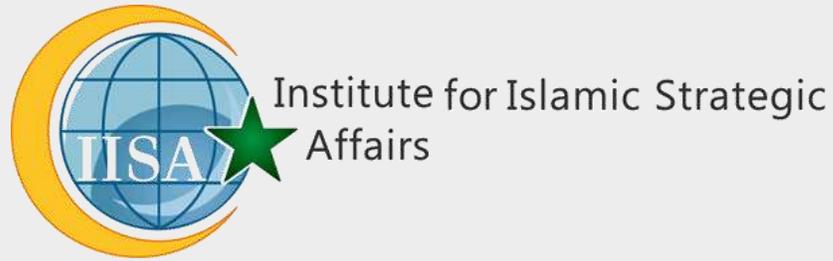


IISA's Blog Post



[INDONESIA'S NEW CABINET: A NEW HOPE?]

[IISA's global researcher 'Jaya Dani Mulyanto' provides analysis on the new cabinet formation in Indonesia and its implication on country's domestic and foreign policies.]

By 'Jaya Dani Mulyanto' in Indonesia

Indonesia's New Cabinet: A New Hope?

Spurring economic growth, igniting maritime power, and coping with separatism

The news of President Jokowi's new cabinet has received mixed reactions, a change from the enthusiasm which greeted the president's election by the local and international public. "A New Hope (for Democracy)" TIME magazine boldly asserted. However, following a tough week of selection, the new cabinet, which was announced on 26 October, stirred a lot of questions. There are four main concerns. First, the cabinet is considered to be heavily nuanced by cronyism, particularly the highly criticised link to Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of former president, Sukarno (who herself was president of Indonesia and the leader of Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle [PDIP] - which also happens to be Jokowi's party). However, it seems that Jokowi is committed to accommodating other political parties, which belong to the coalition group. There are 15 ministers having political party affiliations, out of a total of 34 figures. Second, the ministers have questionable track records. Some are believed to have corruption cases against them, even

though the Corruption Commission and the Financial Transactions Reports and Analysis Centre were involved in the cabinet selection process. Others are regarded as human rights violators, neo-liberal economy promoters, and mismatched with the religious and local values. Third, the promise to form a more streamlined cabinet has not been fulfilled as the number is still the same as the previous cabinet, despite a decrease in the number of deputy ministers from 17 to one. Thus, the efficiency and even the effectiveness of the cabinet are in doubt. Fourth, the change in the cabinet nomenclature has not resulted in boosting the public's confidence in its ability to solve fundamental and critical issues. Yet, despite the setbacks, the cabinet has successfully appointed eight female ministers, an unprecedented record in Indonesian history, paving the way for more gender mainstreaming and equality initiatives. Moreover, the cabinet rises to the diversity challenge, ensuring there are varied religious and ethnic representations. In addition, several key

figures possessing strong professional track records have been appointed, making a positive contribution to the cabinet. In summary, the profiles of the key ministers are detailed below.

Tjahjo Kumolo has been appointed the new Home Affairs minister. He is a senior member of the People Representative Council from PDIP, with more than 25 years of experience in his political career. As he was previously in charge of the General Secretary of PDIP, he is often viewed as being a member of Megawati's inner circle.

The Foreign Affairs minister, **Retno Marsudi**, is the first woman in Indonesia to hold the office. She is a senior diplomat, who was previously the Ambassador to the Netherlands, Norway, and Iceland as well as Director General for America and Europe. She was awarded the Order of Merit from King Harald V of Norway. The Defence Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu is an ex-Army Chief, who also has close ties with Megawati. Human rights activists have accused him of orchestrating the slaughter of separatists in Aceh and

condoning the assassination of Papuan separatist leader Theys Eluay, although he has denied all claims. He is also considered to have more conservative leanings in defence, prioritising more focus on the army and less on cooperation with other countries.

The newly appointed State Secretary **Pratikno** was the rector of Gajah Mada University, a top university in Indonesia. He also served as a professor in political science. The Development Planning Minister is Andrinof Chaniago, who was an academic, researcher and public policy observer. He is the executive director of Center for Indonesian Regional dan Urban Studies Surveyors Group. The Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs **Indroyono Soesilo** is the former director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and Conservation Division at Food and Agriculture Organization. The Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs is Tedjo Purdjianto, an ex-Navy Chief who was also one of the chairmen for the National Democrat party. Sofyan Djalil, the Coordinating Minister for the Economy previously held the positions

of Minister of Communications and Information Technology from 2004 – 2007, and Minister for State-owned Enterprises from 2007 - 2009. The Coordinating Minister of Human Development and Culture Puan Maharani, is the daughter of Megawati. Despite her having more than a decade of experience in the national legislative body, her appointment is still judged as controversial due to her familial ties.

The new Minister of Transportation is **Ignasius Jonan**, who was successfully evaluated as leading the state-owned Indonesia Train and Railways Company. The Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries is **Susi Pudjiastuti**, who holds a strong background in the private fisheries industry. Yet, she is often criticised for personal issues which are thought to be out of line with traditional and religious values. The Finance Minister is Bambang Brodjonegoro, who was previously the Deputy Finance Minister. The Minister of State-owned Enterprises, **Rini M. Soemarno**, is also a close confidant of Megawati. She was the Minister of Trade and Industry during Megawati's presidency, and she is

suspected of being involved in a corruption case. Rahmat Gobel, the new Minister of Trade, is also the president of the electronic company Panasonic Global Group. The Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, Sudirman Said, was formerly the president of a state-owned weapons-maker company and the deputy president of the oil, gas and mining contractor Petrosea.

In general, the cabinet appointments demonstrate Jokowi's priorities of the economic growth, maritime power, and curbing separatism. Jokowi's foreign policy is also likely to be formulated around the same issues. The cabinet, comprising of businesspersons, bureaucrats, and academics, were selected due to their strong managerial capabilities and entrepreneurial spirit to achieve the target of a 7 per cent economic growth. The new president has shown no strong indication of nationalising the economy or for opting out of market liberalisation, which was one of the hotly debated topics during the campaign period. Furthermore, eschewing China's invitation to participate in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank might be

an interesting indication of the administration's Western leanings. The US Secretary of State, John Kerry's, presence during the presidential inauguration and a meeting with the newly sworn president is further evidence of the direction Jokowi is likely to take regarding foreign policy. However, the administration will definitely face various challenges amidst the sluggish situation of the global economy and the deceleration of China's economy. Thus, revitalising maritime ideology and practice is another goal that is likely to be prioritised, due to the advantage posed by the world's biggest archipelago which suffered a long period of being ignored; the newly established Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and the unexpected choice of Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries are proof of Jokowi's intention. Yet, this goal will undoubtedly be intertwined with the geopolitical situation, especially the conflict in the South China Sea, China's dream of a revival of the Silk Road, and the US' pivotal role in the Asia Pacific. Border issues with Malaysia are also a key factor in the administration's maritime aspirations. The separatism issue mainly

pertains to Papua, the most eastern region of the country. While the previous administration did not achieve success in mitigating the separatism issue in Papua, Jokowi will be under pressure to make more significant gains than his predecessor. In fact, the appointment of the Foreign Minister, Retno Marsudi, is expected to deliver positive results by fostering diplomatic ties as she had formerly engaged with the issue of Timor Leste independence in Australia, and is esteemed for being successful in facing the Papua independence issue in the Netherlands. Moreover, she is also considered to be open and progressive in dealing with human rights issues. However, the appointment of Defense Minister, Ryamizard Ryacudu may be viewed as a setback for the administration due to his conservative approach and his reputation of being inflexible in defending territorial integrity. In addition, his tainted human rights record will be another problem, as well as his strained relationship with the US and Australia.

While the three issues of economic growth, maritime power, and separatism have become the primary

concern for the new administration, there are still many other issues which need to be tackled, such as terrorism and extremism, economic inequality, and environmental degradation. The choice of cabinet members has raised many questions and scepticism, a stark contrast to the enthusiasm heralded by the

election of Jokowi. There are several key issues which fall below both domestic and international public expectation and standards. With regards to this matter, Jokowi and his cabinet should be able to prove these concerns wrong and restore hope for Indonesia.

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