁰ Drury, "The Secret Shame of Afghanistan's Bacha Bazi 'Dancing Boys' Who Are Made to Dress Like Little Girls, Then Abused by Paedophiles. Daily MailDrury, F" (2016).



be interpreted as a role model or role model for employees. *Soft power* is said to work when a person or group obeys the wishes of others without coercion or threats. Power is an appropriate manifestation to build good relations, in terms of bilateral and multilateral relations, and to participate in creating peace and preventing the existence of war¹¹ From this, this article will explain how Indonesia's role in resolving the conflict in Afghanistan through *soft power* with a cultural approach and the similarity of the majority of the population is Muslim.

RESEARCH METHODS

The qualitative approach is used as a method in this study. Descriptive-analytical research method, that is, a type of research that uses patterns to describe empirical facts accompanied by relevant arguments. The result of the description then continued with an analysis that leads to analytical conclusions. Books, magazines, documents, regulations, minutes of meetings, diaries, and even various historical objects such as inscriptions and artifacts can be used as research subjects.¹²

RESEARCH RESULT

To reach a peace deal with the Taliban, the Afghan government and other international actors have used a variety of approaches. Community-led military efforts have stalled on a global scale. Internationally, Indonesia's role as a mediator and commitment to world peace has been recognized. Peace support, for example, is associated with long-term concern for Afghanistan, as well as a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict. Indonesia's participation is regulated in the preamble to the 1945 Constitution. So far, Indonesia has also shown hopeful measures in the multilateral global order. Given that Afghanistan has similarities to religious believers, upholding Islam as a world tolerant, and increasing political will to help with global conflicts. As a result of the spirit and experience of

¹¹ Cohen, "Tongkat Besar: Batas Kekuatan Lunak Dan Kebutuhan Kekuatan Militer."

¹² D. Clemmens, "Adolescent Motherhood: A Meta-Synthesis Of Qualitative Studies," *American Journal of Maternal Child Nursing* (2017).



resolving the Indonesian conflict, Afghanistan can look back on its country. Indonesia, with its Islamic-tolerant face, as well as its role as a mediator in the Afghan conflict, is also committed to contributing to the complexity of the Afghan conflict. Afghanistan is increasingly confident in Indonesia's ability to mediate the situation. Given the religious similarities between Indonesia and Afghanistan, Indonesia uses a conflict strategy based on Soft Power, some of the roles performed include

a. *Soft power* strategy through a cultural approach.

Culture is a type of *soft power* that can be used by a country to carry out state life. *Soft power*, as embodied through culture, became a powerful weapon for the country in expanding its influence throughout the world. Culture can be used to introduce the country's wealth and cultural diversity to strengthen national identity. In 2010, BPS encoded 1211 languages (1158 regional languages) in Indonesia representing more than 350 tribes or ethnicities. Some ethnic groups These people are spread across more than 17,500 islands in Indonesia. The ethnic diversity of Indonesia shows that this country has all the conditions and characteristics that do not allow it to unite. Differences and Diversity of Indonesian Life Because Indonesia is so vast, it is natural for humans to coexist. Indonesia is united even though it is different and diverse. Indonesia is working to improve its image as a tolerant and harmonious multiethnic country. From the perspective of international stakeholders, each country has a different image. 30 A positive image contributes to the *soft power* of the country. ¹³ Because efforts to maintain population harmony must continue, the Indonesian government realizes that friction between populations of different ethnicities and religions can occur. Religion is an important pillar for the success of national development as a whole. Every Indonesian government strives for long-term religious harmony because it does not happen overnight, but over time. Following a bilateral meeting with President Jokowi at the Merdeka Palace in Jakarta on Wednesday, April 5, 2017, President Ashraf Ghani stated that

¹³ Parwiz Mosamim, Ida Widianingsih, and Oekan S. Abdoellah, "Indonesia's Peace Efforts in Afghanistan," no. November 2020 (2020): 268-275.



Indonesia has succeeded in establishing democracy, the rule of law, and constitutional governance ¹⁴.

"Indonesia is an unforgettable story of conflict resolution and future planning, and we want to join you in seeing Islamic civilization as a mercy for the environment," Ashraf Ghani said, as quoted from *Antara*. After a bilateral meeting with President Jokowi, he stated that Indonesia had succeeded in consolidating democracy, the rule of law, and a constitutional government. From this, it can be concluded that Indonesian culture such as having a harmonious attitude is one of the *soft powers* in resolving conflicts that occur in Afghanistan. Interfaith Dialogue is a *soft power* that many other countries want to cooperate with Indonesia to promote tolerance and mutual understanding between religions and civilizations. Indonesia's proactive efforts are aimed at combating negative stereotypes about Islam that are growing in the West, where Islam is held responsible for various acts of terrorism. Interfaith dialogue presents Indonesia as a multicultural country that lives in tolerance and harmony while contributing to the creation of "harmony between civilizations".

b. *Soft power* strategy through a diversity similarity approach

Afghanistan looks to Indonesia because Indonesia as a mediator of the Afghan conflict is also committed to contributing to the complexity of the Afghan conflict. The push came from Afghan leader Mullah Abdul Ghani, who visited Indonesia and met with the then vice president, Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, instilling renewed confidence in Indonesia's ability to act as a mediator. Indonesia's role in this regard is as a mediator of conflict. According to the statement above, Afghanistan strongly supports Indonesia's role in realizing a change in peace in the Afghan conflict based on the religious beliefs it stands for. The Jokowi-JK administration's involvement in the Afghan peace process is certainly unexpected. This decision was taken because Afghanistan has a Muslim-majority population. Afghan society and culture are deeply rooted in

¹⁴ Fabian Nur Farizan and Dudy Heryadi, "Indonesia's Involvement in the Afghanistan Peacebuilding Process," *Global: Jurnal Politik Internasional* 22, no. 2 (2021): 244.



Islamic traditions and culture. In Afghanistan, many Islamic teachings and laws have been adopted and practiced.

The selection of Indonesia as a mediator of the Afghan conflict gave certainty, especially from President Abdul Ghani who praised the holding of a meeting of clerics from the three countries to discuss peace in Afghanistan. Furthermore, 3 days later, there was a ceasefire in which case the Afghan president praised Indonesia's role in bringing clerics into the peace process. In his speech, the President of Afghanistan said that "Islam in Indonesia represents the Islam that has been developing in Afghanistan. Islam is moderate, tolerant, and accepts civilian civilization. The dialogue established between Indonesia and the clergy in the East Asian region is essential for deradicalization. ".¹⁵ The same statement was also said by the Afghan deputy ambassador, who co-gave a scathing explanation for peace in Afghanistan before and after participating in the settlement of his confectionery

. *"There are significant distinctions. The Taliban has suffered numerous defeats because they are not fighting alone; there is a broader aspect to the conflict, a proxy war in which other international terrorist organizations such as ISIS, Al Qaeda, TTP, and others are involved. They have no accurate issues; they simply claim that Jihad is legitimate, which is incited by Pakistani Ulama. However, after engaging with Indonesia, it appears that conflict resolution is becoming more promising, with a trilateral meeting of Ulama in Bogor Ulama Peace. Afghanistan and Indonesia boosted bilateral ties between MUI and HPC, and the meeting was a success. The Afghanistan conflict is widely regarded as a catalyst for progress and a major source of concern within the OIC. The Taliban were more defeated as a result of this move."*

The group through several visits and communication forums in Indonesia. For several years, Afghans in Indonesia have visited the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and moderate Islamic organizations in Indonesia represented by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, especially since Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's visit to Jakarta on April 5. Because of various meetings and activities in Indonesia and Afghanistan at

¹⁵ Uni Lubis, "Obrolan Dengan Presiden Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani Di WEF 2020 Davos".



that time, cooperation was established between Afghan and Indonesian community groups, one of which was to encourage the Afghan peace process. On September 13, 2013, 12 Afghan clerics were brought to Indonesia to learn more about Pancasila, known as the unifier of Indonesian society. "Because of Pancasila, they know that Indonesia can coexist. They want to learn because people who adhere to one religion alone cannot get along and fight with each other," Munim said when met on the sidelines of a delegation of Afghan clerics. visit. ¹⁶. In addition to peace diplomacy, the Government of Indonesia provided grants to Afghanistan for the construction of mosques, clinics, and Islamic studies centers that served as centers of Islamic knowledge and interaction between various groups. . Because it is fully equipped, the clinic in Ahmad Shah Baba Mina Kabul is expected to be able to serve thousands of residents from Bagram district and six other districts with outpatient and inpatient services, as well as being used as a referral.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, the results of the study stated that Indonesia's role in resolving conflicts in Afghanistan through soft power through cultural diversity is through tribal cultural diversity in Indonesia, an attitude of tolerance that shows that Indonesia has all the conditions and characteristics of having Differences and Diversity of Indonesian Life, while in soft power through the question of religious similarities, the selection of Indonesia as a mediator of the Afghan conflict has received certainty, especially from President Abdul Ghani who praised the holding of a meeting of clerics from three countries to discuss peace in Afghanistan, In addition to the Indonesian government, Afghans in Indonesia have long visited the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and moderate Islamic organizations in Indonesia, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah.

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