

Indonesia's Geostrategic Balancing Act Will Inspire the Global South

By [Andrew Korybko](#)

Asia-Pacific Research, July 03, 2026

Region: [South-East Asia](#)

Theme: [Politics](#)

Prabowo and his team are doing a great job balancing between leading players in the global systemic transition while crucially keeping Indonesia out of New Cold War intrigue.

The world is in the midst of a global systemic transition from Western unipolarity to non-Western multipolarity. Western dominance over the world order is ending and gradually being replaced by non-Western countries finally obtaining a more equal role therein. The US is by far the most powerful Western country, while China is by far the most powerful non-Western one, and the competition between their respective unipolar and multipolar models can be described as the New Cold War.

Indonesia has a unique role to play in both the global systemic transition and the New Cold War. As the world's fourth-most-populous country, it's long overdue for Indonesia to play a greater role in global affairs. This has thus far taken the form of its membership in the G20 and recently in BRICS as well. These two organizations are focused on economic and financial cooperation. Indonesia's membership therein will therefore facilitate its efforts to expand trade and investment with the West and the non-West alike.

On that topic, Indonesia sits astride the Indian and Pacific Oceans, thus imbuing the country with a unique advantage due to its location at the center of contemporary global economic growth. Through its membership in ASEAN, Indonesia is now part of free trade areas with fellow Asian powerhouses China, Japan, India, and South Korea. It also recently clinched a trade deal with the US that importantly includes cooperation on critical minerals. Not only that, but a security deal was also just agreed to too.

Their "Major Defense Cooperation Partnership" solidifies Indonesia's status as a key American security partner in the Indo-Pacific. While Indonesia has rejected emulating Iran's brief Hormuz toll policy in the Strait of Malacca, it and the US might prepare such contingency plans in the event of a crisis. They're also reportedly considering an agreement to grant the US free overflight rights over Indonesia. Be that as it may, it would be mistaken to describe Indonesia as against China, since it's [really just balancing China](#).

To briefly explain, no country wants to be disproportionately dependent on another like some Southeast Asian countries fear might define the future of their ties with China due to their trade imbalances, ergo why Indonesia is now actively relying on the US as a counterbalance. The famous Bandung Conference's Non-Alignment spirit is flourishing in today's Indonesia and takes the form of Indian-inspired multi-alignment between Great Powers for the aforesaid purpose. Russia also plays a role in this too.

President Prabowo Subianto was in Moscow discussing energy cooperation on the day that his Defense Minister was in DC to announce Indonesia's new security deal with the US. This shed insight into his envisaged balancing act: Russia helps fuel the economy, the US helps bolster security, it and the previously mentioned Asian powerhouses are Indonesia's top trade partners, Japan and South Korea help reduce tech dependence on China, and there'll always be special civilizational ties with India.

Prabowo and his team are doing a great job balancing between these leading players in the global systemic transition while crucially keeping Indonesia out of New Cold War intrigue. While its new security deal with the US does indeed balance China, it's not against China, nor does this arrangement threaten China. Trade and investment ties with China also still remain strong. What Indonesia has therefore done is show the Global South how to most effectively balance between China and the US.

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Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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Articles by: **Andrew Korybko**

About the author:

Andrew Korybko est le commentateur politique étasunien qui travaille actuellement pour l'agence Sputnik. Il est en troisième cycle de l'Université MGIMO et auteur de la monographie *Guerres hybrides: l'approche adaptative indirecte pour un changement de régime*(2015).

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