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## Soft Power Strategy: The Role of Indonesia's Diplomacy in the Peace Mission to the Russian-Ukraine Conflict

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### ABSTRACT

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has adversely affected global stability and triggered crises. Indonesia took the initiative to facilitate the peace mission. This study aims to analyze the concept and application of soft power strategies in Indonesia's diplomacy related to the peace mission in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict. A qualitative explanatory method is used to explain the reasons underlying this move. Data collection was conducted through a literature study, while data analysis used a qualitative approach. Soft Power Theory was used as a theoretical framework to understand how Indonesia uses its power of attraction in diplomacy, while the First Track Diplomacy Concept became the foundation to understand the government's direct role in resolving conflicts. The results showed that Indonesia used the first line diplomacy instrument as part of its peace mission in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This is realized through the use of dialogue, negotiation, and cooperation efforts made by both countries. This is in line with Indonesia's Soft Power goals which seek to improve security in the external environment through the projection of an image as a peaceful and attractive country.

### KEYWORDS

Conflict; Indonesian Diplomacy; Russia-Ukraine; Soft Power

## INTRODUCTION

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has a complex global impact. Beginning on February 20, 2022, the conflict had widespread implications for international politics, economics, and security. Russia decided to conduct what they called a 'special military operation' to protect ethnic Russians in the Donbas and Luhansk regions from threats it claimed were coming from the government in Kyiv ([Hakim & Sadiyin, 2022](#)). This intervention has sparked a protracted conflict, with Ukraine receiving military support from NATO, resulting in unresolved tensions at the time of writing ([Jeffrey, 2022](#)). The conflict between the two countries poses significant new challenges on the international stage ([Sudiq & Yustitiantingtyas, 2022](#)).

The battle to win the debate by optimizing the use of rhetoric, such as strong logic, interesting language style, use of convincing evidence, and so on between Russia and Ukraine, has made the resolution of the conflict difficult. Russia claims that Ukraine intends to expand its alliance eastward, which is considered a threat to Russia's existence. Russia also accuses NATO of supporting Ukraine. This claim became the basis for Russia's intervention. However, Ukraine and NATO deny these allegations. They emphasized that Russia has no right to intervene in an independent country ([Widiassa, 2018](#)). Both Russia and Ukraine expect that the war will end shortly because of negative impacts from sanctions placed on Russia by the United States and NATO, as well as negative accusations made by some heads of state in the blocs ([Fisipol, 2022](#)).

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine impacted other countries in various sectors, especially in energy, fertilizer, and global supply chains. In the energy sector, there are supply shortages in the European Union as Russia is one of the region's leading producers of oil, gas, and coal. Due to sanctions imposed by the United States and its allies on energy trade with Russia, access to energy supplies for the European Union has been hampered ([Donegan, 2023](#)). As a result, there are fears of energy supply shortages, which could impact energy availability and stability in the region. Concerning fertilizer, the conflict has also affected international trade. The conflict affects about 20% of global fertilizer trade, leading to fertilizer shortages in many countries. This scarcity can affect agriculture and food production in many countries, as fertilizer is critical in increasing agricultural productivity ([Bakrie et al., 2022](#)). With the disruption of global supply chains in sectors such as energy and fertilizer, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has shown its wide-ranging and significant impact on the global economy and the stable supply of vital commodities. This situation indicates that regional conflicts can have profound consequences for other countries across the globe.

Conditions arising from the conflict between Russia and Ukraine have caused significant disruptions in global supply chains, including the circulation of food, raw materials, and electronic products. Most of the impact has been seen in the food chain. Russia and Ukraine, as major producers, play an essential role in world wheat production.

Together, they account for about one-third of global wheat production. In addition, Ukraine also produces approximately 75% of the world's sunflower oil. The conflict in the region has disrupted the production and distribution of wheat and sunflower oil, potentially triggering food crises and food shortages in some areas. This affects the global supply chain as a whole, not only in the food sector but also in raw materials. The continued uncertainty in the conflict caused instability in the supply chain, disrupting the production and distribution of goods at the international level. This crisis demonstrates that unresolved regional conflicts can have far-reaching impacts covering many sectors of daily life. They must be taken seriously due to their long-term consequences on the global economy and people's well-being.

Indonesia's participation in peace efforts to solve the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is based on the understanding that the conflict is detrimental to all parties and has far-reaching impacts, both materially (in terms of economic, social, and security) and immaterially (in terms of politics and humanity). To mediate this conflict, President Joko Widodo visited Ukraine on June 29, 2022, to meet with the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky ([Komala et al., 2023](#)). The visit marked Indonesia's concrete step in facilitating dialog and diplomacy between the two countries involved in the conflict. Through the meeting, Indonesia sought to be a bridge of communication and encourage the creation of space for negotiation and peace between Russia and Ukraine.

Indonesia hopes that by participating in the peace efforts, both conflicting parties will agree to negotiate, ease tensions, and find solutions because the conflict harm all parties and have a broad impact, both materially (related to economic, social, and security) and immaterially (in the context of politics and humanity). These steps also demonstrate Indonesia's commitment to promoting peace and stability at the international level. Widodo's visit to Ukraine manifests Indonesia's concern for the situation in Ukraine. The visit has a symbolic meaning as a manifestation of the humanity felt by the Indonesian people toward Ukraine ([Susilo & Saptowalyono, 2022](#)). In this context, the President's visit to Ukraine was a formal diplomatic effort and showed Indonesia's solidarity and empathy towards a country in crisis. This reflects Indonesia's commitment to supporting peace, resolving conflicts, and assisting in rebuilding countries affected by humanitarian crises. Thus, Widodo's visit has political significance and implies a moral and humanitarian message that Indonesia is ready to help and support recovery and peace efforts for countries experiencing difficulties.

The visit of state representatives, such as the President, Minister of foreign affairs, and other high-ranking officials to different countries, has an essential meaning in diplomacy as a symbol of the representation of the state and its people at the international level ([Mujiono & Alexandra, 2019](#)). As a diplomatic actor and representative of Indonesia, Widodo conveyed that Indonesia continued to uphold the values of sovereignty and territorial integration.

Indonesia believes that peace and peaceful solutions are critical aspects that should not be ignored. In line with this approach, Widodo offered to be a 'messenger' to Russian President Vladimir Putin through communication with Zelensky ([Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2022](#)). This step emphasizes Indonesia's commitment to peace diplomacy and concrete efforts to help encourage dialogue and negotiations between Russia and Ukraine for sustainable peace.

President Widodo's visit to Russia on June 30, 2022, is Indonesia's concrete step in fulfilling its constitutional mandate to contribute to efforts to create world peace. The purpose of this visit was to be part of the solution to global conflicts and to play the role of mediator. Widodo fulfilled his promise to Ukraine by delivering a message from Zelensky to Putin following a previously made agreement ([BPMI Sekretariat Presiden, 2022a](#)). In this context, Indonesia emphasized its commitment as a bridge between the two countries involved in the conflict. In addition, Widodo also expressed his concerns to Putin regarding disruptions in the food supply chain resulted from this conflict. Indonesia voiced its hope that the conflict that caused adverse impacts on humanity could soon find a solution ([Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2022](#)). Widodo's actions as a messenger between the two heads of state and expressing concern for humanity emphasized Indonesia's role as a committed player in finding peaceful solutions and overcoming conflicts that harm many parties.

Understanding the global impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, particularly in terms of geopolitical changes and economic consequences, provides an insight into the complexity and interconnectedness between regional conflict dynamics and broader global impacts, including direct implications for the domestic conditions of countries such as Indonesia. Within this context, uncovering and understanding the main question, "Why did Indonesia pursue a peace mission to the Russia-Ukraine conflict?" will provide deep insight into the motivations and interests underlying Indonesia's participation in global peace diplomacy and enrich understanding of its foreign policy.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The study conducted by [Nagy & Beng \(2022\)](#), highlights that the actions taken by Russia have significant global consequences. They point out that Russia's actions in changing the world order, from previously oriented towards Westernization to a multipolar system, with Russia and China becoming a balancing force against Western powers, reflects a geopolitical power shift that has the potential to change global power dynamics ([Nagy & Beng, 2022](#)). This change illustrates a power shift that reflects new dynamics in international politics. This indicates that it is no longer just Western powers that dominate the global stage. Still, the strong presence of other countries, such as Russia and China, significantly influences the direction and dynamics of international relations.

The power shift has a complex impact on global politics. Some of the key points that can be further explained include:

1. **Multipolar system:** This concept refers to the distribution of power in the world that is no longer entirely controlled by one dominant power. The presence of multiple power centers, such as the United States, Russia, China, and the European Union, creates a more complex structure in global governance.
2. **Changes in diplomacy dynamics:** This shift has also created new dynamics in global diplomacy. States now tend to form more complex and flexible alliances and partnerships, often based on ideological affiliations and strategic interests.
3. **Changes in economics and trade:** Russia and China's role as balancing powers has also affected international economic and trade flows. They have increased their role as key players in the global economic system, offering alternatives to countries that may want to reduce their dependence on Western markets.
4. **Potential tensions and collaboration:** These power shifts can also give rise to potential conflicts or tensions between different powers. However, it also allows for opportunities for collaboration in addressing global challenges such as climate change, cyber security, and humanitarian issues.

Critiques of this view raised concerns related to global stability, arms races, and changes in norms and values that emerging powers may advocate. Nevertheless, analysis of Russia's and China's roles in global power shifts continues to evolve as politics, economics, and security change in different parts of the world. Any interpretation of their roles must be considered against the diverse perspectives and dynamics of international relations.

Meanwhile, the study conducted by Darmayadi & Megits underscores the impact of a series of economic sanctions imposed on Russia. These sanctions have led to widespread consequences at the global level, including inflation and constraints on economic growth. The effects of the sanctions also spread to the energy and food sectors, creating a crisis that affected global economic stability ([Darmayadi & Megits, 2023](#)). These impacts are not only limited to the global level but also affect the domestic conditions of other countries. Indonesia, for example, is also affected by the energy crisis triggered by sanctions against Russia. Rising energy commodity prices can increase the country's subsidy burden and pressure the government budget ([Dano, 2022](#)).

In the Indonesian context, rising energy commodity prices can affect economic stability, prices of goods, and government subsidy policies. Rising energy costs can cause price increases in other sectors and create more significant economic pressure, especially for consumers and the industrial sector. Such conditions often force governments to adjust their economic, budgetary, and subsidy policies to maintain economic stability and reduce negative impacts on society. Given the interconnectedness of global geopolitical events and their impact on the domestic economy, the government and stakeholders in Indonesia (and



other affected countries) need to consider appropriate strategies to deal with the economic challenges posed by changing global geopolitical dynamics ([Darmayadi & Megits, 2023](#)).

Another research conducted by Grace Frestisa Irena Hutabarat in 2022 with the title '*Arah Kebijakan Luar Negeri Indonesia Pasca Perang Rusia-Ukraina Berdasarkan Perspektif National Interest*' describes Indonesia as a country that applies the principle of free and active in dealing with international conflicts, especially after the Russia-Ukraine War. The article highlights how Indonesia has the freedom to determine its behavior and is not bound to a particular power, focusing on understanding and interpreting national interests ([Hutabarat, 2022](#)).

Furthermore, research conducted by Saryono, Aulia Fajarianti, Lia Dahlia Kurniawati, Ainun Alfasari Akbariah, Ibnu Abdul Jabar, Fitri Yulyanti in 2022 with the title '*Sikap Politik Dan Hukum Internasional Indonesia Terkait Penyerangan Rusia Ke Ukraina*' explores the impact of Russian military operations on Ukraine since February 24, 2022. This research highlights the negative consequences involving casualties, damage to various public facilities, economic decline in several countries, as well as potential threats to the position of other countries that provide support and military pressure on Ukraine. The focus is on the international political and legal stance taken by Indonesia in the face of these events ([Saryono et al., 2022](#)).

### **Soft Power Theory**

Soft power theory is used to explain Indonesia's interests in peace missions related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Soft Power Theory, as explained by [Alfarauqi \(2018\)](#), refers to the ability of a country to utilize soft resources, such as ideas, symbols, culture, traditions, image, and so on, to influence other parties in a cooperative and non-coercive manner.

Soft power diplomacy allows countries to influence public opinion, perceptions and policies of other countries without the use of force or direct pressure. In other words, soft power strengthens a country's positive image in the eyes of the international community, and can be used as a tool to gain greater influence in international affairs. In the context of Indonesia's peace mission towards the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Soft Power can provide a deeper understanding of how Indonesia utilizes its soft assets, such as peaceful values, inclusive diplomacy, or its positive image as a stable country that plays a role in conflict resolution, to influence and support peace efforts between Russia and Ukraine.

Moreover, this theory can help explain Indonesia's role as a mediator or bridge between the two conflicting parties and show how the use of Soft Power can be an effective in responding to international conflicts. Geun Lee identifies different types of soft power based on their main objectives in the context of international diplomacy which are to:

1. enhance external environmental security by focusing on projecting a peaceful and attractive image of the country to create a safe and stable international environment.

2. gain support from other countries for one's foreign or security policies.
3. manipulate other countries' ways of thinking and preferences to change the views or preferences of other countries through the influence of projected culture, values, or ideology.
4. maintain the unity of a state community or communities to maintain solidarity between communities of states or regional cooperation.
5. to increase approval or support for a domestic leader or government to gain support or approval from citizens or the international community for a country's leadership or government policies ([Lee, 2009](#)).

Understanding these objectives can help explain how a country like Indonesia uses soft power strategies to achieve its specific objectives in the context of a peace mission to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. By combining several aspects of these types of soft power, countries can play a more active and effective role in global diplomacy and international conflict resolution ([Alfarauqi, 2018](#)). The use of Soft Power Theory provides an important and different perspective from other articles that tend to use theories of international political economy. Soft power theory does provide a comprehensive approach to the analysis of immaterial aspects, such as images, ideas, and cultural influences championed by Indonesia in the context of diplomacy and international conflict resolution.

The use of this theory also distinguishes this article from others (novelty) which focus more on theories of international political economy without paying attention to the analysis of the immaterial aspects. By utilizing this theory, the authors can formulate arguments regarding the strategies used by Indonesia in building its soft power, which then has the potential to influence the dynamics of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in the future.

### **Diplomacy Concept**

According to Ernest Satow, diplomacy uses knowledge and reason and wisdom to act as opposed to aid relations between states, sometimes involving relations between public authorities, and briefly described as behavior that is different from the commitment or obligation between states to achieve peaceful relations ([Satow, 2017](#)).

According to Panikkar, as a logical analytical tool diplomacy serves as one of the drivers to advance a nation's interest. The importance of diplomacy cannot be separated from public interest, as it is seen as a key element in the mission to achieve a country's public interest. In his work "The Principle and Practice of Diplomacy," Panikkar reveals that diplomacy, especially in the context of global legislative issues, is a specialty that emphasizes the interests of a nation in its interactions with other countries ([Panikkar, 1956](#)).

In the idealistic view presented by Ranny Emilia, diplomacy is carried out with the aim of achieving something higher than material achievements alone. The role of diplomacy is defined as an effort to win individual support, with a significant impact on each other's views and behavior. Therefore, each party involved in diplomacy is expected to achieve



harmonization and emphasize the importance of quality in their relationship. Ranny Emilia highlighted the focus of diplomacy on countries coexisting peacefully. In this context, it was expressed that the world needs negotiators who have the creativity and shrewdness to stop the desire for war, which often arises as a result of global issues. As such, diplomacy is considered a tool to resolve conflicts, create harmony, and promote international cooperation through a more holistic and idealistic approach ([Emilia, 2013](#)).

Faizullaev, in his book entitled "Diplomacy for Professionals and Everyone," explains the elements of diplomacy as follows: Conversation: Diplomacy actors generally cooperate and coordinate, especially in dealing with complex issues. Maximum cooperation is often required to solve problems effectively. Negotiation: Every negotiation involves an element of cooperation, especially when there are differences of interest or opinion between the parties involved. Negotiation is a common and natural aspect of international diplomacy. Dispute: Diplomacy sometimes uses the dispute mode which involves dialogic interaction and negotiation. Discussion emphasizes tolerance and exchange of views, while debate involves a higher level of challenge and contestation. Rhetoric: Speeches, storytelling, presenting and developing narratives, letter writing, and other forms of rhetoric are often used in diplomacy. While rhetoric can be considered a persuasive method of exerting influence, in a dialogic context, it can also involve openness, acceptance of feedback, and a willingness to listen to the other side. Faizullaev emphasizes that diplomacy involves a number of these elements, which can be applied in a variety of situations to achieve win-win solutions and maintain harmony in international relations ([Faizullaev, 2022](#)).

### **First Track Diplomacy Concept**

The concept of first track diplomacy is often considered as 'traditional diplomacy' which focuses on conflict resolution through direct dialogue between heads of state or government officials. As such, it emphasizes a nation-centric perspective in conflict resolution efforts ([Burton, 1984](#)). The advantage of this track is that the state has political capacity that allows it to use political power as a means to influence the outcome of the negotiation process. Moreover, states have the ability to use their material and financial power to strengthen their bargaining position in the dialogue process ([Burton, 1984](#)).

However, the disadvantage of this route is the potential for the dialogue process and peace efforts to be less effective due to the presence of power aspects. Sometimes, this can cause countries to focus too much on the power they have, thus ignoring the results of the agreements reached, because they are caught up in power dynamics ([Kementerian Pertahanan RI, 2020](#)). In the context of this article, Indonesia actively seeks to establish diplomacy through official visits to Russia and Ukraine. The purpose of these visits is to ease tensions and push the two countries towards a clearer resolution of the ongoing conflict. The use of the concept of first track diplomacy in this article also provides novelty, which helps explain how Indonesia shapes its soft power as a key actor in global peace missions. This

results in a more comprehensive understanding than previous articles that focused more on analyzing the international system in general. Thus, the first track diplomacy approach provides a more in-depth perspective on Indonesia's role in responding to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, especially in shaping its positive image and influence as an agent of international peace.

## **METHODS**

In the context of research on Indonesia's peace mission to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the qualitative explanatory approach will help understand the reasons for Indonesia's participation. Qualitative explanatory research aims to provide an in-depth description of the observed phenomenon and explain why it occurs and its impact. Qualitative explanatory methods are used to reveal the factors underlying a particular event or phenomenon ([Silverman & Marvasti, 2008](#)).

The qualitative approach will allow researchers to gain deep and complex insights into the factors that motivate Indonesia and how Indonesia's presence in the peace mission affects geopolitical dynamics ([Ardyan et al., 2023](#)). The unit of analysis at the nation-state level used in this research places Indonesia alongside Russia and Ukraine as the main subject of discussion. In the context of the correlations level, this research tries to understand the relationship or correlation between the actions or policies taken by the countries involved, especially Indonesia, Russia, and Ukraine. The deductive pattern is used as an analytical approach, which refers to the use of existing theories or frameworks to understand and explain the observed phenomena. In this case, the deductive approach allows researchers to visualize the events that occurred and analyse the data by considering the existing conceptual framework. The data analysis method is qualitative, where the collected data will be processed using non-statistical analysis, such as tables, figures, or graphs. These data will then be presented and interpreted in the form of paragraphs that explain the findings or results of the analysis in depth.

This research uses literature-based data collection techniques such as books, journal articles, newspapers, press releases, official state documents, as well as news and ministry websites from countries involved in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This literature study approach allows researchers to gather information from a variety of diverse sources, thus expanding the scope and depth of analysis of the topic under study.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Indonesia's Response to the Russia-Ukraine Conflict through Peace Mission**

Indonesia 1945 Constitution highlights the commitment to create world peace and maintain global order including seeking the resolution to Russia-Ukraine conflict. Indonesia's

involvement in the peace mission reflects this commitment. According to Moerdijat, the Russia-Ukraine crisis must find a solution immediately because of its impacts on various global geopolitical and geostrategic orders, especially its implications on energy sector and food security ([Moerdijat, 2022](#)).

Many raised doubts about the effectiveness of the efforts made by President Joko Widodo. For example, at the G7 Summit 26–28 June 2022 in Germany, President Widodo indicated his plan to continue his trip to Ukraine and Russia as part of Indonesia's peace mission. However, the plan did not make a significant impact. Some observers in Indonesia argue that Indonesia lacks the power or influence to force Russia and Ukraine to reach a peace agreement ([Farisa, 2022](#)). Despite this, on April 27, 2022, Widodo called Zelensky by phone. During the conversation, Zelensky provided Widodo with the latest information regarding the situation on the ground. He also conveyed various requests for assistance to Indonesia, especially regarding weapons. However, Widodo rejected the request, referring to the Indonesian constitution and foreign policy principles that oppose the provision of arms assistance to other countries. Instead, he emphasized Indonesia's readiness to provide humanitarian support and assistance. Before ending the phone conversation, Widodo also invited Zelensky to attend the G20 Summit in Bali in November ([BPMI Sekretarian Presiden, 2022b](#)).

One day after communicating with Zelensky, Widodo contacted Putin. During the conversation, Putin also provided an update on the Ukraine situation from his perspective. He also stated that the negotiation process between the two sides is continuing. Widodo strongly hopes that Putin can immediately end the war. In addition, Widodo also invited the Russian President to attend the G20 Summit, which Putin answered positively ([BPMI Sekretariat Presiden, 2022b](#)).

### **Indonesia's Diplomatic Efforts in Ukraine and Russia**

Indonesia uses diplomatic visits to establish and strengthen cooperation, and seek solution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Indonesia's diplomatic visit to Ukraine occurred on June 29, 2022, when President Widodo met directly with President Zelensky. This meeting marked the first step of Indonesia's direct diplomacy in responding to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Widodo was the first Asian country leader to visit Ukraine ([Lamb & Widiyanto, 2022](#)). During this diplomatic meeting, Widodo emphasized that he brought the Indonesian people's aspirations to create peace between the two countries. Zelensky's response to this motivation was very positive, where he expressed his appreciation for Indonesia's support in the struggle for Ukraine's freedom and independence ([Lamb & Widiyanto, 2022](#)).

The next phase of the Indonesian peace mission to Ukraine was strengthening and building bilateral cooperation. President Widodo highlighted that June was the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Ukraine ([Lamb & Widiyanto, 2022](#)). In response, the two agreed to enhance the bilateral cooperation that has been built. In

2020, the two countries agreed to expand cooperation in economy, defence, intelligence, culture, education, and tourism. In fact, at that time, Indonesia and Ukraine approved a defence cooperation agreement ([Kementerian Pertahanan RI, 2016](#)). Widodo's visit strengthened harmonious communication in this cooperative spirit, resulting in a visa cooperation agreement between Indonesia and Ukraine ([Rds, 2022](#)). Indonesia also assisted in medicine and hospital construction in Kyiv. In addition, the two countries also discussed the potential for cooperation in post-war reconstruction in Ukraine ([Rds, 2022](#)).

Widodo firmly emphasized Indonesia's role as a mediator between the two countries to reach a peaceful agreement. In his statement, Widodo expressed his belief that although achieving peace will be difficult, the efforts to conflict resolution needed to be continued and fought for ([Nasution, 2022](#)). Indonesia's role as a mediator is evident from its readiness, through Widodo, to convey Zelensky's message to Russia to reach a peace agreement. Indonesia played a role in communicating Ukraine's message to Russia regarding the opening of supply lines, including food and wheat trade, which affected the two countries and the international community ([Rds, 2022](#)).

Indonesia's diplomacy and negotiation in Ukraine continued by participating in the G20 summit. The summit was planned to discuss global economic recovery and to serve as a platform to promote global peace and stability. Widodo invited Zelensky to participate in the G20 summit, which Russia will also attend so that both countries can dialogue and negotiate directly with the direction of the G20 countries. This action is evidence of Indonesia's active role in achieving peace in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Zelensky expressed gratitude for the invitation, while affirming that Ukraine's presence would depend on the security situation and conditions in his country. Nonetheless, he welcomed the agenda as it could strengthen efforts to end the conflict facing the heated conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Widodo firmly emphasized Indonesia's role as a mediator between the two countries to reach a peaceful agreement. In his statement, Widodo expressed his belief that although achieving peace will be difficult, the spirit of peace must continue to be encouraged and fought for ([Nasution, 2022](#)).

At the time of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement condemning the attack without directly blaming Russia for the attack. Indonesia also called on Russia and Ukraine to resolve the conflict peacefully immediately. President Widodo also emphasized that the conflict could disrupt the global economic recovery after the pandemic. This step shows that Indonesia is trying to initiate communication with the parties involved in the conflict, especially Russia ([Mujiono, 2020](#)).

In his response to the conflict, President Widodo emphasized that Indonesia's main concern was the increase in food prices that could potentially harm many countries, especially developing countries ([Komala et al., 2023](#)). During the diplomatic visit to Russia, Indonesia has two important objectives: first, to make persuasive efforts to President Vladimir Putin to open a route for Ukrainian wheat exports during the conflict, and second,

to invite Putin to attend the G20 Summit in Bali in November 2022 ([Darmawan et al., 2023](#)). Achieving both objectives would strengthen Indonesia's position in the international political arena while fulfilling its national interests.

On June 30, 2022, in a meeting with President Vladimir Putin, President Widodo focused on peace and humanitarian issues related to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine while repeating the two important objectives. Indonesia strongly conveyed its message and concern for the conflict that has resulted in a security and humanitarian crisis. It played a role as a mediator between the two countries to achieve peace. Furthermore, Indonesia also tried to 'persuade' Russia to re-emphasize the importance of peace and the principle of multilateralism, especially in restoring the global food supply chain disrupted by the war ([Hamonangan & Assegaff, 2020](#)).

Based on the outcome of the meeting, President Putin agreed to open export channels for Ukrainian wheat and provide guarantees for the supply of Russian fertilizer commodities to reintegrate both commodities into the global supply chain ([Hamonangan & Assegaff, 2020](#)). Indonesia's peace-making efforts in the face of the Russia-Ukraine crisis are part of its soft power strategy. Behind Indonesia's emphasis on the narrative of world peace related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, implied national interests also underlie these actions. Not only were they based on the ideals of global peace but also because of the domestic needs affected by the conflict, which caused negative impacts in various sectors of life. Through world peace missions, Indonesia seeks to advance common and national interests, such as stabilizing the energy and food crisis.

In the context of Geun Lee's soft power theory, Indonesia's peace mission to resolve the Russia-Ukraine conflict is to improve the security of the external environment. Through these efforts, Indonesia seeks to project an image as a country that actively fights for peace, brings stability, and shows commitment to global order. In addition, Indonesia is trying to shape its positive image as a country that cares about world peace and attracts the attention of other countries to support efforts to resolve the Russia-Ukraine conflict to create sustainable peace. Thus, Indonesia's peace mission here is to pursue global security stability and fight for its positive image as a country that promotes peace. This is in accordance with the concept of soft power ([Aprianto, 2020](#)).

Winardi Hanafi Lucky, Director of Europe II at the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a discussion on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, emphasized that Indonesia's principle of free and active is not the same as active neutrality. According to Winardi, free and active does not mean being neutral, but rather taking steps that are in line with Indonesia's national interests. Winardi also emphasized that this principle does not only include support in the form of thoughts, but also making contributions, including assistance, to achieve conflict resolution. In addition, Indonesia's attitude is not just following the direction of other countries, but is an effort to emphasize the importance of respect for the norms of international law ([Nasution, 2022](#)).



Therefore, it can be concluded that in the peace mission to Russia and Ukraine, Indonesia used diplomacy as the main tool to mediate communication between the two parties. Indonesia maintained a neutral stance as a third-party country and acted as a mediator in accordance with the principles of its free and active foreign policy.

### **Soft Power Diplomacy: Indonesia's Peace Mission Amidst the Russia-Ukraine Crisis**

National interests are the main driving factors in Indonesian effort to end Russia-Ukraine conflict. These interests include the stability of the energy and food crisis, reducing tensions with Western countries, the successful organization of the G20 Summit in Indonesia, and the formation of an increasingly positive image of Indonesia's soft power on the world stage.

The impact of the conflict, particularly in relation to the energy and food crises, has a global effect and puts great pressure on various countries, especially developing countries. Specifically, in the energy sector, the impact felt globally involves a spike in the price of fossil energy, such as oil and natural gas, reaching high and volatile levels. This occurred as a consequence of disruptions in the global energy supply chain, causing instability and uncertainty in the world energy market. Russia, which is a leader in natural gas exports and is also the world's second largest oil producer, faces a number of economic sanctions and embargoes. As a result, Russia's ability to make optimal distribution of both commodities is hampered. Such economic sanctions and restrictions negatively impact the smooth distribution process as well as the availability of global supplies of natural gas and oil. The continuing energy crisis also creates concerns of friction between countries competing for access to energy sources. In situations of energy supply uncertainty, competition to secure these resources can trigger diplomatic tensions and disputes of interest between countries at the global level ([United Nations, 2022](#)).

In the context of food, Russia and Ukraine are two major players in the supply of wheat commodities, as well as being significant fertilizer exporters in the global agricultural process. Supply disruptions from these two countries can have a serious impact on global food security, triggering more intensive competition between countries to gain access to critical food resources such as wheat and fertilizer. The impact of the conflict has caused delays in the organization of commodity supplies from both countries into the global supply chain. This situation increases the vulnerability of countries with low food security, as they face the risk of instability in the supply of wheat and fertilizer that could significantly affect their food security.

In addition, there are restrictions and disruptions in the wheat cultivation process in Ukraine during the spring and the harvest process in winter is hampered. The success of both processes is critical to ensure optimal wheat supply to international markets. Such disruptions can be detrimental to the global supply of wheat and potentially increase uncertainty in meeting food needs at the international level. The absence of the ability to channel commodity distribution from the two countries considered the 'breadbasket of the



world' contributes to the potential increase in the number of people experiencing global hunger. It is estimated that around 323 million people in 2022 will experience food insecurity, creating a significant impact on global food security due to the disruption of wheat supplies from Russia and Ukraine ([Quader, 2013](#); [Hassen & El Bilali, 2022](#)).

In the energy sector, Indonesia still relies on imports to fulfil domestic oil supply needs, leading to higher fuel prices as a consequence of the rising global trend. In general, however, fuel supply in Indonesia can be considered relatively secure as it is not directly dependent on direct imports from Russia. Nevertheless, changing global trends and rising energy prices may still impact fuel prices at the domestic level, given the complex interconnectedness of the global energy market ([Wicaksana et al., 2022](#)). Rising wheat prices have also triggered price fluctuations in several food commodities in Indonesia, such as bread, noodles and wheat flour. Since the onset of the conflict, global wheat prices have increased by 5.34%, reaching IDR 141,373 per bushel. This increase is the largest since the Economic Crisis in 2008, creating additional pressure on people's cost of living and purchasing power ([Hassen & Bilali, 2022](#)).

The increase in energy and food commodity prices has prompted Indonesia to adjust its foreign policy direction, which is reflected in the Peace Mission. Therefore, President Widodo's visit to Kiev and Moscow is considered a strategic move, signalling that Indonesia has a strong 'interest' in restoring global supply chains, especially regarding threats to energy and food that affect domestic conditions.

## CONCLUSION

Indonesia, through its peace missions in Ukraine and Russia, adopted the instrument of diplomacy as a means to resolve conflicts and achieve peace. Despite national interests, these efforts did not detract from Indonesia's focus on global interests such as economic recovery and supply chains. Indonesia's political move stands out due to its principle of free and active foreign policy, which differs from other countries' approaches. In this context, Indonesia uses First Track Diplomacy as a soft power instrument to oversee the peaceful dialog process between the two countries, ensuring its goals and interests are achieved. Indonesia's focus on humanitarian issues is also intertwined with economic agendas at the domestic, regional, and international levels. This brings humanitarian and economic elements to be closely linked in the approach.

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