



Indonesia's 2023 ASEAN Chairmanship: A Stag Hunt Game Analysis of Indonesia's Behaviour in Facing the Myanmar Conflict

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Abstract

This research examines the rational choice available to Indonesia in facing the Myanmar conflict in the context of Indonesia's 2023 ASEAN chairmanship. The conflict in Myanmar is a complex and multifaceted issue involving various ethnic groups, political actors, and external influences. It is rooted in historical, political, and socio-economic grievances, with deep-seated ethnic and religious divisions exacerbating tensions. The military coup of February 2021 further escalated the conflict, leading to widespread protests, violence, and human rights abuses. The international community, including ASEAN and other regional powers, has attempted to mediate and facilitate a resolution to the crisis, but progress has been slow and difficult, and the situation in Myanmar continues to pose a significant challenge to regional and global stability. This research uses a qualitative method, collecting and analysing secondary data published by institutions, organisations, and other credible sources. Rational choice theory and Stag Hunt game theory are used to analyse the complexity of Indonesia's position in the Myanmar conflict. The research finds that Indonesia's rational choice in facing the Myanmar conflict during its chairmanship has largely been a lone movement at the bilateral, regional, and international levels, although there remains a hope for stronger and more concrete cooperation with partners in implementing the Five-Point Consensus, relevant UN resolutions, and other measures.

Keywords: Indonesia, ASEAN, Myanmar, Rational Choise, Stag Hunt

INTRODUCTION

The Myanmar government has long been accused of committing human rights abuses against ethnic minority groups, including forced labour, displacement, and violence (Ekeh & Smith, 2007, pp. 1–5). Since independence, multiple ethnic insurgencies have taken root in Myanmar (Cline, 2009, p. 574). Various ethnic groups have formed armed opposition movements, with some fighting for autonomy or independence from the central government. The conflict has led to widespread displacement and suffering, affecting millions of people over the decades.

One of the most visible and controversial dimensions of Myanmar's ethnic conflict is the treatment of the Rohingya, a Muslim ethnic minority that has faced persecution and



violence at the hands of the Myanmar military and Buddhist nationalists (Mohajan, 2018, p. 1). The Rohingya have been subjected to violence, forced displacement, and denial of basic rights, culminating in a devastating military “clearance operation” launched in August 2017 that killed thousands of people and displaced hundreds of thousands more (Mahmood et al., 2017, pp. 1841–1850). Having been denied recognition as one of Myanmar’s official ethnic groups, the Rohingya were effectively stripped of citizenship under the 1982 Citizenship Law. Following the 2017 crackdown, more than 700,000 Rohingya fled across the border into Bangladesh within a matter of months, many undertaking dangerous journeys by land and sea, joining several hundred thousand Rohingya already displaced from earlier waves of violence dating back to 1978 (Mahmood et al., 2017, pp. 1841–1850; UNHCR, 2024).

Myanmar’s constitution recognises eight major ethnic groups as “national races” of the country: the Bamar (Burmans), Chin, Kachin, Karen, Kayah (Karenni), Mon, Rakhine (Arakanese), and Shan (Holliday, 2014, p. 410). These groups are granted specific rights and protections under the constitution, including the right to preserve and promote their culture and language. Beyond these eight groups, numerous other ethnic minorities in Myanmar are not officially recognised by the constitution and face marginalisation in access to public services such as healthcare and education. Following the 1962 and subsequent military consolidations of power, ethnic minorities were further marginalised and discriminated against through restrictions on their political and civil rights (Kramer, 2010, p. 51).

Although the 2015 general election saw Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy (NLD) win a landslide victory after nearly three decades of military-dominated rule (Ladd, 2022, p. 1), the democratically elected government was overthrown by the military (the Tatmadaw) on 1 February 2021 (Bhattacharya & Raghuvanshi, 2021, p. 31). Citing alleged irregularities in the 2020 general election, which the NLD had won decisively, the military declared a state of emergency and detained Aung San Suu Kyi along with other senior NLD officials.

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the coup was widely condemned by world leaders because the escalating violence severely undermined Myanmar’s pandemic response (Rocha et al., 2021). In his first months in office, US President Joe Biden imposed new sanctions on Myanmar (Drezner, 2021, p. 142), while the European Union likewise imposed sanctions

against members of the junta (European Council, 2023). The UN Security Council subsequently adopted Resolution 2669, which was passed by a vote of 12 in favour to none against, with three abstentions from China, India, and Russia among the Council's 15 members (United Nations, 2022). Against this backdrop, ASEAN held an emergency summit on 24 April 2021, convening all ASEAN leaders together with Myanmar's de facto military leader, Min Aung Hlaing (Rocha et al., 2021), reflecting a broader regional and international recognition that the compounded crisis of conflict and pandemic in Myanmar demanded a coordinated response.

At that Jakarta summit, ASEAN reached the Five-Point Consensus, a joint statement accepted by the Myanmar delegation (Majid, 2022, p. 5). The consensus set out a series of steps intended to facilitate a peaceful resolution to the crisis (ASEAN, 2021):

1. The immediate cessation of violence and initiation of dialogue among all parties in Myanmar;
2. The appointment of a special envoy from ASEAN to facilitate the dialogue process;
3. The provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar;
4. The deployment of ASEAN observers to monitor the situation on the ground;
5. The building of constructive relationships among all parties to the crisis.

As ASEAN chair in 2021, Brunei convened the special summit that produced this agreement (ASEAN, 2021), with the leaders of all ten ASEAN member states and the ASEAN Secretary-General participating virtually. The summit was viewed as a significant demonstration of ASEAN's commitment to addressing the Myanmar crisis, though Brunei's overall response drew criticism for being comparatively muted relative to other regional and international actors (Anadolu Agency, 2021). The summit's final statement urged an immediate end to violence and dialogue among all parties but stopped short of explicitly calling for the restoration of democratic rule or the release of political prisoners, and it did not include representatives of the ousted civilian government or Myanmar's civil society (Anadolu Agency, 2021).

Despite these criticisms, ASEAN's engagement under Brunei's chairmanship was regarded as an important first step toward bringing stakeholders together, even as ongoing violence continued to constrain progress. Brunei's second foreign minister, Erywan Yusof, was subsequently appointed as ASEAN's special envoy to Myanmar, but he ultimately cancelled his planned visit after the junta refused to grant him access to opposition figures, including

Aung San Suu Kyi (Piromya, 2023). Although the envoy was mandated to engage with all parties to the crisis, the military government retained effective control over the extent of ASEAN's involvement on the ground.

As ASEAN chair in 2022, Cambodia faced a demanding agenda that included the lingering pandemic, economic headwinds, the Taiwan Strait crisis, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the ongoing civil war in Myanmar (Vun & Rim, 2023). Among these, the Myanmar crisis had the most immediate impact on the regional bloc, and Cambodia's leadership paid numerous visits to the region in response. Although implementation of the Five-Point Consensus made little headway during Cambodia's tenure, Indonesia as ASEAN's incoming chair for 2023 could draw lessons from both Brunei's and Cambodia's experiences.

After Indonesian President Joko Widodo called for the junta to be barred from major ASEAN events, Cambodia moved to reject Myanmar's invitation to a defence-related meeting, a notable reversal for a government that had previously shown a greater propensity to engage the junta (Detsch, 2022). Even so, ASEAN faced criticism at its 2022 summit in Cambodia for failing to take more decisive action to exclude junta officials from the bloc's meetings altogether.

Following Aung San Suu Kyi's transfer to prison, Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn called on Myanmar's military administration to reinstate her house arrest (Turton, 2022). Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen subsequently proposed Sokhonn as ASEAN's special envoy to Myanmar, and in correspondence with Myanmar's junta-appointed foreign minister, Sokhonn expressed disappointment over Suu Kyi's continued detention and over international perceptions of Myanmar's democratisation process, while also defending his government's decision to engage directly with the junta (Strangio, 2021a).

According to the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), China has positioned itself as a strategic external partner for ASEAN in managing the Myanmar crisis, given its capacity to exert pressure on the junta (Ayudiana, 2023). Yet while China remains one of the junta's principal external backers, it has also sought to avoid destabilising its broader relationship with Southeast Asia. During Indonesia's 2023 chairmanship, Myanmar was again excluded from the ASEAN Summit in Labuan Bajo, even as China continued to extend support to the junta illustrated by Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang's visit to Myanmar and Beijing's public statements encouraging Myanmar to "choose its own path" of development (Romana, 2023).

Beyond China, Russia has also maintained significant leverage in Myanmar. The United States has assessed that ending Russian arms transfers to Myanmar would be central to de-escalating the country's civil war (Tempo.co, 2023). Myanmar signed a US\$400 million contract with Russia in January 2018 to acquire six Su-30SME multirole fighter jets, deliveries of which were completed in stages between 2022 and late 2024 (Armyrecognition.com, 2025; Militarnyi, 2026). The aircraft have since become central to the Myanmar Air Force's operations, reinforcing its military position relative to neighbouring air forces.

The United States, together with the United Kingdom, Japan, and Australia, has condemned the junta for the coup and expressed concern that the regime's push for elections could generate further instability (Ratcliffe, 2023). Analysis published by The Diplomat has argued that the assistance authorised under the US BURMA Act should be understood not as a one-off gesture but as the first step in building sustained political engagement between the National Unity Government (NUG) and exiled Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) on one hand, and the US government on the other, laying groundwork for expanded future support to Myanmar's pro-democracy movement (Hein, 2023). These responses have been important in signalling to the public that the US remains an important actor in the Myanmar conflict.

Indonesia formally assumed the ASEAN chairmanship for 2023 (The Jakarta Post, 2022), its fourth term in the role after 1976, 2003, and 2011. The transfer of the chairmanship from Cambodia to Indonesia at the November 2022 ASEAN Summit was widely welcomed and viewed as a continuation of Indonesia's international standing following its 2022 G20 presidency, providing a platform for Indonesia to showcase its economic and health diplomacy. President Joko Widodo announced the chairmanship theme "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth" in Phnom Penh.

Indonesia has worked largely behind the scenes to advance progress during its chairmanship. As ASEAN's special envoy to Myanmar throughout Indonesia's chairmanship year, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi adopted a low public profile, favouring what has been described as "quiet diplomacy" (The Jakarta Post, 2023). Moe Thuzar, senior fellow and coordinator of the ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute's Myanmar Studies Programme, has argued that maintaining continuity of attention on Myanmar's crisis would require the special envoy role to be institutionalised as a standing ASEAN Special Envoy on Myanmar, rather than being re-appointed with each annual chair rotation (Robinson, 2023).

Prior to assuming the ASEAN chairmanship, Indonesia had already undertaken three notable efforts concerning the Myanmar junta. First, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi engaged in “shuttle diplomacy,” visiting Brunei, Singapore, and Thailand to build support for a coordinated response encouraging Myanmar’s democratic transition (Septiari, 2021). Second, Indonesia lobbied for ASEAN to take a more active role in addressing Myanmar’s political crisis (Strangio, 2021b). Third, at the G20 summit, Indonesia raised the Myanmar crisis in bilateral discussions, though this did not translate into a concrete follow-up plan (Indonesia.go.id, 2022).

As ASEAN chair in 2023, Indonesia convened the 32nd ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) Meeting and ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Retreat, as well as the 42nd ASEAN Summit. According to ASEAN’s official press statement, the ACC Meeting and Foreign Ministers’ Retreat resulted only in a statement addressing the situation in Myanmar, without a concrete plan of action (ASEAN, 2023). Similarly, the 42nd ASEAN Summit’s outcome document did not articulate a clear plan of action; ASEAN leaders condemned the attack on the regional humanitarian aid team (the AHA Centre) and the ASEAN Monitoring Team in Hseng Township, Shan State, and reiterated calls for Myanmar’s compliance with the Five-Point Consensus (Kementerian Kominfo, 2023). To demonstrate to junta officials how Indonesia achieved its own transition to democracy, Indonesia also planned to send a senior general to Myanmar (Lamb, Suroyo, & Teresia, 2023).

According to reporting by Nikkei Asia, implementation of the Five-Point Consensus has continued to face significant obstacles (Robinson, 2023). First, although there is broad consensus on the need for an immediate end to violence and restraint by all sides, the military administration has continued escalating its campaign against resistance forces, rebel groups, and ethnic armed organisations. Second, despite Indonesia’s claims of incremental progress as ASEAN chair, key parties on both sides have declined to engage in substantive negotiations. Third, while Brunei and Cambodia each appointed a special envoy, Indonesia instead established a dedicated Office of the Special Envoy in Jakarta. Fourth, the provision of humanitarian aid mandated under the consensus remains stalled. Finally, while the consensus envisions that the special envoy and accompanying delegations should be able to visit Myanmar and meet with all parties, prior envoys including Cambodia’s have been denied full access.

As ASEAN chair in 2023, there was hope that Indonesia could achieve more meaningful progress toward peace in Myanmar. During the Brunei and Cambodia

chairmanships, ASEAN established the Five-Point Consensus and appointed special envoys for dialogue, though the junta consistently restricted envoys' access to all relevant parties. In its own chairmanship, Indonesia initially adopted "quiet diplomacy" in an effort to build trust among all stakeholders (France 24, 2023). Yet Indonesia also did not invite Myanmar to the 42nd ASEAN Summit, an apparent tension with its stated aim of building trust with all parties. This tension raises the central question addressed in this research: what was the rational choice available to Indonesia in facing the Myanmar conflict during its ASEAN chairmanship?

ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

This research draws on rational choice theory and game theory specifically the Stag Hunt game to analyse the rational choice available to Indonesia in facing Myanmar's conflict. Rational choice theory is useful for evaluating the best available option for Indonesia as ASEAN chair in dealing with the Myanmar crisis, while the Stag Hunt game serves as an analytical device for understanding Indonesia's behaviour in relation to other actors.

Rational choice has been one of the primary approaches in the post-war study of international relations (IR). It has improved scholarly understanding of issues such as the effects of anarchy and the conditions for cooperation, and it has helped frame theoretical debates about international politics more broadly (Snidal, 2013, p. 85). In the context of international relations, rational choice theory helps explain a range of state behaviours, including decisions to go to war, participation in international organisations, and the use of economic sanctions. The theory assumes that states are the primary actors in international relations and that their decisions are driven by the pursuit of national interest.

To complement the rational choice approach, this research employs the Stag Hunt as its game-theoretic framework. The Stag Hunt originates as a parable later formalised as a game representing a social compact. In *A Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau recounts a tale in which hunters understand that each must remain at his post while hunting a deer, yet each would abandon that post without hesitation should a hare happen to pass by (Skyrms, 2004, p. 1). The hunters' only available choices are hare or stag. A hare can always be secured regardless of what others do, whereas a stag cannot be caught by a single hunter acting alone the likelihood of a successful stag hunt rises only as more hunters cooperate. A hare, however, is worth considerably less than a stag. This structure of interdependent choice under uncertainty is what is now known as the "Stag Hunt."

The rational decision made by any one player in the Stag Hunt depends on that player's expectations about the other player's decision, making the game a useful model for social collaboration. Both the hare and stag strategies constitute equilibria, but each participant must decide without knowing what the other will choose. Successfully hunting a stag requires a partner's cooperation, whereas a hare can be secured independently, albeit for a smaller reward. A player who chooses to hunt stag risks the possibility that the other player will not cooperate; a player who chooses to hunt hare faces no such risk, since the reward is independent of the other's decision, but forfeits the larger payoff a successful stag hunt would have yielded (Skyrms, 2004, p. 32).

The Stag Hunt deserves particular attention because, in its fullest sense, it captures multi-person interactions and models both large- and small-scale social contracts (Skyrms, 2004, p. 38). This makes it a useful lens for analysing Indonesia's decisions under conditions of uncertainty in facing the Myanmar conflict during its chairmanship, since the theory foregrounds the different patterns of social interaction between Indonesia and the other relevant actors.

In this research, Indonesia and each of the other actors examined Myanmar, fellow ASEAN member states, the UN Security Council, the United States, China, and Russia are analogised as hunters in this multi-person interaction (Skyrms, 2004, p. 38). Because no hunter knows in advance what the others will choose, each actor must decide whether to pursue the higher-value but riskier "stag" of concerted cooperative action or the lower-value but safer "hare" of unilateral, low-risk engagement. Cooperation makes a stag attainable, but only if partners can be relied upon; if a hunter cannot be confident of others' cooperation, hunting hare requiring less effort, time, and risk becomes the rational choice. This framework structures the results and discussion that follow.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative method. Qualitative research is a flexible and iterative approach involving the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data to generate rich, detailed descriptions of social phenomena. In qualitative research, participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions are among the most commonly used data collection techniques (Moser & Korstjens, 2018, p. 9); this study, however, relies primarily on the collection, analysis, and interpretation of secondary data. This approach is well suited to generating a rich and detailed account of the rational choice underlying Indonesia's behaviour

as ASEAN chair in facing the Myanmar conflict, drawing on official ASEAN and UN documents, government and press statements, and peer-reviewed scholarly literature as the principal secondary sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section analyses the rational choice underlying Indonesia's behaviour as ASEAN chair in facing the Myanmar conflict. It begins with an overview of Indonesia's Free and Active Foreign Policy and its expression under President Joko Widodo, before applying the Stag Hunt framework to Indonesia's relations with Myanmar, ASEAN, the United Nations, the United States, China, and Russia. It concludes by drawing together these threads into an overall argument about Indonesia's rational choice during its chairmanship.

Since the end of the Cold War, Indonesia has continued to apply its Free and Active Foreign Policy, though its application has evolved from the bipolar constraints of the Cold War era toward a more dynamic posture suited to a multipolar international system that allows Indonesia to cultivate a broader range of partnerships (Anwar, 2020). This dynamism forms the backdrop against which Indonesia's specific choices regarding Myanmar can be understood.

During Cambodia's chairmanship, President Joko Widodo was the first ASEAN leader to publicly call for the junta to be barred from major ASEAN events (Detsch, 2022), a stance that followed earlier criticism of Brunei's relatively muted response to the crisis (Anadolu Agency, 2021). Although Myanmar's junta had agreed to the Five-Point Consensus during the April 2021 meeting with ASEAN leaders, more than a year on it had still not implemented or complied with the agreement (Nadi, 2022).

These dynamics have shaped Indonesia's behaviour in significant ways. Within the Stag Hunt framework, Indonesia has generally avoided taking the risk of relying on bilateral or purely regional engagement with Myanmar alone. Given the junta's persistent non-compliance with the Five-Point Consensus and the continued escalation of violence documented in the preceding section including the long-standing pattern of violence against ethnic minorities (Ekeh & Smith, 2007, pp. 1–5) and the Rohingya in particular (Mohajan, 2018, p. 1) Indonesia has been cautious about relying solely on communication and dialogue with Myanmar, recognising that doing so risks forfeiting the larger "stag" payoff of a genuine resolution without any guarantee of cooperation from the junta.

In relation to ASEAN, achieving genuine solidarity among member states has proven to be a long and difficult process, complicated by internal polarisation. Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam took part in an informal dialogue on the Myanmar issue hosted by Thailand in December 2022, while other ASEAN members chose not to attend (Harsono, 2023). This “track 1.5” dialogue also involving Bangladesh, India, and the junta raised questions about why Indonesia should continue to anchor its approach around the Five-Point Consensus when other members appeared willing to engage the junta informally. Thailand, in particular, demonstrated a preference for maintaining close ties with the junta even as its own general election approached, while Laos and Russia both close to the junta continued strengthening their bilateral relationship over the preceding year (Hutt, 2023). Separately, Reuters reported that certain ASEAN members, including Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos, engaged in both formal and informal meetings with Myanmar figures, even as other members declined to attend Thailand’s informal gathering (Reuters, 2022). Beyond these divisions, ASEAN as a bloc took no concrete punitive action in response to the attack on the AHA Centre’s humanitarian team and the ASEAN Monitoring Team, issuing only a statement of condemnation (Kementerian Kominfo, 2023). Early in its chairmanship, Indonesia opted for quiet diplomacy in an effort to build trust among all ASEAN members (France 24, 2023).

Viewed through the Stag Hunt framework, Indonesia’s calculus regarding ASEAN reflects a similar logic. As the “hunter,” Indonesia had reason to observe that other ASEAN members had not fully committed to the Five-Point Consensus as the sole framework for engaging Myanmar, given their willingness to hold informal talks with junta officials. Relying entirely on ASEAN-wide consolidation around the Five-Point Consensus therefore carried real risk, since there was no guarantee that all members would follow through. Given the experiences of Brunei and Cambodia as previous chairs both of which found the consensus difficult to implement Indonesia had grounds to treat full consolidation around the consensus as a long-term project rather than a near-term guarantee, and it accordingly avoided staking its chairmanship entirely on that outcome. Indonesia’s use of quiet diplomacy to build trust among ASEAN members reflects this more cautious, risk-averse posture (France 24, 2023; Robinson, 2023).

Indonesia’s foreign policy has also evolved substantially since President Joko Widodo took office in October 2014, with a more pronounced emphasis on domestic priorities relative to global engagement compared with earlier administrations (Rosyidin, 2017, p. 13). As the third-largest Asian power after China and India, Indonesia nonetheless has strong incentives to

remain engaged in global contestation, requiring it to weigh its international commitments through a similarly rational calculus.

At the multilateral level, Indonesia has maintained a constructive relationship with the United Nations, including a term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council alongside Germany, South Africa, Belgium, and the Dominican Republic for 2019–2020 (Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2019). On Myanmar specifically, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2669, though China, India, and Russia abstained (United Nations, 2022). Human Rights Watch has since called for more concrete Security Council action given the junta's continued non-compliance, urging Indonesia's foreign minister and the UN's special envoy to press the Council on documented torture, killings, unlawful arrests, and war crimes committed by the junta (Human Rights Watch, 2023). Within the Stag Hunt framework, Indonesia cannot simply rely on the UN Security Council as a fully cooperative partner: despite Indonesia's constructive relationship with the Council, there is no guarantee that it will take further concrete action on Myanmar. In this sense, the “stag” outcome a decisive, binding Security Council response remains costly and uncertain for Indonesia to pursue, given how protracted concerted action between Indonesia and the Council on this issue has proven to be.

The involvement of the United States and China in the Myanmar conflict is also examined here, specifically from the standpoint of how it shapes Indonesia's own position. Tierney (2021) has noted the prospect of US–China strategic competition playing out in Myanmar in ways that echo dynamics seen in the South China Sea, underscoring why the involvement of these two powers merits close analysis. The international response to Myanmar has also differed markedly from the response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine: whereas major Asian and Western states responded to the invasion of Ukraine within days with sanctions and arms transfers, the international reaction to the February 2021 coup in Myanmar was comparatively muted (Abuza, 2023). Consistent with its Free and Active Foreign Policy, Indonesia maintains diplomatic relations with both the United States and China.

Within the Stag Hunt framework, Indonesia's posture toward both the US and China on the Myanmar issue can likewise be characterised as risk-averse. Although the US has condemned the coup and enacted the BURMA Act, concrete on-the-ground action remains limited, and the Act's stated aim of building political engagement with the NUG and EAOs remains a longer-term commitment rather than an immediate concrete result (Hein, 2023). Indonesia cannot reliably predict how far the US will follow through on implementing the Act, making a cautious, low-risk posture the safer option if US follow-through proves limited. With

respect to China, Indonesia similarly adopts a cautious stance, given Beijing's substantial ongoing engagement with Myanmar. Although China has positioned itself as a strategic external partner for ASEAN in addressing the crisis, it has not demonstrated strong commitment to resolving the conflict in practice (Ayudiana, 2023), and it was among the three states that abstained on UN Security Council Resolution 2669 (United Nations, 2022).

The final relationship examined is that between Indonesia and Russia, both of which can be characterised as pursuing the lower-risk “hare” strategy in this context. The United States has assessed that ending the Myanmar conflict is closely tied to ending Russian arms transfers to the junta (Tempo.co, 2023), and reporting indicates that Russia closely aligned with the junta has continued deepening this relationship in recent years (Hutt, 2023). Russia was also among the states that abstained on Resolution 2669. Under the Stag Hunt logic, it would be difficult for Russia to be considered a reliable partner in pursuing the “stag” outcome of a democratic, peaceful settlement in Myanmar, given its continued military and political support for the junta. For Indonesia, then, the lower-risk “hare” option limited, cautious engagement rather than a high-stakes bet on deep cooperation with Russia represents the more rational choice, requiring comparatively less effort, time, and exposure to risk.

CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding analysis, Indonesia's rational choice in facing the Myanmar conflict during its ASEAN chairmanship has largely taken the form of a lone movement at the bilateral, regional, and international levels, even as hope remains for stronger, more concrete cooperation with partners in implementing the Five-Point Consensus, relevant UN resolutions, and other measures. Guided by its Free and Active Foreign Policy, Indonesia has positioned itself as a strategic actor in relation to Myanmar, ASEAN, the UN Security Council, the United States, China, and Russia, but this position has been shaped by clear limitations.

First, Indonesia could not safely rely on its special envoy alone to influence Myanmar's compliance with the Five-Point Consensus; the experiences of Brunei and Cambodia suggest that such an approach carries a high cost relative to its likely payoff. Second, while fellow ASEAN members remain strategic partners for Indonesia, persistent polarisation among them regarding how to engage Myanmar has limited the value of relying on ASEAN-wide consolidation alone. Third, the UN Security Council and the United States are important strategic partners for Indonesia as ASEAN chair, yet neither has translated its formal instruments Resolution 2669 and the BURMA Act, respectively into a concrete, sustained plan

of action on the ground. Fourth, although China and Russia remain partners of Indonesia and ASEAN in a broader sense, both abstained on Resolution 2669, underscoring the risk Indonesia would face in staking its approach on their full cooperation.

Taken together, these constraints help explain why Indonesia has been reluctant to take the risk of a fully cooperative, “stag hunt” strategy without stronger assurance of reciprocal commitment from other actors. Pursuing a more cautious, largely independent approach the lower-risk “hare” strategy therefore represents the more rational choice available to Indonesia under the conditions that prevailed during its 2023 ASEAN chairmanship.

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