

CHINA'S RELATIONS WITH, DEVELOPING COUNTRIES INDONESIA

Pengajar di Fisip Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang
Program Studi Ilmu Komunikasi

Flori Mardiani Lubis
flori.mardianilubis@staff.unsika.ac.id

Abstract

With China's dynamic economic growth, the exchanges of high-level visits between China and other developing countries have strengthened political consultation and expanded their economic and trade cooperation. The Indonesian archipelago has been an important trade region since at least the seventh century, when the Srivijaya Kingdom traded with China and India. Local rulers gradually adopted Indian cultural, religious and political models from the early centuries, Hindu, Buddhist and Islam.

Relations between two of the world's most populous nations, China and Indonesia have been developing steadily which have also promoted regional peace and prosperity. China and Indonesia established diplomatic relations on April 13 1950, which was suspended on October 30 1967. And it developed gradually since the resumption of diplomatic relations of the two countries.

Key word : China relation, Developing country, China and Indonesia Relation.

INTRODUCTION

With China's dynamic economic growth, the exchanges of high-level visits between China and other developing countries have strengthened political consultation and expanded their economic and trade cooperation. For example, In April 2001, President Jiang Zemin successfully visited the six Latin American countries of Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Cuba, and Venezuela, and also had a cooperation between China and Latin American countries. In July 2001, President Jiang Zemin successively visited Malta, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. In January 2002, President Vojislav Kostunica of the Federa Republic of Yugoslavia paid a state visit to China and signed the "Sino-Yugoslavia Joint Statement". In November 2001, Chairman Li Peng visited Algeria and Tunisia. In January 2002, Jordan's King Abdullah II and Egypt's President Mubarak made state visits to China respectively. In February 2002, King Mohammed VI of Morocco visited China, to become the first Moroccan monarch to visit China.

INDONESIA

The Republic of Indonesia, is a country in Southeast Asia and Oceania. Indonesia comprises 17,508 islands, and with an estimated population of around 237 million people, it is the world's fourth most populous country, and has the largest Muslim population in the world. Indonesia is a republic, with an elected legislature and president. The nation's capital city is Jakarta. The transcontinental country shares land borders with Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Malaysia. Other neighboring countries include Singapore, Philippines, Australia, and the Indian territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands¹.

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Across its many islands, Indonesia consists of distinct ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. The Javanese are the largest and most politically dominant ethnic group. Indonesia has developed a shared identity defined by a national language, ethnic diversity, religious pluralism within a majority Muslim population, and a history of colonialism and rebellion against it.

CHINA AND INDONESIA

Relations between two of the world's most populous nations, China and Indonesia have been developing steadily which have also promoted regional peace and prosperity.

In the past, the economic relationship between Indonesia and China had not been smooth, mainly due to political reasons. However, increased integration of China into the world market

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia>

after its joining of the World Trade Organization (WTO) provides the opportunity for an economic relationship that is more detached from politics.

- *POLITICS*

Historical

Chinese Indonesians (印度尼西亚华人) are ethnically Chinese people living in Indonesia, as a result of centuries of overseas Chinese migration. Chinese Indonesian people are diverse in their origins, timing and circumstances of immigration to Indonesia, and level of ties to China. Many trace their origins to the southern parts of China, such as Fujian, Guangdong and Hainan provinces².

Most Chinese who migrated to Indonesia came as traders or labourers. Colonial policies made it difficult for Chinese to acquire land, and the only region with a significant Chinese farmer population was West Kalimantan. The largest waves of Chinese migration happened during early to middle Dutch colonial era (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries) seeking to find new opportunities of trade.

Race relations between the Chinese Indonesians and native Indonesians (*pribumi*) have always been problematic, and remain so up to the present. Some commentators trace this to the Dutch era when colonial policy favored the ethnic Chinese, and in so doing established their economic dominance over the region.

The caste system established by the Dutch also made it disadvantageous for ethnic Chinese to assimilate into the native population. Assimilation would mean being placed in the lowest estate together with the natives. Ethnic Chinese, together with Arabs and other "foreign orientals" were members of the second estate. The first estate was reserved for Europeans³.

During the 1945–1950 National Revolution to secure independence from the Dutch, few Chinese Indonesians were involved in the Indonesian Republican army. Following independence, the Japanese and Dutch companies were deserted. The new government sold the companies at very cheap prices, and Chinese Indonesians quickly assimilated these companies. However, many *pribumis* sought to curb this effort, and they were successful in accusing Chinese Indonesians of unpatriotic ways during the war (as they were rarely involved in armed conflicts). The fledgling Indonesian government forced many to relinquish acquired properties. This would be the first of many Chinese Indonesian restrictions on personal rights. Political activity was greatly reduced, but not eliminated.

Discrimination worsened as the economy became increasingly dominated by Chinese Indonesians. The *pribumis* decried the government's lackluster effort to provide a level playing field and sought even more aggressive predicaments. This further escalated the tension of the

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Indonesian

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Indonesian

already uneasy relationship between *pribumis* and Chinese Indonesian, as *pribumis* always considered Chinese Indonesians as the agents of the colonials. The tendency of Chinese Indonesians to flock together in *Pecinan* or Chinatowns, segregated from the *pribumis*, exacerbated the situation.

In 1959, President Soekarno⁴ approved PP 10/1959, a directive that forced Chinese Indonesians to close their businesses in rural areas and relocate to urban areas. Enforcement was brutal; in one 1967 incident in Western Kalimantan, 42,000 accused separatists were slaughtered.

On President Soeharto⁵ era Chinese Indonesian were blurred because Soeharto treated them alike. They were all forced to change their names to Indonesian sounding ones. This law is considered as one of the most humiliating ones to those in the Chinese community in Indonesia since by doing so, they are forced to lose their family name. Between 1965 and 1975, army and police officers were rampant in abusing Chinese Indonesians, such as openly robbing and raping their families. During this time, police could abuse any people using Chinese language. At this time China and Indonesia diplomatic relations was suspended due to the occurrence of the September 30 event of 1965⁶.

China was suspected of complicity with the PKI⁷ in planning the coup and was viewed by the new ABRI⁸-dominated government as a threat through its possible support of a resurgent underground PKI, both directly and through a "fifth column" of Chinese Indonesians. Indonesia repeatedly demanded an explicit disavowal by China of support for communist insurgents in Southeast Asia as its sine qua non for a normalization process. Underlying the Indonesian policy was unease about China's long-range goals in Southeast Asia. The break in relations persisted until 1990, when, in the face of renewed mutual confidence, the two countries resumed their formal ties. The normalized relation boded well for resolving the status of some 300,000 stateless Chinese-descent residents of Indonesia and improving political and economic relations between the two nations. An exchange of visits by Chinese premier Li Peng to Jakarta in August 1990 and by Suharto to Beijing in November 1990 symbolized the dramatic alteration that had taken place.

In 1998, the fall of Suharto's 32-year presidency, large riots targeted the Chinese Indonesians in another series of pogroms. Chinese homes were looted and burned, and many Chinese people were raped or killed. The events in 1998 were significant because unlike earlier pogroms against Chinese Indonesians, due to the Internet, this incident spread worldwide in real-time, and aroused the interest and feelings of the ethnic Chinese around the world, leading to demonstrations against Indonesia in many countries with significant Chinese populations and protests to the government of Indonesia.

⁴ The 1st President of Republic of Indonesia.

⁵ The 2nd President of Republic of Indonesia

⁶ attempted coup d'état of President Soekarno.

⁷ Indonesian Communist Party

⁸ Indonesian Military

Reformation Era

After Abdurrahman Wahid was elected president in 1999⁹, he quickly abolished some of the discriminatory laws in efforts to improve race relationships. Wahid released Presidential Decree 6 of 2000¹⁰ and allowed Chinese religion and traditions be practiced freely without the need of a permit. Two years later, President Megawati Sukarnoputri¹¹ declared that Chinese New Year¹² would be marked as a national holiday beginning in 2003. The teaching of Chinese language was once again permitted following a presidential instruction by B. J. Habibie¹³ in 1998.

Chinese languages were banned from 1965 to 1994 in Indonesian television, but its use did not come until years later. In November 2000, Metro TV would become the first to broadcast news in Mandarin to local television stations since broadcasting began in Indonesia. Radio Cakrawala in Jakarta also added music and news programming in Mandarin at the same time.

According to Citizenship Law 12 of 2006, the distinction between Indonesian natives¹⁴ and non-natives were abolished, and only the distinction between Indonesian nationals¹⁵ and foreign national¹⁶ remained. During Chinese New Year celebrations in 2007, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono reaffirmed his commitment to replacing the term *Cina* with *Tionghoa* peoples of Chinese descent and *Tiongkok* to describe the People's Republic of China in order to avoid the term's negative connotations.

Since China and Indonesia agreed to strategic partnership in 2005, there have been significant engagements in political, security, economic, and socio-cultural affairs. In politics, both countries have signed cooperation (agreements) in various fields, such as the exchange of officers and information, people-to-people contact, such as exchange of students, for better understanding. And there are even plans for China to provide Indonesia with military equipment. With the signing of an agreement between the two defense ministers, there are detailed action plans to follow. Indonesia is also looking forward to the signing of an extradition treaty.

Indonesia has consistently exercised the 'one China' policy, meaning that Indonesia has only recognized the People's Republic of China (PRC) and develop and maintain diplomatic

⁹ The 3rd President of Republic of Indonesia

¹⁰ which repealed Presidential Instruction 14 of 1967 on Chinese Religion, Beliefs, and Traditions

¹¹ The 4th President of Republic of Indonesia

¹² known as *Imlek* in Indonesia

¹³ The 5th President of Republic of Indonesia

¹⁴ Pribumi

¹⁵ Warga Negara Indonesia (WNI)

¹⁶ Warga Negara Asing (WNA)

relations with Beijing. Indonesia fully respects the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of PRC over Taiwan.

CONCLUSION

China and Indonesia established diplomatic relations on April 13 1950, which was suspended on October 30 1967. And it developed gradually since the resumption of diplomatic relations of the two countries.

The improvement in China and Indonesia relations follows a long and checkered history of mistrust, suspicion, anger and resentment since 1967. Diplomatic and trade relations between the two countries were severed then, in the aftermath of what the Suharto regime said was an attempted communist coup by the PKI (the Indonesian Communist Party).

Renewal of diplomatic ties under President Abdurrahman Wahid in 1990 heralded in a gradual improvement in bilateral relations that has continued since. The dark days of the past were finally laid to rest when Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Hu Jintao signed a historical Indonesia-China Joint Declaration in Beijing on April 25 2005.

The largest populations of Chinese Indonesians today are in the cities of Jakarta (the capital city of Indonesia), Surabaya (the capital city of East Java Province), Medan (the capital city of North Sumatera Province), Pekanbaru (the capital city of Riau Province), Semarang (the capital city of Central Java Province), Pontianak (the capital city of West Kalimantan Province), Makassar (the capital city of South Sulawesi Province), Palembang (the capital city of South Sumatra, Bangka, Belitung and Bandung (the capital city of West Java).

The two countries, China and Indonesia have agreed to continue improving bilateral relations which have run better. Indonesia and China also discussed steps the two countries had to take to further improve their bilateral relations in the framework of the 60th anniversary of their diplomatic relations.

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