Chapter 9
Indonesia’s Response to COVID-19: Between Economics, Public Health, and Social Media

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9.1 COVID-19 in Indonesia

Since the early outbreak in the country, Indonesia has been juggling to synergize the economic and public health also social media interest. Unlike other countries, which straightaway imposed many social restriction measures such as city and national lockdowns, Indonesia was trying not to impose such restrictions immediately. Instead, it tries to downplay the outbreak panic by framing that Indonesia was having the outbreak under control, therefore was still open for business and tourism.\(^1\) Beyond that, the Health Minister himself, also made several statements which were seen to initially oversimplify the outbreak, as well as missing in necessary actions to contain the outbreak from getting worse.\(^2\)

The economic wellbeing of many people is undeniably vital both for the state and the people themselves. However, the decision to not directly execute strict health protocols earlier also has evident consequences. As result, the outbreak cases have been rising significantly day by day since the first case in early March 2020. In addition to the late protocol establishment, the decentralized system in Indonesia also led the central government and regional government to take different steps in providing health security to its people.\(^3\) The problem was, the policies were contradictory. There was no unified strategy that could synchronize all layers of government in fighting this pandemic.

\(^1\) Lindsey and Mann (2020).
\(^2\) McBeth (2020).
\(^3\) Interviewed with Adriano, W., Social and Cultural Affairs Counsellor of Indonesian Consulate in Shanghai (2020).

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In response to this, both the central and regional governments were putting an attempt to flatten the curve by any means. Despite not having national-scaled lockdowns, some of the cities in Indonesia had their regional social restrictions, such as Jakarta, who had Large-Scale Social Restrictions (LSSR) (Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar or PSBB). The central government also provided many subsidies both in cash and basic supplies to minimize the economic urgency for the people not to stay home. Indonesia also tries to increase the testing capacity to catch up with the WHO standard for national testing rate. Under the metric given by WHO, Indonesia should have tested for about 260,700 people every week, while Indonesia has not been able to pass 100,000. Compared to many countries with the largest population in Asia, Indonesia is one of the lowest as mentioned in the Table 9.1.

The hard work is unfortunately not yet enough to contain the escalating positive cases. The country could not afford the economic damages caused by prolonged social restriction measures, so the ‘new normal’ concept was introduced to the people, aiming to stimulate more mobility which recovers the economy. Unfortunately, this new concept was not coming with clear and detailed health protocols, which caused many misinterpretations by Indonesian society. The most consequential assumption was to see the ‘new normal’ as the end of the crisis, allowing people to gather in mass as usual. It resulted in significantly increasing cases, making Indonesia be one of the

Table 9.1 Test rate in Asia

![Table 9.1](image)

*Source* Mangi (2020)

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1 Purwanto (2020).
2 Jakarta Post (2020).
3 Wahyuni (2020).
Table 9.2  Indonesia GDP drop

| Year | GDP Growth Rate |
|------|-----------------|
| 2002 | 0.1%            |
| 2004 | 5.0%            |
| 2006 | 5.8%            |
| 2008 | 5.7%            |
| 2010 | -1.7%           |
| 2012 | -3.6%           |
| 2014 | -6.1%           |
| 2016 | -7.3%           |
| 2018 | -8.0%           |
| 2020 | -10.6%          |

Source: Sihombing (2020)

worst in Southeast Asia.⁷ Beyond that, the image of Indonesia is also damaged as the country is now banned to be traveled by many countries around the world, which should be the “wake up call” for the government.⁸

All in all, Indonesia’s approach to focus both on economics and health did not come as expected since it has relatively poor outcomes on both sides. In public health, the health front line workers are overwhelmed by the escalating number of positive cases and the hospital beds are also limited. On the economic side, it left the government with panic, as the recession hit the country as could be seen in Table 9.2. The non-systematic health protocols and the negative economic prospect of Indonesia due to the pandemic have discouraged many investors to further intensify their economic activities in the country.

9.2 Indonesia’s Regulation on COVID-19

Most countries are caught unprepared for the speed and scale of impacts from the COVID-19. Several national regulations have been produced by the government at different levels from the president to ministerial levels during January–March 2020. Table 9.3 (ordered chronologically) summarises the rules and regulations produced to guide national and local response in Indonesia. The Indonesian government has

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⁷ Lindsey and Mann (2020).
⁸ Fachriansyah (2020).
| Date       | Issuing agency                        | Title of regulation                                                                 | References                                                                 |
|------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| February 4 | Ministry of Health                    | Declaration of COVID-19 as Disease that can cause plague and its response measures    | The Decision of MoH No: HK.01.07/MENKES/104/2020                            |
| February 28| National Disaster Management Agency   | Declaration of Special Emergency Situation of COVID-19 Epidemic Disaster in Indonesia | The Decision of Head of BNPB 9A/2020                                       |
| March 13   | President of Indonesia                | Task Force for Rapid Response to COVID-19                                            | The Presidential Decree (Keppres) 9/2020                                   |
| March 14   | Ministry of Finance                   | Distribution of Special Grant Allocation for Infrastructure in Health Sector and Grants for Health Operation for COVID-19 response | The Decision of MoF 6/KM.7/2020                                            |
| March 16   | Ministry of Health                    | The Network of COVID-19 Laboratories                                                 | The Decision of MoH HK. 01.07/MENKES/182/2020                              |
| March 16   | Ministry of Finance                   | Distribution and the use of Shared income grant, fiscal allocation, general allocation grant, special allocation grant, and regional incentives for 2020 fiscal response to COVID-19 | MoF Regulation No: 19/PMK.07/2020                                          |
| March 19   | National Police (POLRI)               | Prohibition of mass gathering or group activity both in public and local environments | Kapolri Mandate No. MAK/2/III/2020                                        |
| March 20   | President of Indonesia                | Revision of Keppres on Task Force for Rapid Response to COVID-19                    | Presidential Decree (Keppres) 9/2020                                       |
| March 20   | President of Indonesia                | Refocussing on activities, fiscal allocation, and procurement of goods and services for the acceleration of COVID-19 response | President Instruction (Inpres 4/2020)                                       |

(continued)
| Date       | Issuing agency                        | Title of regulation                                                                 | References                                           |
|------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| March 21   | Ministry of Finance                  | Tax incentives for Compulsory Tax Holders affected by COVID-19                       | MoF Regulation No: 23/PMK.03/2020                    |
| March 23   | Ministry of Communication and Information | Acceleration of socialization of COVID-19 Prevention at Provincial and District/City levels | Circulated letter SE 2/2020                          |
| March 24   | Village, Regional Disadvantage and Transmigration Minister | The Village Response for COVID-19 and Cash for work in Villages                        | Circulated Letter SE 8/2020                          |
| March 31   | President of Indonesia               | National Budgeting Policy and the Stability of Budgeting System for COVID-19 and/or Managing Threats for National Economy and/or the Stability Budgeting System | Government Regulation in place of Law No 12/2020      |
| March 31   | President of Indonesia               | Declaration of Community Health Emergency Situation for COVID-19                      | President Decree No 11/2020                          |
| March 31   | President of Indonesia               | Big Scale Social Restriction for Accelerating COVID-19 Eradication                   | Government Regulation No 21/2020                      |
| April 2    | Minister of Industry                 | Implementation of Industrial Activities in the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency Response Period | Decree of the Minister of Industry No 32/2020         |
| April 3    | Ministry of Health                   | PSBB guidelines in the context of COVID-19                                            | Minister of Health Regulation No 9 of 2020            |
| April 7    | Ministry of Health                   | Determination of large scale social restrictions in the DKI Jakarta province to accelerate the handling of COVID-19 | Minister of Health Decree No. HK.01.07/MENKES/239/YEAR 2020 |

(continued)
| Date      | Issuing agency                    | Title of regulation                                                                 | References                                                                 |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| April 7   | Minister of Industry               | Implementation of Factory Operations in the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency          | Circular of the Minister of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia (Menperin) Number 7 of 2020 |
| April 9   | Minister of Industry               | Guidelines for Submitting Applications for Licensing for Implementation of Industrial Activities in the Public Health Emergency COVID-19 | Circular of the Minister of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia (Menperin) Number 4 of 2020 |
| April 9   | Ministry of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform (PANRB) | Circular prohibiting the State Civil Service (ASN) and their families to go home during pandemic times. Regarding Restrictions on Out-of-Area Travel Activities for ASN | SE Minister PANRB Number 46 of 2020 |
| April 9   | Governor of the Special Capital Region of Jakarta Province | Implementation of the PSBB in handling the COVID-19 in the province of DKI Jakarta | Regulation of the Governor of the Special Capital Region of Jakarta (Pergub DKI) No. 33 of 2020 |
| April 10  | Governor of the Special Capital Region of Jakarta Province | The implementation of PSBB in handling COVID-19 in DKI Jakarta Province | Decree of the Governor of DKI Jakarta No. 380 of 2020 |
| April 11  | Ministry of Health                 | Regarding the establishment of Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the areas of Bogor Regency, Bogor City, Depok City, Bekasi Regency, and Bekasi City, West Java Province to accelerate the handling of COVID-19 | Decree of the Minister of Health Number HK.01.07/Menkes/248/2020 |

(continued)
| Date     | Issuing agency       | Title of regulation                                                                 | References                                      |
|----------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| April 12 | Minister of Health   | Regarding the establishment of Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the Tangerang District, Tangerang City and South Tangerang City, Banten Province to accelerate the handling of COVID-19 | Decree of the Minister of Health Number HK.01.07/Menkes/249/2020 |
| April 16 | Ministry of Finance  | Management of transfer to regions and village fund for the 2020 fiscal year in the context of handling the COVID-19 and/or facing threats that endanger the national economy | 35/PMK.07/2020                                   |
| April 23 | Ministry of Transportation | Regarding transportation, control to prevent homecoming activities. The temporary prohibition covers the use of land, rail, sea, and air transportation | Permenhub No. PM 25 2020                         |
| April 24 | Director-General of Taxes | Procedures for implementing tax administration services that are in force majeure due to the COVID-19 | SE-26/PJ/2020                                   |
| April 24 | Ministry of Finance  | Procedures of the implementation of the budget for the state budget income and expenditure in handling the COVID-19 | 43/PMK.05/2020                                  |
| April 27 | Ministry of Finance  | Tax incentives for taxpayers affected by the COVID-19                                | 44/PMK.03/2020                                  |
| April 29 | Bank of Indonesia    | Adjustment to the Implementation of several Bank Indonesia Regulations as a result of the COVID-19 | 22/7/PBI/2020                                  |
| Date     | Issuing agency               | Title of regulation                                                                                                                                                                                                 | References       |
|----------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| April 29 | Ministry of Finance          | Procedure for submitting a certificate of origin or invoice declaration along with customs complementary documents for inspection of the certificate of origin to impose tariffs on imported goods under international treaties or agreements during COVID-19 | 45/PMK.04/2020   |
| April 30 | Ministry of Finance          | Management of grants from the central government to local governments in the context of handling the COVID-19 and the impact of the COVID-19                                                                                   | 46/PMK.07/2020   |
| April 30 | Director-General of Taxes    | Instructions for implementing the Minister of Finance Regulation Number 44/PMK.03/2020 concerning tax incentives for taxpayers affected by the COVID-19                                                               | SE-29/PJ/2020    |
| May 4    | President of Indonesia       | The Third amendment to Circular Letter of the Head of Tax Court number SE-03/PP/2020 concerning guidelines on adjusting the trial and administrative services during the prevention of COVID-19 spread in the tax court area | SE-06/PP/2020    |
| Date       | Issuing agency | Title of regulation                                                                 | References |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| May 9      | President of Indonesia | Implementation of the national economic recovery program to support the country’s financial policies for handling the COVID-19 and/or facing threats that endanger the national economy and/or financial system stability and save the national economy | PP 23/2020 |
| June 5     | Ministry of Finance | Placement of funds in participating banks in the context of the national economic recovery program | 64/PMK.05/2020 |
| June 6     | Ministry of Transportation | Regarding the Travel Criteria and Requirements for People in the Adaptation Period for New Habits Towards a Productive and Safe Covid-19 Society issued by the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19 on June 6 | Circular SE/No. 7 of 2020 |
| June 8     | Ministry of Agriculture Director General of Animal Husbandry and Animal Health | Regarding the Implementation of Sacrifice Activities in Situations of Non-Natural Disaster Outbreaks COVID-19 | Circular Letter of the Ministry of Agriculture Director General of Animal Husbandry and Animal Health Number:0008/SE/PK.320/F/06/2020 |
| June 10    | President of Indonesia | Income tax facility in the context of handling COVID-19 | PP 29/2020 |
### Table 9.3 (continued)

| Date       | Issuing agency                                                                 | Title of regulation                                                                                           | References                                                                                                                                 |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| June 15    | Joint Decree Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Religion, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia | Guidelines for Implementation of Learning for the 2020/2021 Academic Year and the 2020/2021 Academic Year During the COVID-19 | Joint Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture, Minister of Religion, Minister of Health, and Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 01/KB/2020 Number 516 of 2020 Number HK.03.01/Menkes/363/2020 Number 440-882 of 2020 |
| June 19    | Ministry of Health                                                              | Health protocols for the community in public places and facilities in the context of preventing and controlling COVID-19 | Decree of the Ministry of Health Number HK.01.07/Menkes/382/2020                                                                         |
| June 22    | Ministry of Finance                                                             | Placement of state money at Commercial Banks in the context of accelerating national economic recovery          | 70/PMK.05/2020                                                                                                                           |
| June 23    | Ministry of Finance                                                             | The procedures for the government guarantee through a designated guarantee business entity to implement the national economic recovery program | 71/PMK.08/2020                                                                                                                           |
| June 26    | National Disaster Management Agency as Chief Executive of the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19 | Amendments to Circular Number 7 of 2020 concerning the Criteria and Requirements for Travel of People in the Adaptation Period for New Habits Towards a Productive and Safe Society of COVID-19 | Circular Number 9 of 2020                                                                                                               |
| Date       | Issuing agency                                      | Title of regulation                                                                 | References | References |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| June 26    | Ministry of Finance                                | Guidelines for supervising the implementation of the national economic recovery program to support the country’s financial policies for handling the COVID-19 pandemic and/or facing threats that endanger the national economy and/or financial system stability and preserving the national economy | HK.02.01/MENKES/382/2020 | HK.02.01/MENKES/382/2020 |
| June 26    | Ministry of Health                                 | Protocol for monitoring domestic travelers at airports and ports in the context of implementing life and safe community life against COVID-19 | Ministry of Health Circular Number HK.02.01/MENKES/382/2020 | Ministry of Health Circular Number HK.02.01/MENKES/382/2020 |
| June 30    | Ministry of Religion                               | Organizing Eid Al-Adha Prayers and Slaughtering of Sacrificial Animals in 1441 H/2020 AD Towards a Productive and Safe Society COVID-19 | Ministry of Religion Circular Number 18 of 2020 | Ministry of Religion Circular Number 18 of 2020 |
| July 1     | Governor of Bali                                   | Controlling People Travel at the Entrance of the Bali Region in a New Era of Life and Safe Society COVID-19 | Circular: 305/GUGASCOVID19/VI/2020 | Circular: 305/GUGASCOVID19/VI/2020 |
| July 2     | Joint Decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy Agency | Regarding Technical Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in the Cultural and Creative Economy Sector in the Determination Period for COVID-19 Public Health Emergencies | Joint Decree Number: 02/KB/2020 and Joint Decree Number: KB/12/M.04.00/M-K/2020 | Joint Decree Number: 02/KB/2020 and Joint Decree Number: KB/12/M.04.00/M-K/2020 |
| July 6     | Director-General of Health Services, Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia | Regarding the Limit on the Highest Tariff for the Antibody Rapid Test | Ministry of Health Circular Number HK.02.02/12/19/2020 | Ministry of Health Circular Number HK.02.02/12/19/2020 |
| Date     | Issuing agency                          | Title of regulation                                                                                                                                                                                                 | References                                      |
|----------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| July 6   | Ministry of Finance                     | Amendment of Minister of Finance Regulation number 34/PMK.04/2020 concerning the provision of customs and/or excise facilities as well as taxation facilities of imported goods to handle the COVID-19 pandemic | 83/PMK.04/2020                                  |
| July 8   | President of Indonesia                  | Implementation of the authority of the Indonesia Deposit Insurance Corporation to implement steps to address financial system stability problems                                                                 | PP 33/2020                                     |
| July 8   | Ministry of Finance                     | Procedure for giving interest subsidies/margin subsidies for credit/financing for micro, small business, and medium enterprises to support the implementation of the national economic recovery program | 85/PMK.05/2020                                  |
| July 10  | Ministry of Manpower                    | Adjustment of the period for social security protection benefits before employment for prospective Indonesian migrant workers during the non-natural disaster of the spread of COVID-19 | Permenaker 10/2020                             |
| July 13  | Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform | Official Travel Activities for State Civil Service Employees in the New Normal Order                                                                                                                                   | Circular of the Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform Number: 64 of 2020 |
| July 13  | Ministry of Health                      | Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of COVID-19                                                                                                                                                               | Decree of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number HK.01.07/MENKES/413/2020      |
| Date       | Issuing agency          | Title of regulation                                                                                                                                                                                                 | References        |
|------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| July 16    | Ministry of Finance     | Tax incentives for taxpayers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic                                                                                                                                                          | 86/PMK.03/2020    |
| July 20    | President of Indonesia  | Committee for handling COVID-19 and national economic recovery                                                                                                                                                        | Perpres 82/2020   |
| July 20    | Deposit Insurance Agency| Implementation of Government Regulation Number 33 of 2020 concerning the implementation of the authority of Indonesia Deposit Insurance Corporation to implement steps in handling financial system stability problems | PLPS 3/2020      |
| July 20    | Ministry of Finance     | Requirements and procedures for providing loans from the government to the Indonesia Deposit Insurance Corporation in the context of facing threats that endanger the national economy and/or financial system | 88/PMK.010/2020   |
| July 28    | Ministry of Finance     | Government guarantee procedures for corporate business actors through a designated guarantee business entity in the context of implementing the national economic recovery program | 98/PMK.08/2020    |
| July 28    | Director-General of Taxes| Instructions for implementing Minister of Finance Regulation number 86/PMK.03/2020 concerning tax incentives for taxpayers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic                                      | SE-43/PJ/2020     |
| Date      | Issuing agency                                      | Title of regulation                                                                 | References                                      |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| July 28   | Ministry of Health                                  | Guidelines for the prevention and control of COVID-19                                | HK.01.07/MENKES/413/2020                       |
| August 4  | President of Indonesia                              | Increasing discipline and enforcement of health protocol laws in the prevention and control of COVID-19 | Inpres 6/2020                                  |
| August 4  | Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia | About Guidelines for Implementing Curriculum in Education Units in Special Conditions of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia | Decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 719/P/2020 |
| August 4  | President of Indonesia                              | Amendment of Government Regulation number 23 of 2020 concerning the implementation of the national economic recovery program to support the country’s financial policies for handling the COVID-19 pandemic and/or facing threats that endanger the national economy and/or financial system stability and save the national economy | PP 43/2020                                     |
| August 5  | Ministry of Finance                                 | Distribution and use of transfers to regions and village funds for the 2020 fiscal year to support the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and national economic recovery | 101/PMK.07/2020                                |
| August 6  | Ministry of Finance                                 | Procedures for managing special accounts in the context of financing in handling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and national economic recovery | 103/PMK.05/2020                                |
| Date        | Issuing agency       | Title of regulation                                                                 | References     |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| August 6    | Ministry of Finance  | Placement of funds in the context of implementing the national economic recovery program | 104/PMK.05/2020 |
| August 6    | Ministry of Finance  | Management of national economic recovery loan to local government                    | 105/PMK.07/2020 |
| August 7    | Ministry of Finance  | Mechanism of implementation and accountability for tax borne by the government in the context of handling COVID-19 | 107/PMK.05/2020 |
| August 19   | Governor             | Discipline and Law Enforcement of Health Protocols as Efforts to Prevent and Control COVID-19 | Governor Regulation Number 79 of 2020 |
| September 11| Governor             | Amendments to Governor Regulation Number 33 of 2020 concerning Implementation of Large-Scale Social Restrictions in Handling COVID-19 in the Province of the Special Capital Region of Jakarta | Governor Regulation Number 88 of 2020 |
| September 11| Governor             | Enforcement of Large-Scale Social Restrictions in Handling COVID-19 in the Province of the Special Capital Region of Jakarta | Governor Decree Number 959 of 2020 |

*Source* Authors, compiled from different sources
implemented various policies in the legal, health, and economic fields to tackle the Covid-19 outbreak. The strategies of each area are related to one another. Since the first case was announced, the Indonesian Government has tried to prepare various steps and policies to deal with and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In the health sector, the Ministry of Health has prepared 132 referral hospitals with a capacity of 40,829 beds to focus on dealing with patients. In addition, there were 40,320 specialist doctors on standby to treat patients spread across 2,877 hospitals, both government-owned and private hospitals. The government also ordered 2 million Avigan drugs, following an earlier order for 5 thousand of the same drugs. Apart from Avigan, the government also ordered 3 million Chloroquine.

In the field of law, President Joko Widodo has issued Presidential Decree No.11 of 2020 concerning the Stipulation of Public Health Emergencies. The determination of this status is driven by the increasing number of coronavirus cases in Indonesia every day. He also declared the pandemic a national disaster on April 13, which was made with the issuance of Presidential Decree Number 12 of 2020. The Presidential Decree states that national disaster management caused by the coronavirus is carried out by the COVID-19 Handling Acceleration Task Force. The governors, regents, and mayors will become the chairperson of the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19 at the regional level.

To reduce the rate of spread of the COVID-19, the government issued Government Regulation Number 21 of 2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the Context of Accelerating Handling of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19). The social restriction policy is also supported by four strategies created by the Covid-19 Handling Acceleration Task Force to reduce the spread of the pandemic. The first strategy is the mask movement for all. The government continues to campaign for the obligation to wear masks when outside the home or in public spaces. The second strategy is to contact tracing or tracing contacts of positive cases treated using rapid tests. The third strategy is education and preparation of independent isolation on partial tracing results that show positive test results from rapid tests or negative tests with symptoms for self-isolation. The fourth strategy is hospital isolation when independent isolation is not possible, such as when there are clinical signs that require definitive services in the hospital.

After three months of Indonesia facing the pandemic, the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling Covid-19 compiled five stages to get to a productive and safe Indonesia for Covid-19. This stage is a step into a new normal situation that begins with the relaxation of large-scale social restrictions or PSBB. The new normal that the government is campaigning is inseparable from the conditions in the last three months of the pandemic which hit many business sectors and the wheels of the economy. The Ministry of Manpower noted that at least 1.7 million formal and informal workers have been affected by COVID-19.

This situation leaves the government faced with a difficult choice, to save the economy without sacrificing public health. Facing these conditions, starting in mid-May the government began to urge people to live in peace and side by side with COVID-19. Thus, it is hoped that the activities and productivity of the community will be rolling again while still prioritizing health protocols. In determining whether
an area can resume productive and safe economic activities, the Task Force used 11 indicators of epidemiology, public health surveillance, and health services as recommended by WHO.

One of the conditions for a region to be able to resume productive and safe economic activities is a decrease in the number of cases during the two weeks since its last peak. The reduction target is more than 50% for each region. But in its application, the stages of productive and safe Indonesia for COVID-19 received a test from three aspects. The three aspects are the increase in the number of new cases, the reach of mass tests, and the lack of readiness of the community to undergo a new normal phase.

9.3 Social Media and COVID-19 in Indonesia: Double-Edged Knife

As Indonesia has the 4th largest population globally, it proportionally leads to the vast amount of social media users compared to many populous countries around the world. In July 2020, Indonesia is the 3rd largest social media user after China and India with 198.96 million users and projected to rise to 256.11 million in the following 5 years. Not only that Indonesia has a relatively huge number of users, but they are also significantly active users. It was recorded that Indonesia has 338.2 million internet connections made using cellphones, 124% of the total population of the country. With that number of internet and social media penetration to Indonesia, it could be seen that social media is widely used by diverse demography and spectrum nationwide. It made Indonesian social media is a huge market for many contexts, such as digital marketing for business or political and social campaigns.

The high number of social media activities in Indonesia undeniably leads to the rapidly spreading of information and narratives through the platforms. Besides the rise of digital marketing and business marketplaces, this opportunity was taken advantage of by political campaigners to attract more supports from its constituents. It was intensively utilized since the 2014 Indonesian presidential election by both Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto sides to send political messages and broadcasts to its supporters. It reflects how powerful social media is to mobilize the mass through the information and message it delivered.

However, Indonesian social media users’ characteristics were not fully matured to cope with the rapidly growing information coverage online. The social media users in the country have a minimalist level of literacy to examine and identify which information is reliable to be consumed and shared on the internet. This could have severe consequences and backlashes if that false information leads to violent misconduct.

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9Number of Social Network Users in Selected Countries in 2020 and 2025 (2020).
10Simanjuntak (2020).
11Irawanto (2019, pp. 1–11).
in society. The impact could be even worse during this COVID-19 pandemic, where lives, public health, and the economy is severely at stake.

Nowadays, social media are often seen as fast and effective platforms for searching, sharing, and distributing health information among the general population. The usage of social media could come in handy to mobilize the mass to obey health protocols in flattening the curve. In this context, it is even urgent since recovering from a global pandemic require all layers of society to act together in controlling the virus spread. While doctors and health front line workers are working in the hospital, the others should stay home and obey health protocols. During the pandemic, internet usage is rising due to people staying at home. Therefore, social media should be an effective channel to deliver the message to society regarding health protocols and COVID-19 information updates. Also, social media serves to provide an important informal source of data to identify health information that has not been reported to medical officers or health departments and to uncover or share perspectives on any life-threatening health-related issues. That includes important new information, changing regulations, and new findings related to pandemic development.

In Indonesia, it led to the rise of COVID-19 social media influencers. Many doctors who are social media savvy gains exponentially new followers and more exposure, especially online. It was because, due to the pandemic, people are demanding continuous information with more engaging, simpler, and understandable language. The prime example of this case in Indonesia is Tirta Mandira Hudhi, or commonly known by the public as “dr. Tirta”, a businessman and a doctor with 1.7 million Instagram followers who campaigns simple but effective message to society to wash their hands properly. With millions of followers, the influencer also raised awareness by popularizing the hashtag #IndonesiaTerserah (#WhateverIndonesia), to express his as well as other Indonesians’ frustration with people disobeying health protocols and confusing government policies. The pandemic also leads to many creative posts, such as drawings, in social media to better deliver the health campaigns as well as the media to cope with stress during the long lockdowns. Other social media mediums such as memes and jokes to spread the information about the virus to engage with the other spectrum of society who is not familiar with medical analysis and data. It showed that at one edge of a knife, Indonesian social media is a positive platform for doctors and medical experts to educate society about the pandemic in an effective way.

On other hand, digital platforms such as Gojek, Tokopedia, Bukalapak, Halodoc, and Ruangguru have provided facilities and support in working from home, learning from home, and praying or worshiping at home according to their respective fields of service. Gojek and Halodoc have provided facilities for monitoring and checking health from home. While Bukalapak, Tokopedia, Gojek and Grab open opportunities to work from home, Ruangguru facilitates the learning process from home.

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12Widiyani (2020).
13Fachriansyah (2020).
14Dyahapsari (2020).
15Sulistyaningtyas et al. (2020, pp. 52–62).
As mentioned earlier, the Indonesian social media demography is diverse. Not all people are bought by the idea that this pandemic exists and dangerous since it significantly affects their economic wellbeing. Even worse, the narrative that this pandemic is a conspiracy even swayed more people in Indonesia. Such conspiracy theories are amplified by celebrities, such as Indonesian Superman Is Dead drummer Jerinx with even more die-hard followers, to validate this ‘alternative truth’ that the pandemic is nothing more than ‘global elites’ agenda to profit from the pandemic.\(^\text{16}\) Such narratives lead to a march by hundreds in Indonesia’s Bali in rejecting the government’s obligatory rapid tests, accusing the government of taking business advantage of this pandemic. This obviously leads to the lagged progress of flattening the curve as the social distancing was not endorsed.

All in all, social media during the pandemic could be a double-edged knife since it could both raise the collective awareness about the COVID-19 as well as to down-play the pandemic by accusing it of a conspiracy. In case of Indonesia, the pandemic has encouraged many doctors to engage in social media to counter the misinformation besides fighting the outbreak in the hospital. On the other side, many public figures with huge followers in the country, such as celebrities and anonymous gossips accounts, also swayed many people to believe in some alternative theory about the pandemic. As social media is a potentially effective means to deliver messages, the Indonesian government should also take part in educating the society about digital literacy, which vital amidst this rapidly growing information era. Both useful information about the COVID-19 and hoaxes as well as hateful comments are similarly easy to get viral in the country with the current level of digital literacy among the society. Therefore, this double-edged knife needs to be well managed by the government as the most powerful authority in the country, especially amidst the crisis.

### 9.4 Indonesia–China Bilateral Relationship Amidst the Pandemic

As the pandemic is now global, international engagement and cooperation both in multilateral as well as bilateral manner are vital. In the context of Indonesia and China, by default the bilateral ties between them are robust. It was reflected during the pandemic as both countries showed supportive gestures towards each other, both in a normative and practical sense. Many economic sectors are jeopardized due to lagged transportation and slowed production as well as minimized consumption. However, Indonesia and China are willing to help each other out during these tough times, especially when economically both countries are reliant on one another.

\(^{16}\)Nugroho (2020).
9.4.1 Economic Cooperation: Trade and Investment

In the context of China–Indonesia relations, Jakarta and Beijing by default have progressive bilateral ties, with the economy as one of the biggest appetites in developing it. With the pandemic, it is attention-grabbing how the economic partnership between the two countries reacts to many unprecedented challenges. Unforeseen obstacles caused by the global outbreak are the real tests for many economies around the world, ranging from multinational companies to small-medium enterprises. Indonesia and China, in an economic sense, need each other. In addition to the fact that China is the second-largest investor in Indonesia after Singapore, China is also awarded many strategic infrastructure projects in Indonesia to boost connectivity and economic growth. For Indonesia, China is both the largest source of import as well as the biggest export destination. Therefore, it is habitual for Beijing and Jakarta to maintain this lucrative relationship to keep going.

Despite the crisis, in principle, both China and Indonesia are not discouraged to keep on developing economic cooperation even amidst the pandemic. The economic bonds are urgent and beneficial for both countries. However, there are practical things that unprecedentedly hampered the economic activities due to the pandemic, especially on the connectivity and consumption part. The lagged flow of goods and services caused many trades and investment activities to plunge. The Minister Counsellor for Economic and Commercial Affairs of the Chinese Embassy in Indonesia, Wang Liping, stated that several factors lead that to happen. First was the travel limitation on the business visa and visa on arrival issuance as well as the PSBB which also decreased the productions. It was reported that 24 Chinese companies in Indonesia stopped their productions during the pandemic. However, Counsellor Wang believed that both countries will resume their economic relationship as it was before.

From China’s perspective, the country’s stable Purchasing Manager Index (PMI) throughout 2019 has been significantly dropped by 22 points as reported by China’s National Bureau of Statistics. The number came from the decline of the country’s exports by 2% as well as the dropped number of the good shipping in February, UNCTAD reported. As China is one of the top exporters and good suppliers to many countries in the world, the lagged flow of China will have some significant consequences to many economies around the world.

Like many other countries in the world, Indonesia also faced similar problems in its trade. The pandemic has led to the significant decrease in international trade activities due to the limitation of connectivity. Despite having a trade surplus during the pandemic, it was not a good kind of surplus. The reason for the surplus was not necessarily because Indonesia was able to export more and import less but rather caused by the inability to import in the usual amount. Between January and May, Indonesia’s imports dropped by 15.5% while the export declined by 5.96%, causing

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17 Maulia (2018).
18 Jaramaya (2020).
19 Global Trade Impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Epidemic (2020).
Indonesia to have that ‘surplus’. Therefore, an immediate resume of economic activities needs to be done.

However, during the pandemic, Indonesia and China’s economic relationship is seen to keep progressing despite both countries’ difficulties in a domestic economic context. Fortunately, in commodities, the trade between Indonesia and China is still growing. In detail, 11 Indonesian commodities showed a significant increase in the first quarter of 2020 as shown by the Table 9.4.

Both China and Indonesia did several measures taken to ease the commodities trade activities to stay seamless amidst the pandemic, where many travels are limited or even banned. Despite the good trend in goods, the revenue and economic progress in a service context, such as tourism, is flunked. Chinese tourist is the biggest non-ASEAN international tourist in Indonesia. Due to the pandemic, the number of visits by Chinese tourists dropped by 97% in May 2020. In response to this challenge, President Joko Widodo stated that among many economic revitalization efforts that Indonesia is making with China, one of them is concerning the international travel between the two countries in which necessary health protocols will be made to facilitate and ease essential business trips and official visits. By default, a drastic drop in people mobility has damaged many related sectors like travel and many other service-based industries.

In investment, China is positively still the second largest in Indonesia despite the difficulties faced due to the pandemic. It is also seen that the trends will stay positive in the future. Social and Cultural Affairs Counsellor of Indonesian Consulate in Shanghai, Wandi Adriano, stated that Chinese strategic investments in Indonesia are still going and will give a positive perspective impact on Indonesian society.

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Table 9.4 | Indonesian commodity rise
| No | Commodity (export code) | Increase percentage (%) |
|----|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | Coal (HS 2701)         | 74.42                   |
| 2  | Iron and steel (HS 7202) | 196.40                |
| 3  | Swift’s nest (HS 0410)  | 189.61                  |
| 4  | Frozen fish (0303)      | 53.78                   |
| 5  | Tropical food (HS 0804)  | 22.29                   |
| 6  | Packed fruits (HS 2007) | 320.27                  |
| 7  | Canned fish (0305)      | 92.59                   |
| 8  | Shoes (HS 6403)         | 24.59                   |
| 9  | Furniture (HS 9404)     | 30.87                   |
| 10 | Processed woods (HS 4409)| 222.44                |
| 11 | Electronics (HS 8541)   | 14.70                   |

Source: Fitriani (2020)

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20Ing (2020).
21Indonesian tourism buckles as Chinese tourists stop coming (2020).
22Wirajuda (2020).
He stated that despite the problematic sentiment of Chinese workers taking all the strategic positions and jobs in the project, it will gradually be decreased and finally fully replaced by Indonesian local workers in the future. At first, many positions will be still dominated by Chinese workers since they need to establish the system first, as it is a Chinese-backed project. However, more Indonesians are now starting to work on those projects, showing a progressive trend. Therefore, this shows that Indonesia and China do have a positive prospect for economic cooperation. From the Chinese perspective, Beijing’s ambassador to Jakarta Xiao Qian also showed his confidence that the economic prospect of the two countries on economic cooperation, trade, and investment will stay positive as he trusts the Joko Widodo administration to handle the pandemic.\textsuperscript{23} Chinese President Xi stated to President Widodo that both China and Indonesia need to collaborate further to seize new industries and business models created by the pandemic.

Despite the optimism from both sides, the challenges are still there. First of all, there is a possibility that the running China-backed projects and investments could be stalled for two or three years due to the pandemic.\textsuperscript{24} Also, the anti-Chinese sentiments are hampering the public support for Chinese investments, especially amidst the pandemic. The entrance of Chinese workers in many projects in Indonesia such as in Morowali during the pandemic has led to many rejections from Indonesian society, damaging the image of China’s investment in the country. However, such things are considered as ‘ripples’ with which China and Indonesia are able to deal with.\textsuperscript{25}

Besides the strong sense that China and Indonesia are mature enough to deal with the negative sentiments of their economic decisions, both countries need each other to economically bounce back after the pandemic. As many other countries around the world, China and Indonesia are struggling economically from trade and investment contractions. By this, the revitalization in both sectors is vital for the recovery. However, if both countries can overcome the obstacles, the bilateral relationship is going to be even stronger since Indonesia will urgently need investment from and economic collaborations with China to boost the economic recovery after the pandemic passes.\textsuperscript{26} The Indonesian government has established National Economic Recovery and Transformation Taskforce to recover from the economic damage of the pandemic. The taskforce mission to revitalize the economy has led the country to persistently invites Chinese skilled workers to support Indonesia’s industrial and investment projects.\textsuperscript{27} China and Indonesia’s trade and investment flows are one of the biggest in Southeast Asia, therefore the resume to the full effect is necessary to restore the lost capital during the pandemic.

\textsuperscript{23}Aini (2020).
\textsuperscript{24}Mulyanto (2020).
\textsuperscript{25}Interviewed with Adriano, W., Social and Cultural Affairs Counsellor of Indonesian Consulate in Shanghai (2020).
\textsuperscript{26}Rakhmat (2020).
\textsuperscript{27}Ng (2020).
9.4.2 Political Spectrum: Trust and Sentiments

A global pandemic could be a real test to any state political relationships. In a success story, it could fortify political bonds since many countries are suffering similar health security threats, bringing them closer together. Otherwise, the pandemic could be a new tension as one state could fault the others for the outbreak. Bilateral political ties between Indonesia and China fell into the first category.

Indonesia–China bilateral relationship had been officially initiated in 1950 during President Soekarno’s administration. However, the relationship was frozen in 1967 as President Soeharto took power replacing President Soekarno, after the 30 September incident in 1965. The “New Order” under President Soeharto, which was anti-communist, drove the established relations under President Soekarno’s “Old Order” to be significantly broke down as both countries were not bilaterally related. Due to the Cold War and domestic issues, the relationship was not progressing for decades. The betterment happened 23 years later when the bilateral ties were normalized in 1990. In 1989, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and Indonesian Foreign Minister Moerdiono announced that both countries will resume the diplomatic relationship, followed by the official normalization in August 1990. The political bilateral ties are growing ever since.

Decades after the diplomatic ties resume, China by default sees Indonesia as a strategic partner in many contexts. In the context of the BRI, Chinese President Xi stated that he is willing to deepen the cooperation with Indonesia to push many strategic partnerships to support BRI. It showed that Indonesia is a vital political partner for China. In reverse, Indonesia is actively welcoming and supporting the Initiatives in reciprocal. During the pandemic, President Xi also said that China is standing by Indonesia and ready to support in overcoming challenges caused by the pandemic.

Indonesia–China political relationship remains positive in facing the pandemic. Since the early outbreak, both state leaders have shown their concerns towards each other. When the cases in Wuhan was rising, President Joko Widodo called President Xi to express its support towards China amidst the sudden outbreak in the country. In response months later in May, Chairman Xi called President Widodo back to show his encouragement for Indonesia who was, at that time, facing the significant escalating number of positive COVID-19 cases. In the Indonesia–China context, these supportive manners reflect the mutual trust between the two, something that is not always present in a bilateral context amidst this pandemic. It was proven in moments where the many countries are working to create and access effective vaccines which in this stage, the number is still very limited. Indonesia was one of the limited countries given access to Sinovac Vaccines made by China. In addition, it was also said that there is also a prospective collaboration between Indonesia’s Kalbe

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28 Anwar (2019, pp. 1–7).
29 Sriyanto (2015).
30 Xi Calls for New Areas in China-Indonesia Cooperation (2020).
31 Mulyanto (2020).
Farma and China’s Sinovac Biotech to further research and distribute the vaccines. It depicts that Indonesia is one of the closest and trustworthy partners by China.

Further from what Indonesia and China are jointly doing, it is also important to see how Indonesia perceives China’s efforts to domestically handle the virus. Indonesia sees China’s efforts to handle the virus positively and looking up to do the same thing by learning from China.\(^{32}\) China having the outbreak under control in a relatively shorter tie with a lesser case compared to other countries, despite being the first country facing the virus. It built new hospitals and health facilities within approximately a week in an emergency situation. Strict lockdowns were also able to be done in minimizing social interactions and containing the outbreak. Compared to many other countries with a growing number of cases, those were not something ordinarily done to face coronavirus.

Subsequent to that, it needs to be noted that every country has different contexts and situations. China has a centralized government which leads to simpler communication and coordination processes to create unified policies, including the execution. Meanwhile, Indonesia has been decentralized in recent decades, which has given partial autonomy to regional governments. Such a system leads to more complicated communication between the central and regional governments, causing the different or sometimes contradictive policies taken by central and regional authorities. Despite the differences, many Indonesian doctors and health workers are learning from Chinese doctors in handling the pandemic through many online seminars.\(^{33}\) Those online meetings and webinars reflect that Indonesia is willing to learn from China.

Even though the bond and solidarity were tight among the elites, it did not mean the problem on the grassroots level is absent. By default, even before the pandemic, the anti-Chinese sentiment in Indonesia is still evident in several contexts. In recent years especially after the 2014 presidential election, many have used the anti-Chinese sentiment as the black campaign against then -presidential candidate Joko Widodo to accuse him of being a Chinese-decent with communist affiliation.\(^{34}\) Many have seen Indonesia’s increasing debt to and investment projects from China as the steps are taken to overrun the country through a debt-trap scheme.\(^{35}\) Such sentiments have caused the historical resentments to resurface, aggravating the situations during this pandemic.

Seeing that this virus ‘came’ from China, the sentiment became even worse, especially among the people in the grassroots. Many have seen that this racial and hatred tension is as dangerous or even more threatening than the virus itself, such as making statements to expulse Chinese workers from Indonesia.\(^{36}\) Many Indonesians also have linked the ‘Chinese virus’ to the Uyghurs case, stating that the pandemic

\(^{32}\) Interviewed with Adriano, W., Social and Cultural Affairs Counsellor of Indonesian Consulate in Shanghai (2020).
\(^{33}\) Ibid.
\(^{34}\) Khidhir (2018).
\(^{35}\) Tarahita and Rakhmat (2019).
\(^{36}\) Llewellyn (2020).
was God’s warning to the Chinese government for the mistreatment of the Muslims in Xinjiang.\textsuperscript{37} Still, in coronavirus context, there is also a small increase of the anti-Chinese hate speech made by Islamic State-affiliated militants which were feared to lead to an attack while the country is weak.\textsuperscript{38} Those are some of the challenges that stand within the line of Indonesia and China’s bilateral relations.

Despite the tensions in local communities, the cooperation in fighting the pandemic is still going robustly. Since the early of the outbreak, the Chinese government has been assistive to provide necessary access for Indonesia to escort Indonesian citizens from Wuhan, which was the main epicenter of the COVID-19. During the escort process, in reciprocal Indonesia donated masks for people in Wuhan, which the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially thanked Indonesia for. As the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that China will reciprocate other states’ support toward the country, Indonesia got medical supports from Shanghai transported to Jakarta.\textsuperscript{39} It was an initial stage for further cooperation in fighting the pandemic.

Certainly, the cooperation goes beyond the medical supplies exchange between China and Indonesia. Many prospective areas of cooperation also will be advanced amidst the pandemic. During her visit to Hainan Province in late August 2020, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi stated that Indonesia and China have begun the third phase of a clinical trial.\textsuperscript{40} The joint development of vaccines has been a new flashpoint in the bilateral cooperation as President Xi conveyed his view to President Widodo that this pandemic could open up new opportunities and industries.\textsuperscript{41} In practice, China provides necessary assistance to produce the vaccines as well as to make them more accessible to one in need.

Both countries are on the same page in further developing the well-established tie. Ambassador Xiaio Qian stated that even though the pandemic has slowed down some of the bilateral exchanges and cooperation projects, the long-term prospect of the bilateral relations is not going to be affected.\textsuperscript{42} Amidst the celebration of the 70th anniversary of Indonesia–China relations, President Joko Widodo thanked China’s support, especially in the vaccine cooperation, and stated that Indonesia is keen to develop further cooperation with China in many strategic sectors.\textsuperscript{43} The pandemic may jeopardize the practical aspect of the relationship but certainly that it would bounce back stronger in the long run.

\textsuperscript{37}Rakhmat and Aryansyah (2020).
\textsuperscript{38}Chew (2020).
\textsuperscript{39}Pinandita (2020).
\textsuperscript{40}Yuting (2020).
\textsuperscript{41}Xi Calls for New Areas in China-Indonesia Cooperation (2020).
\textsuperscript{42}Hui and Qianliang (2020).
\textsuperscript{43}President Xi Jinping Speaks with Indonesian President Joko Widodo on the Phone (2020).
9.5 Southeast Asian Nations Future Trajectory: COVID-19 and U.S-China Rivalry

The US and China are currently competing in a lot of sectors, such as politics, economy, security, and even technological developments. Some even describe the power contest between the US and China as a “new cold war”. The rise of China in recent decades does significantly affect the regional and global structure, threatening U.S.-led liberal order and hegemony. The power competition is even sharper under President Trump’s administration, which has more inward-looking foreign policy compared to the previous presidency. Apparently, the pandemic became a new arena for competition. President Trump blames China for the virus caused and stopped funding the WHO for conspiring with China in hiding some facts about the pandemic. Chinese officials also accuse the U.S. military to bring the virus into Wuhan, although there is no evidence supporting that. Regardless of who is right, the point is the clash is there and expanding, even during the global pandemic.

Many regions are affected by these power competitions, including one of the most strategic areas in Asia–Pacific, Southeast Asia. ASEAN, a regional institution that unites Southeast Asian nations, is known to be neutral on the international relations chessboard. The value of impartiality within ASEAN reflects the value of most of the Southeast Asian nations, the members of ASEAN, in conducting its foreign relations, including on US–China rivalry context. For ASEAN, engaging with both the US and China proportionally is the most preferable option. Amidst the US–China decoupling, generally no Southeast Asian showed a bold alignment to one side but neutral.

In the context of the pandemic, the rivalry is manifested into the battle of “aid diplomacy” in Southeast Asia. China approached Southeast Asia closely as it joined the China–ASEAN Foreign Minister’s Meeting on COVID-19 as well as sending ventilators, masks, and experts as an aid to Southeast Asian nations to battle the pandemic. Those help were largely welcomed by Southeast Asian leaders. The US also announced that it would provide US$35.3 million to ASEAN members as emergency assistance to handle the pandemic, such as to build a laboratory to accelerate testing. Indeed, Southeast Asian leaders thanked Washington for this support. Foreign Minister Pompeo highlighted this assistance during the foreign ministers’ video meeting but also used this opportunity to exploit China’s SCS positions by pointing out China’s recent maritime activities in the maritime lane during the pandemic. As said, Southeast Asia engages both impartially.

44 Ash (2020).
45 Zakaria (2020).
46 Winter (2020).
47 Tay and Wau (2019).
48 Stromseth (2020).
49 Stromseth (2020).
Indonesia also acts neutral in this regional power contention. Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi openly said to the two superpowers that “we do not want to be trapped by this rivalry” but to show that Indonesia, as well as ASEAN, are ready to be a partner. As Indonesia’s basic principle in its foreign policy maneuver is “free and active, it employs a hedging strategy in dealing with this rivalry. To be more specific, Indonesia hedges under the economic pragmatism and limited bandwagoning as Indonesia engage with both China’s BRI and the US’ Indo-Pacific Strategy. The trajectory will remain this way as the strategies and agendas from both sides are equally vital to Indonesian economic and strategic interests. Therefore, it is less likely that Indonesia, as well as other Southeast Asian nations to fall into one side and be hostile to the other.

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