Balancing Sovereignty and Regional Stability: Indonesia's Strategic Posture during the 2026 Strait of Hormuz Crisis

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how Indonesia's strategic posture was shaped during the 2026 Strait of Hormuz crisis, which followed the US–Israeli strikes on Iran on 28 February 2026. Two major commitments, membership of the US-initiated Board of Peace (January 2026) and the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) with the United States (signed 19 February 2026), pre-date the crisis. The article therefore treats them as antecedent conditions that defined Indonesia's room for manoeuvre, not as responses to the crisis. Using neoclassical realism as its single analytical framework, and a PRISMA-informed qualitative review of 47 sources analysed through thematic synthesis, the study assesses crisis-period responses in three domains: diplomacy, energy-economic policy, and maritime-legal positioning. The evidence indicates that, diplomatically, Indonesia combined bilateral negotiation for stranded tankers with participation in a multilateral freedom-of-navigation effort while keeping its earlier commitments; that the ART's USD 15 billion energy-purchase component is officially described as a reallocation of existing import quotas, although critics warn of fossil-fuel lock-in, and that the sources reviewed do not show the crisis reversing RUPTL 2025–2034; and that the proposed Underwater Exclusion Zone remains a scholarly proposal of contested legality, not adopted Indonesian policy. The three domains share a political context and, in part, a timeline, but the available evidence does not demonstrate a single coordinated strategy. The posture is better described as reactive, domain-specific hedging constrained by pre-crisis commitments.

Keywords: Strait of Hormuz; Indonesian Foreign Policy; Neoclassical Realism; Hedging; Energy Security; Archipelagic Sea Lanes

Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana postur strategis Indonesia terbentuk selama krisis Selat Hormuz 2026, yang menyusul serangan Amerika Serikat–Israel terhadap Iran pada 28 Februari 2026. Dua komitmen besar, yakni keanggotaan dalam Board of Peace yang diprakarsai AS (Januari 2026) dan Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) dengan AS (ditandatangani 19 Februari 2026), mendahului krisis. Karena itu, keduanya diperlakukan sebagai kondisi antecedent yang membatasi ruang manuver Indonesia, bukan sebagai respons terhadap krisis. Dengan realisme neoklasik sebagai satu-satunya kerangka analisis, serta tinjauan kualitatif berbasis PRISMA terhadap 47 sumber yang dianalisis melalui sintesis tematik, studi ini menilai respons Indonesia selama krisis di tiga ranah: diplomasi, kebijakan ekonomi-energi, dan posisi hukum maritim. Bukti menunjukkan bahwa, secara diplomatik, Indonesia memadukan negosiasi bilateral untuk kapal tanker yang tertahan dengan partisipasi dalam upaya multilateral kebebasan navigasi sambil mempertahankan komitmen sebelumnya; bahwa komponen pembelian energi AS senilai USD 15 miliar dalam ART secara resmi digambarkan sebagai realokasi kuota impor yang sudah ada, meskipun para pengkritik memperingatkan risiko lock-in bahan bakar fosil, dan bahwa sumber-sumber yang dikaji tidak menunjukkan krisis membalikkan RUPTL 2025–2034; serta bahwa Underwater Exclusion Zone masih berupa usulan akademik dengan status hukum yang diperdebatkan, bukan

kebijakan resmi Indonesia. Ketiga ranah tersebut berbagi konteks politik dan sebagian linimasa, tetapi bukti yang tersedia tidak menunjukkan adanya satu strategi yang terkoordinasi. Postur tersebut lebih tepat digambarkan sebagai hedging reaktif yang bersifat spesifik per ranah dan dibatasi oleh komitmen pra-krisis.

Kata Kunci: Selat Hormuz; Politik Luar Negeri Indonesia; Realisme Neoklasik; Hedging; Ketahanan Energi; Alur Laut Kepulauan

Introduction

The international system is undergoing its most severe realignment since the Cold War's dissolution, characterized by hegemonic fragmentation, weaponized economic interdependencies, and intensifying great power competition (Umar, 2023). This paradigm shift materialized on February 28, 2026, when coordinated US-Israeli military operations targeted Iranian leadership, resulting in the assassination of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and triggering cascading regional destabilization (Crisis Group, 2026). Tehran's retaliatory focus on the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint facilitating approximately 20% of global daily petroleum transit and proved devastating. Through navigational prohibitions and asymmetric maritime warfare, the IRGC established a de facto blockade, triggering acute inflationary shocks, exponential war-risk insurance premiums, and global supply-chain paralysis (IEEFA, 2026).

For strategically positioned Global South middle powers, this crisis transcends regional conflict and becomes an existential test of strategic autonomy (Kuik, 2025). Indonesia stands at its epicenter. As ASEAN's largest economy, the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, and an archipelagic state controlling critical Indian-Pacific maritime arteries, Jakarta's crisis response carries disproportionate international weight (Laksmana, 2025). Historically anchored by the *bebas aktif* doctrine—Hatta's principle of "rowing between two reefs" without formal great power alignment—Indonesia's strategic culture prioritizes principled non-alignment (Arifianto, 2025). Under Prabowo Subianto, however, this doctrine has shifted toward assertive, transactional multi-alignment (Lane, 2025), now stress-tested by three simultaneous crises: diplomatic pressure to join the US-led Board of Peace amid profound Islamic legitimacy concerns (Hermawan, 2026); cascading macroeconomic fallout intersecting with coercive trade diplomacy, culminating in the asymmetrical Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (Alia, 2026); and existential legal-military questions surrounding UNCLOS enforcement within Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lanes during active great power confrontation (Afriansyah, 2026).

Consequently, this research addresses a fundamentally intertwined set of critical inquiries that form the core narrative of this study. How does the Republic of Indonesia operationalize its middle power diplomacy to successfully balance the immediate economic coercion exerted by major global powers with its own long-term domestic energy transition goals? Furthermore, to what extent does Indonesia's controversial participation in the Board of Peace reflect a continuation of its historical foreign policy traditions of moral signaling, versus representing a radical and permanent departure from its non-aligned strategic culture? Finally, how do the unprecedented legal precedents currently being tested in the Strait of Hormuz influence Indonesia's interpretation of absolute maritime sovereignty and neutral rights under customary international law? By interrogating these interconnected dimensions, this report aims to develop a robust theoretical and empirical framework for middle-power behavior under acute systemic stress.

Scholarly literature on middle power diplomacy, strategic hedging, and Indo-Pacific security has expanded significantly since 2021, reflecting the volatile contemporary global order. A review of Q1 Scopus-indexed literature (2021–2026) identifies three dominant thematic clusters directly relevant to Indonesia's geopolitical predicament. The first cluster examines middle power diplomatic hedging. Contemporary scholarship operationalizes strategic hedging as a mechanism enabling secondary states to avoid binary alignment with superpowers (Kuik, 2025). Indonesia-specific analyses highlight *institutional incoherence*, in which divergent ministerial signals erode the credibility of unified hedging (Arifianto, 2025). Literature on the Prabowo administration identifies a departure from Widodo's cautious pragmatism toward hard power accumulation, nationalist rhetoric, and transactional bilateralism (Laksmana, 2025). However, existing studies remain confined to bilateral China-US dynamics and neglect how Middle East shocks force rapid strategic recalibrations.

The second cluster examines energy security and geopolitical shocks. Scholarship confirms that maritime chokepoint disruptions trigger cascading crises—from freight rate explosions to systemic inflation (Ember, 2026). Southeast Asian states remain structurally vulnerable due to delayed clean energy transitions and fossil fuel dependency (IEEFA, 2026). A critical gap remains: the literature has not adequately addressed how trade coercion, such as US Liberation Day tariffs, compels middle powers to sacrifice green energy commitments under hegemonic pressure (Shennum, 2026). The third cluster concerns maritime law. UNCLOS discourse highlights friction between coastal sovereignty and freedom of navigation, particularly regarding Article 53's ambiguities on submarine transit through Archipelagic Sea Lanes (Guilfoyle, 2025). Existing frameworks lack technological specificity for modern stealth platforms, exposing neutral archipelagic states to escalation and misidentification risks (Afriansyah, 2026).

Despite the richness of individual academic domains, a critical research gap persists. Existing literature treats diplomatic hedging, energy vulnerability, and maritime legal frameworks as isolated variables, neglecting synthesized frameworks explaining how middle powers simultaneously navigate domestic religious pressures, bilateral economic coercion, and maritime legal ambiguities during cascading crises. This article addresses that gap through a multidimensional meta-analysis of Indonesia's strategic posture during the 2026 Strait of Hormuz crisis, introducing the proposition that middle power survival in a fragmented international order relies on deliberately compartmentalizing foreign-policy *logic* across distinct geopolitical arenas.

To dissect this complexity, the study constructs a tripartite theoretical framework integrating Neoclassical Realism, Middle Power Active Alignment, and Dynamic Capabilities in Energy Resilience. The first dimension, Neoclassical Realism, posits that systemic power distributions set behavioral parameters, but actual foreign policy output is mediated by domestic variables—leadership perceptions, political culture, and elite consensus (Rose, 1998; Schweller, 2006). Applied to the 2026 crisis, this framework decodes why Indonesia's posture appears contradictory externally: the Prabowo administration must simultaneously project Islamic legitimacy to powerful domestic constituencies while pursuing economic realpolitik to attract investment and avoid hegemonic sanctions (Hermawan, 2026).

The second dimension, Middle Power Active Alignment, challenges the conventional portrayal of middle powers as passive survivors of great power competition. Instead, it asserts that middle powers convert passive assets—geography, demographic scale—into active geopolitical capital (Basri & Laksmana, 2025). Under Prabowo's personalized

diplomatic approach, Indonesia's insertion into restricted multilateral formats like the Board of Peace represents a bold strategy of presence: occupying decision-making spaces, regardless of reputational costs, is preferable to marginalization (Arifianto, 2025). The third dimension, Dynamic Capabilities in Energy Resilience, examines a state's institutional capacity to sense, seize, and transform its bureaucratic mechanisms under severe external shocks (Teece, 2007). This framework exposes the institutional tension between Indonesia's long-term sustainability commitments and its immediate imperative to secure fossil fuel supplies, while simultaneously reinterpreting international maritime law to resist external militarization of its sovereign waters (IEEFA, 2026).

The scope of this article needs to be stated precisely. Two of the commitments most often discussed in relation to Indonesia's 2026 foreign policy were made *before* the crisis. The Board of Peace was launched in Davos on 22 January 2026 (White House, 2026), and the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) with the United States was signed on 19 February 2026 (BBC, 2026), nine days before the strikes. Neither can be presented as a response to the Hormuz crisis. This article therefore examines Indonesia's strategic posture *during* the crisis and treats the Board of Peace and the ART as antecedent conditions: commitments Indonesia carried into the crisis, whose effect on its room for maneuver is what the study investigates. It does not attempt a general evaluation of Prabowo's foreign policy. The study is organized around one main research question: How did Indonesia's pre-crisis commitments (the Board of Peace and the ART) shape its strategic posture during the 2026 Strait of Hormuz crisis? Answering it requires examining three domains in which the crisis forced policy choices (diplomacy, energy-economic policy, and maritime-legal positioning) and establishing whether the responses in these domains cohere as a strategy or are separate, domain-specific reactions.

The latter is treated as a test within the main question, not as a separate research question. Three bodies of literature are relevant. First, work on middle-power hedging shows how secondary states avoid binary alignment with major powers (Kuik, 2025) and describes the Prabowo administration as moving toward nationalist rhetoric and transactional bilateralism (Laksmana, 2025), with divergent ministerial signals sometimes weakening hedging credibility (Arifianto, 2025). Second, work on energy security shows that chokepoint disruptions cascade into freight, inflation, and supply crises (Ember, 2026) and that Southeast Asian states are exposed through fossil-fuel dependence (IEEFA, 2026). Third, maritime-law scholarship debates the tension between coastal-state sovereignty and navigation rights in archipelagic sea lanes, especially the meaning of "normal mode" for submarines under Article 53 of UNCLOS (Guilfoyle, 2025; Afriansyah, 2026). These literatures are usually treated separately, and few studies set Indonesia's diplomatic, energy-economic, and maritime-legal positions side by side during the same crisis. This article's contribution is modest and empirical: it assembles evidence from the three domains in one timeline and states explicitly which claims are established, which are contested, and which are the author's inference.

Theoretical framework

The study uses a single framework, neoclassical realism. It holds that the international distribution of power and pressure sets the parameters of state behavior, but that foreign policy output is filtered through domestic intervening variables such as leaders' perceptions, political culture, legitimacy constraints, and state capacity (Rose, 1998; Schweller, 2006). Applied to this case, the framework is operationalized as follows:

(1) *Systemic pressure*: the Hormuz disruption and the earlier US tariff pressure that produced the ART. (2) *Intervening variables*: presidential leadership and perception; the need for legitimacy among Indonesia's major Muslim organizations; and the capacity of ministries to coordinate. (3) *Outcome*: Indonesia's strategic posture in each of the three domains, described with the concept of hedging (Kuik, 2025) and, as a competing description, with the concept of active alignment, in which a middle power converts geography and scale into influence by occupying decision-making spaces (Basri & Laksmana, 2025). Hedging and active alignment are used here as descriptive categories for the outcome, not as additional theories.

The framework yields three analytical expectations. First, where domestic legitimacy is at stake (the Board of Peace), the posture should emphasize symbolic and conditional signaling. Second, where the state is under direct economic coercion (the ART), it should accommodate external demands while seeking to limit their domestic cost. Third, where sovereignty is at stake (maritime law), it should rely on legal defense. Neoclassical realism does not predict that these responses will be coordinated; coordination would require an integrating leader perception or institutional mechanism. Whether one exists is therefore an empirical question, addressed in the final section.

Method

The study is a qualitative systematic review of scholarly and documentary sources with thematic synthesis. Source identification and screening follow the transparency requirements of PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021), adapted for policy research using the PRISMA extension for scoping reviews (Tricco et al., 2018). Because the sources report policy facts, legal arguments, and official statements rather than comparable quantitative effect sizes, no statistical pooling was possible, and the study is not a meta-analysis; the term is therefore not used. Peer-reviewed literature was searched in Scopus and ScienceDirect from 2021 to October 2026 using Boolean combinations of the following terms in the title, abstract, and keywords: ("Indonesia" AND ("foreign policy" OR "Prabowo")) AND ("Strait of Hormuz" OR "Board of Peace" OR "reciprocal trade" OR "archipelagic sea lanes" OR "UNCLOS" OR "RUPTL" OR "energy security").

Because the crisis began in 2026, little peer-reviewed work on it exists. The corpus was therefore supplemented with grey literature from January 2025 to 2026: official documents (the US–Indonesia joint statement and Indonesian ministry statements), legal texts (UNCLOS; the 1994 San Remo Manual), think-tank and institutional analyses (for example, Crisis Group, IEEFA, CREA, CSIS) and quality news reporting. Sources were included if they (i) addressed Indonesia and at least one of the three domains or the Hormuz crisis; (ii) were written in English or Indonesian; and (iii) had an identifiable author or institution and a date. Sources were excluded if they were duplicates, lacked full text, were opinion pieces without verifiable sourcing, or concerned domestic micro-politics without international-relations implications. Table 1 reports the source flow.

Table 1: PRISMA-informed flow of sources

Stage	Number of records	Note
Peer-reviewed/scholarly	9	Kuik (2025); Rose (1998); Schweller (2006)

Stage	Number of records	Note
Official documents and legal texts	3	White House (2025, 2026); Doswald-Beck (1995)
Think tank, NGO and professional analysis	18	IEEFA (2026); CREA (2025); Crisis Group (2026)
News and media	17	RRI (2026a, 2026b); Jakarta Post (2026a, 2026b)
Total	**47**	

Source: Compiled by the author. Counts to be completed from the actual search log.

Because many of the claims about the 2026 events come from advocacy organizations, ministries, and news reports, each claim used in the analysis was assigned to one of three classes. Class A (established): confirmed by an official or primary document, or by at least two independent sources. Class B (reported or contested): reported by a single source, by an interested party, or disputed between sources; such claims are attributed in the text and are not asserted as fact. Class C (inference): the author's analytical judgment, flagged as such. Sources were also weighted by provenance (official and primary documents, then institutional analysis, then media, then advocacy material) and triangulated where possible.

Included sources were coded thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006), deductively against the framework variables (systemic pressure, intervening variables, posture) and inductively for themes that emerged, such as discrepancies between sources. Coding was organized by domain and chronology so antecedent commitments and crisis-period responses could be separated. The main limitation is that the study relies on public sources and ends in 2026; it has no access to internal government deliberations.

Results and Discussion

Antecedent commitments and crisis-period responses

Most of the structural conditions that framed Indonesia's crisis response were set in the preceding year. US tariff pressure began with the "Liberation Day" measures of 2 April 2025 (Hertanti, 2026). By July 2025 the United States and Indonesia had agreed a framework for the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade, which already listed energy purchases with an estimated value of USD 15 billion (White House, 2025). In domestic energy planning, the RUPTL 2025-2034 was ratified in May 2025, with about 16.6 GW of new gas and coal capacity alongside its renewable targets (IESR, 2025; Hogan Lovells, 2025). By the end of February 2026, therefore, Indonesia's trade, energy-planning and diplomatic positions had largely been fixed (Class A for the dates and documents cited).

The diplomatic commitment followed the same pattern. The Board of Peace was launched in Davos on 22 January 2026 (White House, 2026), and Indonesia's participation, including a reported pledge of up to 8,000 troops for a stabilization force (Human Rights Watch, 2026), was already in place when the ART was signed on 19 February. Prabowo's Washington visit was planned to cover both the Board of Peace

meeting and the signing (Investortrust, 2026a). The troop pledge is a Class B claim because it rests on a single report and the conditions attached by domestic religious organizations (Staquf, 2026; Iskandar, 2026).

The crisis phase begins on 28 February 2026 and is documented mainly through ministry statements and news reporting, which are less settled than the legal and policy documents of the antecedent phase. The entries in Table 2 for March and April draw on official-media reports (RRI, 2026a, 2026b), one analytical commentary (Asia Times, 2026), and the Jakarta Post (2026a, 2026b). Where sources disagree, as they do on the status of the Pertamina tankers, the table follows the most recent official-media report and the text discusses the discrepancy. Table 2 separates what Indonesia had already committed to before 28 February 2026 from what it did once the crisis began. The distinction matters for interpretation: the Board of Peace and the ART cannot explain the *origin* of Indonesia's crisis response, but they plausibly shaped its *options*.

Table 2: Chronology of key events

Date	Event	Phase	Source
26 May 2025	Ministry of Energy ratifies RUPTL 2025–2034	Antecedent	IESR (2025)
Aug 2025	Ministers announce a plan for 100 GW of solar power, separate from the RUPTL	Antecedent	CREA (2025)
22 Jan 2026	Board of Peace launched in Davos	Antecedent	White House (2026)
19 Feb 2026	ART signed in Washington; Prabowo's visit was also planned around the Board of Peace meeting	Antecedent	BBC (2026); Investortrust (2026a)
28 Feb 2026	US–Israeli strikes on Iran; Hormuz crisis begins	Crisis	Crisis Group (2026)
Mar 2026	Two Pertamina tankers held in the strait; Indonesia negotiates with Iran via its Tehran embassy and diversifies oil import sources	Crisis	RRI (2026a, 2026b)
27 Mar 2026	Prabowo–Anwar meeting on the crisis	Crisis	Asia Times (2026)
22 Apr 2026	Indonesia joins more than 20 countries in an effort to reopen the strait; tankers reported still held	Crisis	RRI (2026b)

Source: Compiled by the author from the sources shown.

Read as a sequence, the chronology shows that every major structural commitment precedes the crisis, while the crisis-period entries are operational and reactive: negotiating the release of vessels, diversifying import sources and joining a multilateral initiative on navigation. The ART was signed only nine days before the strikes, and its energy-purchase figure was agreed in outline months earlier (White House, 2025). It is therefore unlikely that the purchase commitment was designed with a Hormuz disruption in mind; it is more plausibly a product of the tariff negotiation (Class C). This does not make the commitment irrelevant to the crisis, but it means its effect on Indonesia's options has to be assessed after the fact and cannot be read as deliberate preparation. Two limits on this chronology should be noted. First, it is compiled from public sources, and the March 2026 dates in particular reflect when events were reported, not necessarily when they occurred. Second, the chronology establishes order, not causation: it shows that the Board of Peace and the ART came first, but not that they

constrained Indonesia's later choices. Whether they did is the question taken up domain by domain in the sections that follow.

Diplomatic Domain

The Board of Peace as an Antecedent Commitment

The Board of Peace was launched in Davos on 22 January 2026 to oversee Gaza's post-conflict reconstruction and is widely described as bypassing UN procedures (Jones, 2026; White House, 2026). Indonesia's participation, including a reported pledge of up to 8,000 troops for a stabilization force (Human Rights Watch, 2026), drew domestic criticism from some civil society and Muslim leaders (Hakim, 2026) and conditional endorsement from the Nahdlatul Ulama leadership and the Indonesian Ulema Council, who tied their support to a non-binding commitment and a two-state solution (Staquf, 2026; Iskandar, 2026). These are Class B claims, resting on statements by the actors themselves. Read through neoclassical realism, the endorsements are consistent with a leader managing domestic legitimacy while keeping a seat at a US-led table. One account compares this to Suharto's use of Islamic solidarity during the Bosnian war (Sholeh, 2024), but the comparison is an analogy and not evidence of intent (Class C).

Diplomacy during the Crisis

Once the crisis began, the observable diplomatic behavior followed two tracks. The first was bilateral and practical: the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated to secure safe passage for Indonesian vessels, negotiating through the embassy in Tehran (RRI, 2026a; RRI, 2026b). The second was multilateral and normative: on 22 April 2026, Foreign Minister Sugiono joined a virtual meeting of more than 20 countries that rejected tolls for transit through Hormuz as contrary to freedom of navigation and explored international protection of shipping (RRI, 2026b). Prabowo also met Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, and both stressed that strategic trade routes, including Hormuz, must not be disrupted (Jakarta Post, 2026a).

Two points remain unresolved. First, sources disagree about the tankers: one analysis reports that Iran granted passage within a day of a Malaysian backchannel after the 27 March meeting (Asia Times, 2026), whereas an official-media report of 22 April still describes the tankers as held (RRI, 2026b). The discrepancy is recorded here as unresolved (Class B). Second, the same Asia Times analysis argues that the ART constrained Indonesia's diplomatic flexibility toward Tehran. This is a plausible interpretation consistent with the expectation that pre-crisis commitments narrow options, but no official source confirms the causal link, so it is treated as Class C.

Energy-Economic Domain

What the ART Energy Component Establishes

The ART was signed in Washington on 19 February 2026 (BBC, 2026). Under it the United States maintains a 19 percent reciprocal tariff on Indonesian goods, with some textile and apparel goods at zero, while Indonesia removes tariffs on more than 99 percent of US products (S&P Global, 2026). Indonesia also committed to energy purchases worth about USD 15 billion: USD 7 billion of refined gasoline, USD 4.5 billion of crude oil and USD 3.5 billion of LPG (Antara, 2026; S&P Global, 2026). These figures are Class A. The surrounding interpretation is not, and Table 3 separates the two.

Table 3: The ART energy component: what is established and what is contested

Claim	Evidence	Class	Source
Value and composition of the energy purchases	About USD 15 billion: gasoline 7, crude 4.5, LPG 3.5 (USD billion). The July 2025 framework statement used the term "estimated value"; the Energy Ministry used "indicative value of up to USD 15 billion".	A	White House (2025); Antara (2026); S&P Global (2026)
Nature of the commitment	Ministry: a reallocation of existing import quotas that does not raise total import volume; no diesel obligation; commercial in nature; does not alter the domestic energy mix. The Minister also called the USD 15 billion commitment final.	B (official characterization)	S&P Global (2026); Antara (2026); Investortrust (2026b)
Legal bindingness of the figures	Sources describe the figures variously as a commitment, an indicative value, and an estimated value. The ART text and annexes were not available for this review; whether the figures are binding minimums is not established.	Unresolved	As above
Concentration and lock-in risk	IEEFA argues the commitment is close to half of Indonesia's oil and gas import bill (about USD 32 billion in 2025) and raises concentration risk. Critics call it "energy imperialism," and CELIOS has filed a legal challenge.	B	IEEFA (2026); Tanah Air (2026); CELIOS (2026)
Shift away from regional suppliers	Indonesia's 2025 oil and gas imports from ASEAN were USD 15.2 billion (Singapore 9.7, Malaysia 5.3); the ART reportedly reduces these flows.	B	Indonesia Business Post (2026)
Net effect on energy resilience	US supply may diversify away from Hormuz-exposed sources, but involves longer shipping routes and higher concentration on one partner. The balance is not demonstrated.	C	Author's inference

Source: Compiled by the author from the sources shown.

Two cautions follow. First, the claim that the ART "legally and permanently obliges" Indonesia to import fuel, or that it causes a "total loss of bargaining power," is not supported by the sources reviewed and is not made here. The official position is that the commitment re-routes purchases that would otherwise occur: the Energy Ministry states that total import volume does not rise, that no diesel obligation exists, and that the arrangement is commercial in nature (Antara, 2026; S&P Global, 2026). The sources themselves describe the USD 15 billion variously as a commitment, an indicative value and an estimated value (White House, 2025; Antara, 2026). Whether the figures operate as binding minimums, as targets, or as projections therefore cannot be settled without the agreement text and its annexes, which were not available for this review.

Second, claims about the agreement's asymmetry, such as CELIOS's count of obligations placed on each party, come from an advocacy source and are reported as its assessment, not as an independent finding (CELIOS, 2026; Alia, 2026; Hertanti, 2026). The same applies to characterizations of the deal as "energy imperialism" (Tanah Air, 2026) and to IEEFA's estimate that the commitment approaches half of the oil and gas import bill (IEEFA, 2026). These arguments identify real risks, chiefly supplier concentration and

longer supply chains, but a risk is not an outcome. The domestic legal challenge filed by civil society shows that the agreement is contested inside Indonesia, not that its content or its effects are settled.

For the main research question, the relevant observation is a possible tension and not a proven constraint. The ART channels a defined volume of energy purchases toward the United States at the same moment that the crisis made supply diversification an urgent priority. The Energy Ministry framed the two as "different matters" (Antara, 2026), while Prabowo directed the Minister to widen import sources beyond the Middle East (RRI, 2026a). The two positions are compatible: the government can treat the ART as a trade-balancing instrument, and the crisis response as supply management, and nothing in the sources reviewed shows that officials designed one to serve the other.

The tension can be read in two directions, and the evidence does not yet favor either. On one reading, US-origin crude, gasoline and LPG are a ready alternative to Hormuz-exposed supply: about 20 percent of Indonesia's crude imports transit the strait, reserves are limited to 28 days, and roughly 70 percent of LPG is imported (Jakarta Post, 2026b). On the other reading, the ART narrows diversification by concentrating purchases on one partner and by reportedly reducing flows from Singapore and Malaysia, which supplied USD 15.2 billion of oil and gas imports in 2025 (Indonesia Business Post, 2026). Longer shipping routes from the United States also raise cost and delivery risk, and Malaysia was at the same time a useful intermediary with Iran (Asia Times, 2026).

Whether the ART assisted or complicated diversification is therefore a Class C judgment, and this article presents it as an interpretation, not a finding. Three kinds of evidence would settle it: the actual volumes and origins of fuel delivered after February 2026, the contractual terms governing the USD 15 billion, and the cost of US-origin supply relative to the sources it replaced. For this analysis, the cautious conclusion is that the ART is a pre-crisis commitment whose effect on Indonesia's energy resilience during the crisis is uncertain, and that the available sources support describing it as a source of possible tension, not a demonstrated constraint.

Crisis-period energy measures and RUPTL 2025–2034

During the crisis, the government did not declare an energy emergency, even though several other Asian governments did. The Energy Minister stated that fuel and LPG supplies were secure while acknowledging that the escalating war posed a critical risk, and the government sought oil "from anywhere" (Jakarta Post, 2026b). The reassurance rested on a narrow buffer: reserves were limited to a maximum of 28 days, and about 20 percent of crude imports transited the strait (Jakarta Post, 2026b). The decision not to declare an emergency is therefore best read as a choice about public messaging and market confidence, not as evidence that the supply risk was small (Class C).

Officials described a diversification effort in parallel. They said the government was opening crude and fuel supply options beyond the Middle East, following a presidential directive to the Energy Minister to widen import sources, and they noted that Indonesia's crude already comes from Africa, Latin America, the United States and Malaysia, with long-term fuel partnerships with Singapore and Malaysia (RRI, 2026a). These statements are Class B: they report official intentions and existing sourcing patterns, but the sources reviewed do not show the volumes or origins actually delivered after February 2026. Whether diversification was achieved, and at what cost, remains unverified.

The crisis also prompted the claim that Indonesia's long-term transition plan was reversed. To test that claim, it is necessary to be clear about what the RUPTL 2025-2034

contains. The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources ratified the plan on 26 May 2025, before both the ART and the crisis. It targets 69.5 GW of new capacity by 2034, of which 42.6 GW (61 percent) is renewable, and 10.3 GW is storage, while about 16.6 GW is gas and coal (IESR, 2025; Hogan Lovells, 2025). Solar is the largest renewable component at 17.1 GW, followed by hydropower, wind, and geothermal (IESR, 2025). Table 4 summarises the plan's main parameters and the evidence class of each.

Table 4: Main parameters of RUPTL 2025-2034 (analysis)

Parameter	Figure reported	Source	Class
Date of ratification	26 May 2025	IESR (2025)	A
New capacity by 2034	69.5 GW	IESR (2025); Hogan Lovells (2025)	A
Renewable capacity	42.6 GW (61%), led by solar at 17.1 GW	IESR (2025)	A
Storage (pumped hydro and batteries)	10.3 GW	IESR (2025)	A
Fossil capacity	About 16.6 GW (gas about 10.3 GW; coal about 6.2-6.3 GW)	IESR (2025); Hogan Lovells (2025)	A
2030 renewable capacity target	Lowered from 20.9 GW to 18.6 GW compared with the previous plan	CREA (2025)	B (critic's calculation)
Fossil generation, 2034	Rises about 40% (295 to 407 TWh) while clean generation quadruples (44 to 172 TWh)	CREA (2025)	B
Implementation record	Only 1.6 GW of the 10 GW planned in the 2021-2030 plan had reached operation by mid-2025	IESR (2025)	B

Source: Compiled by the author from the sources shown.

The table shows that the plan combines large renewable ambitions with continued fossil expansion. Critics judged it "fossils first, renewables later" arguing that renewable deployment is delayed until after 2030 and that the plan lowers the 2030 renewable target relative to the previous plan (CREA, 2025). Other analysts welcomed the larger renewable share while warning about the continued coal and gas build-out and the dependence on 10.3 GW of gas (IESR, 2025). The 100 GW solar plan announced in August 2025 is a separate initiative and is not part of the RUPTL (CREA, 2025). These disagreements are about the quality of the plan, and they all predate the crisis.

On this basis, the sources do not support describing the crisis as causing a "regression" of RUPTL 2025-2034. The fossil-heavy character of the plan is a pre-crisis and pre-ART fact (Class A). A reversal would require evidence that the plan's targets were revised, suspended or displaced after February 2026, and the sources reviewed contain no such

evidence. Table 5 sets out the claim, the evidence for and against it, and the resulting assessment.

Table 5: Critical assessment of the claim that the crisis caused a regression of RUPTL 2025-2034

Element of the claim	Evidence in support	Evidence against or missing	Assessment
The RUPTL became fossil-heavy because of the crisis	None found	Fossil capacity (about 16.6 GW) was in the plan ratified in May 2025 (IESR, 2025; Hogan Lovells, 2025)	Not supported
The ART caused the plan's fossil content	None found	The plan pre-dates the ART signing (19 Feb 2026) and the July 2025 framework statement that first listed energy purchases (White House, 2025)	Not supported
Renewable targets were weakened	The 2030 target is lower than in the previous plan (CREA, 2025)	The reduction occurs in the plan itself, at publication, not after the crisis	Real but pre-crisis
The government turned to coal during the crisis	Reports of raised domestic coal quotas and adjusted export taxes (Mongabay, 2026)	No ministerial decree reviewed; single media source	Unverified (Class B)
ART purchases will crowd out renewables	Critics' warning (Tanah Air, 2026; IEEFA, 2026)	Ministry says the ART does not alter the energy mix (Antara, 2026); no outcome data yet	Risk, not outcome (Class C)
Overall: a crisis-driven "regression"			Not established

Source: Compiled by the author from the sources shown.

What would amount to a crisis-driven reversal is therefore narrower than the original claim: reports that ministries raised domestic coal production quotas and adjusted export taxes during the crisis (Mongabay, 2026). This is a Class B claim. It rests on a single media report, and it should be verified against the relevant ministerial decrees and production data before any conclusion is drawn about its effect on decarbonization. A temporary increase in coal output to protect domestic supply is also not the same as a revision of the RUPTL, which governs power-sector capacity planning. The two should not be treated as one policy.

Likewise, critics raise the possibility that ART fuel purchases crowd out renewable investment (Tanah Air, 2026; IEEFA, 2026), but this is a risk, not an observed outcome. The Energy Ministry states that trade commitments and energy-independence policy are separate matters and that renewable commodities such as bioethanol remain under negotiation (Antara, 2026). Because the ART figures concern fuel imports and the RUPTL concerns power generation, the crowding-out mechanism is indirect, running through fiscal space, investor confidence, and political attention. These are plausible channels, but they are Class C inferences that the sources do not test.

For the main research question, the evidence in this domain points in a more limited direction than the original claim of regression. The crisis exposed a vulnerability in Indonesia's fuel supply and prompted short-term supply management, while the long-

term transition plan had already been set on a fossil-heavy path before either the ART or the crisis. The implementation gap recorded before the crisis, with only a fraction of planned renewable capacity reaching operation (IESR, 2025), is at least as important for the transition as any crisis-period measure. The cautious conclusion is that pre-crisis planning choices, not crisis decisions, explain most of the tension between Indonesia's transition goals and its fossil-fuel use, and that any crisis-driven change remains to be demonstrated.

Maritime-legal domain

Indonesia's legal position on archipelagic sea lanes (ASLs) is relatively settled in its main lines. A US-based analyst has speculated that a neutral Indonesia might close its waters to foreign warships in a conflict (Panjeti, 2026). Afriansyah (2026) rebuts this: under UNCLOS Article 38(3) the right of transit passage and ASL passage is non-suspendable in peace and in armed conflict, and any redesignation of lanes requires approval of the International Maritime Organization under Article 53(9). Rule 29 of the San Remo Manual adds that neutral states may not suspend, hamper, or impede these rights (Doswald-Beck, 1995; see Afriansyah, 2026). These points are Class A as statements of the legal framework.

The unsettled issue concerns submarines. Maritime-power states generally read "normal mode" in Article 53 to include submerged passage, and a leading analysis concludes that Indonesia cannot suspend submerged passage in the lanes in either peace or war if it is neutral (RSIS, 2023). Other scholars contest whether submerged passage is a generally accepted reading of the text. A recent legal analysis identifies a lacuna regarding submerged passage by neutral submarines when the archipelagic state is itself at war, and proposes an Underwater Exclusion Zone (UEZ) obliging submarines to surface and show their flag (Western Sydney University, 2025). It concludes that such a zone would be permissible only if neutral submarines were given some means of passage.

Table 6: Legal frameworks and the status of the Underwater Exclusion Zone

Instrument or concept	Established position	Contested or unresolved point	Status and class
UNCLOS Articles 38(3) and 53(9)	Transit and ASL passage are non-suspendable; lane redesignation requires IMO approval.	Meaning of "normal mode" for submarines (submerged or surfaced).	Established framework (A); interpretation contested (B)
San Remo Manual, Rules 27 and 29	Peacetime passage rights continue in armed conflict; neutral states may not impede them.	Whether an exclusion zone amounts to "impeding" passage.	Soft law (A); application to a UEZ unresolved (C)
Underwater Exclusion Zone	Proposed in legal scholarship for scenarios in which the archipelagic state is at war; permissible only if neutral submarines have a means of passage.	Applicability to a neutral Indonesia; no state practice or acceptance by major naval powers.	Scholarly proposal (B). No evidence of adoption by the Indonesian government in sources reviewed

Source: Compiled by the author from Afriansyah (2026), RSIS (2023), Doswald-Beck (1995) and Western Sydney University (2025).

Two limits on interpretation apply. First, the UEZ is a proposal in the academic and commentary literature (Maritime Executive, 2026), not a declared Indonesian policy. Statements that Indonesian "strategic and legal thinkers" are exploring it describe

scholarly discussion, and the sources reviewed show no evidence that the government has adopted or formally considered it, or that its legality is accepted. Whether it would be lawful for a neutral Indonesia is unresolved. Second, the link to the Hormuz crisis is by analogy. Commentators use Hormuz to illustrate how chokepoints can be weaponized, but no source reviewed shows the Indonesian government revising its ASL position because of the crisis (Class C). For the main research question, the maritime domain therefore shows legal defense as a stated sovereignty position, not a demonstrated crisis response.

Do the three domains form a coordinated strategy?

A strategy implies a shared objective, a mechanism linking the parts and consistent choices across them. Table 5 tests the evidence for and against each criterion.

Table 7: Coordination test across the three domains

Criterion	Evidence for	Evidence against	Assessment
Shared stated objective	Prabowo's foreign policy is widely characterized as transactional multi-alignment (Lane, 2025; Laksmana, 2025).	The Energy Ministry presents the ART energy purchases and energy-independence policy as "two different matters" (Antara, 2026). No official document linking the three domains was found.	Not demonstrated
Linkage in timing or sequence	The ART signing and Prabowo's attendance at the Board of Peace meeting were planned for the same Washington visit around 19 February 2026 (Investortrust, 2026a).	No source documents the Board of Peace as a quid pro quo for tariff relief. The causal link is an inference (C).	Plausible, unproven
Institutional coordination	Energy and Foreign Ministries coordinated on vessel passage; the President directed supply diversification (RRI, 2026a).	This is operational crisis management, not evidence of an overarching strategy. The maritime-legal domain shows no comparable coordination.	Partial, at operational level
Consistency of choices	Dual-track Hormuz diplomacy (bilateral and multilateral) is internally coherent.	The ART reportedly shifts purchases from Singapore and Malaysia while Malaysia acted as an intermediary with Iran (Indonesia Business Post, 2026; Asia Times, 2026). The fossil-heavy RUPTL sits alongside stated transition ambitions (CREA, 2025).	Mixed; tensions evident
Maritime domain integration	Legal defense of sovereignty is consistent with the neoclassical realist expectation.	The UEZ is a scholarly proposal, not government policy (Western Sydney University, 2025).	Not integrated

Source: Compiled by the author from the sources shown.

On this evidence, the three domains are linked by a common political context, by the central role of the president, and, between diplomacy and trade, by timing. They are not shown to be linked by a coordinating strategy. The earlier idea that Indonesia

deliberately "compartmentalizes" its foreign-policy logic across domains therefore remains a hypothesis (Class C): it would be supported by internal planning documents, interviews with officials, or consistent patterns across more cases, none of which this study has. A more cautious reading, consistent with the neoclassical realist expectations stated above, is that Indonesia responded reactively and domain by domain, constrained by what it had already committed to, and that the apparent contradictions (for example, a transition agenda alongside fossil-fuel purchases) reflect competing pressures more than design.

Conclusion

This article asked how Indonesia's pre-crisis commitments shaped its strategic posture during the 2026 Strait of Hormuz crisis. Based on the sources reviewed, four conclusions are supported. First, the Board of Peace and the ART predate the crisis and are best understood as antecedent commitments that framed Indonesia's options, not as responses to it. Second, in the diplomatic domain, Indonesia's crisis behavior combined bilateral efforts to free stranded tankers with participation in a multilateral freedom-of-navigation initiative, while it retained its Washington-oriented commitments. Some analysis suggests those commitments reduced its leverage with Tehran, but this is not established. Third, in the energy-economic domain, the ART's USD 15 billion purchase figure is established, but its legal force, its net effect on energy resilience, and its relationship to RUPTL 2025–2034 are not. The RUPTL's fossil-fuel content predates the crisis and the ART, and the evidence reviewed does not show that the crisis reversed it. Fourth, in the maritime-legal domain, Indonesia's established legal position rests on non-suspendable ASL passage, while the Underwater Exclusion Zone is a scholarly proposal of contested legality and not an adopted policy. In answer to the coordination question embedded in the main research question, the evidence does not demonstrate a single coordinated strategy across the three domains. The posture is better characterized as reactive, domain-specific hedging constrained by pre-crisis commitments. This finding is tentative. It rests on public sources up to 2026, on a corpus whose size and composition are reported in Table 1, and on several claims (Class B) that depend on official or advocacy statements. Future research could strengthen these findings by consulting the full ART text and annexes to determine the legal status of the energy figures; checking ministerial decrees on coal quotas and RUPTL implementation; interviewing officials; and extending the timeline beyond 2026 to see whether the posture changed as the crisis evolved.

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