

EDITORIAL NOTE

CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA AND ASEAN IN THE POST COVID-19^{©Σ}

ZARINA OTHMAN * BAKRI MAT †, AND
MUHAMMAD DANIAL AZMAN ‡

ABSTRACT

In Volume 4, Issue 1, July 2024, *SINERGI* takes the readers to explore some of the most important security-related issues in Southeast Asia. In particular, the discussion focuses on Indonesia, one of the countries with the fastest-growing economy in the region. Indonesia has a dense population and ranks fourth in the world. Its new capital, Nusantara, is expected to attract more foreign investors for its development. Nevertheless, Indonesia has not been hit by domestic and international issues, especially in the post-COVID-19 era, such as the threat of energy consumption and conservation, terrorism, and unrest in Myanmar. The pandemic shows the fragility of the country and the region. Moreover, it demonstrates the importance of understanding health issues and their relation to security. Nevertheless, as presented by the authors in this volume, Indonesia maintains good relations with economic powers in Asia including the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea.

Keywords: Indonesia, July 2024, post COVID-19, *SINERGI* Editorial Note

© The Author(s) 2024. Published by UKM Press on behalf of FSSK, UKM and MAFDC (MPAT). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted reuse, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Σ **Article Info:** Submission date: 5 July 2024; Acceptance date: 20 July 2024; Publication Date: 24 July 2024.

* **First Author and Editor-in-Chief:** Zarina Othman, PhD (*Denver, USA*) is a current Editor-in-Chief of *SINERGI*, and a Professor at the Research Centre for History, Politics and International Affairs (SPHEA), Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (FSSK), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) 43600, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia. Email: zo@ukm.edu.my / zaiothman02@gmail.com

† **Second Editor and Deputy Editor:** Bakri Mat, PhD (*UKM*) is a current Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *SINERGI*, an Associate Professor and Research Fellow at the Asian Institute of International Affairs & Diplomacy (AIIAD), School of International Studies, College of Law, Government, and International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia Sintok, 06010, Bukit Kayu Hitam, Kedah, Malaysia. Email: bakri@uum.edu.my

‡ **Third Author and Corresponding Author:** Muhammad Danial Azman, PhD (*St. Andrews, UK*) is a Senior Lecturer at the International Institute of Public Policy and Management (INPUMA), Level 8, Chancellery, Universiti Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Adjunct Professor, International Relations Program, Faculty of Business, Asia Pacific University, Bukit Jalil, Malaysia. Email: daniel@um.edu.my

NOTA EDITOR**INDONESIA KONTEMPORARI DAN ASEAN DALAM ERA PASCA COVID-19**

ZARINA OTHMAN,
BAKRI MAT DAN MUHAMMAD DANIAL AZMAN

ABSTRAK

Dalam Jilid 4, Isu 1, Julai 2024, SINERGI membawa pembaca meneroka beberapa isu keselamatan yang paling penting di Asia Tenggara. Khususnya, perbincangan ini memberi tumpuan pada Indonesia, salah sebuah negara dengan ekonomi yang berkembang paling pesat di rantau ini. Indonesia mempunyai penduduk yang padat dan menduduki tempat keempat di dunia. Ibu kota baharunya, Nusantara, dijangka menarik lebih ramai pelabur asing untuk pembangunannya. Namun begitu, Indonesia tidak terlepas daripada isu-isu domestik dan antarabangsa, terutamanya dalam era pasca-COVID-19, seperti ancaman penggunaan dan pemuliharaan tenaga, keganasan, dan pergolakan di Myanmar. Pandemik ini menunjukkan kerapuhan negara dan rantau ini. Lebih-lebih lagi, ia menunjukkan betapa pentingnya memahami isu kesihatan dan hubungannya dengan keselamatan. Namun begitu, seperti yang dibincangkan oleh penulis dalam Jilid ini, Indonesia mengekalkan hubungan baik dengan kuasa ekonomi di Asia termasuklah dengan Republik Rakyat China dan Republik Korea.

Kata kunci: *Indonesia, Julai 2024, pasca COVID-19, Nota Editor SINERGI*

Introduction

The following collection of articles delves into a diverse range of contemporary issues affecting Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on Indonesia's multifaceted responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. These scholarly works collectively examine the intricate interplay between health, energy, security, and international relations within the region. By scrutinising Indonesia's strategic initiatives and regional collaborations, the articles provide valuable insights into how Southeast Asian nations are navigating the complex landscape of post-pandemic recovery and resilience. The discussions are anchored in empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks, offering a comprehensive analysis of the regional dynamics that shape the political, economic, and security environments in Southeast Asia. This introduction aims to synthesise these critical perspectives, highlighting the contributions of each article to our understanding of the region's evolving challenges and opportunities.

Ludiro Madu and Aryanta Nugraha explore Indonesia's efforts to design a robust health regime amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in their work, "Indonesia's Initiatives on Building a Regional Health Regime in Southeast Asia after COVID-19." The authors argue that while budget constraints are significant hurdles, a strong political will, and regional cooperation could establish a cohesive health regime in Southeast Asia.

Despite the global panic caused by COVID-19, some positive outcomes have emerged. In "The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Indonesia's Energy Transition," Iva Rachmawati posits that the pandemic has facilitated a shift towards renewable energy. The lockdown policies led to a decrease in fossil fuel consumption, thereby reducing pollution and raising awareness of the need for renewable energy sources. Rachmawati strongly advocates for a shift in government policy to enhance energy security and promote a sustainable environment.

From environmental security, the discussion transitions to politics and conflict. Indonesia presents a compelling case study with its multifaceted issues. Macha Astuti Dewi and Iva Rachmawati, in "The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Counter-Terrorism in Indonesia," examine the pandemic's influence on terrorism. They assert that despite COVID-19 restrictions, terrorist activities in Indonesia have persisted, with both physical and cyber terrorism increasing. Their findings, supported by data from authoritative sources such as the National Agency for Counter-Terrorism, suggest that the pandemic has necessitated a strategic shift in Indonesia's counter-terrorism efforts.

Expanding the focus beyond Indonesia, Anik Yuniarti discusses Myanmar's political turmoil in "Challenges Facing the ASEAN Political and Security Community due to the 2021 Myanmar Military Coup: The Role of ASEAN Centrality." The 2021 military coup in Myanmar has posed significant challenges to ASEAN's principles of democracy and security. This event has intensified debates among political observers and strained ASEAN's policy of non-interference, highlighting the internal conflicts that challenge the regional institution's unity and effectiveness.

Ariesani Hermawanto and Melaty Anggrani delve into regional security measures in "Strengthening Confidence, Security Building Measures (CSBMs) in Southeast Asia: ASEAN in the Post COVID-19 Era." They argue that ASEAN's non-interference policy is complemented by CSBMs, which are designed to foster mutual understanding and cooperation among member states, thereby promoting regional stability and harmony.

Hikmatul Akbar, in “Big Brother’s Help: The Dynamics of the Indonesian Narrative of China’s Role in Indonesian Development,” addresses the complex narrative surrounding China’s involvement in Indonesia. While misinformation and hoaxes abound, Akbar presents empirical evidence suggesting that positive perceptions of China’s economic assistance and cultural influence prevail. This narrative bolsters public approval of the Jokowi government and underscores the importance of valid data in shaping public opinion.

Sri Issundari, in “Decentralised International Cooperation: Insights from the Yogyakarta (Indonesia) – Gyeongsangbukdo (South Korea) Partnership,” highlights the success of bilateral cooperation despite cultural and geographical differences. The study identifies two key factors for success: the readiness of local governments to engage in international collaboration and active public participation in executing cooperative activities.

Saptopo Bambang Ilkodar’s article, “ASEAN’s Function in Handling the COVID-19 Pandemic,” outlines the factors contributing to ASEAN’s effective pandemic response. The study attributes success to the trust member states place in regional organizations, the complexity of the problems addressed, the involvement of global organizations, and the degree of autonomy granted to regional bodies compared to individual member countries.

Lastly, Amna’s book review offers a compelling analysis of the future behaviour of states from an international relations perspective, particularly focusing on how geography influences major powers’ interests. The review introduces the novel concept of conflict spillover into outer space, extending the discussion beyond traditional state boundaries.

These contributions collectively provide a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities in Southeast Asia, highlighting the intricate interplay between health, energy, security, politics, and international cooperation in the post-COVID-19 era.

Acknowledgement and Declaration

We would also like to express our gratitude to *SINERGI*’s anonymous reviewers and their constructive feedback in improving the quality of the manuscript.

References

- Akbar, Hikmatul. 2024. “Big Brother’s Help: The Dynamics of the Indonesian Narrative of China’s Role in Indonesian Development.” *SINERGI: Journal of Strategic Studies & International Affairs* 4, no. 1: 99-118.
- Hermawanto, Ariesani and Melaty Anggrani. 2024. “Strengthening Confidence, Security Building Measures (CSBMs) In Southeast Asia: ASEAN in the Post COVID-19 Era.” *SINERGI: Journal of Strategic Studies & International Affairs* 4, no. 1: 85-98.
- Ilkodar, Saptopo Bambang. 2024. “ASEAN’s Function in Handling the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *SINERGI: Journal of Strategic Studies & International Affairs* 4, no.

1: 136-144.

Issundari, Sri. 2024. "Decentralised International Cooperation: Insights from the Yogyakarta (Indonesia) - Gyeongsangbukdo (South Korea) Partnership." *SINERGI: Journal of Strategic Studies & International Affairs* 4, no. 1: 119-135.

Khalid, Amna. 2024. "BOOK REVIEW: The Power of Geography: Ten Maps that Reveal the Future of Our World by Tim Marshall, Elliott & Thompson Ltd, 2021, 304 pages, ISBN: 978-1-9821-7862-8." *SINERGI: Journal of Strategic Studies & International Affairs* 4, no. 1: 145-148.

Macha, Astuti Dewi and Iva Rachmawati. 2024. "The Right to Freedom of Religion and Jurisdictional Conflicts in Malaysia." *SINERGI: Journal of Strategic Studies & International Affairs* 4, no. 1: 45-64.

Madu, Ludiro, and Aryanta Nugraha. 2024. "Indonesian Initiatives on Building Regional Health Regime in Southeast Asia after COVID-19." *SINERGI: Journal of Strategic Studies & International Affairs* 4, no. 1: 6-20.

Rachmawati, Iva. 2024. "The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Indonesia's Energy Transition." *SINERGI: Journal of Strategic Studies & International Affairs* 4, no. 1: 21-44.

Yuniarti, Anik. 2024. "Challenges Facing the ASEAN Political and Security Community due to the 2021 Myanmar Military Coup: The Role of ASEAN Centrality." *SINERGI: Journal of Strategic Studies & International Affairs* 4, no. 1: 65-84.