

EDITORIAL NOTE

NAVIGATING GEOPOLITICAL SHIFTS AND TURBULENCE: A MULTIFACETED ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS^{©Σ}

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ABSTRACT

The year 2023, which is about to draw its curtain, has recorded various geopolitical changes and challenging issues due to complex interactions among various parties, which require a thorough solution for the benefit of humanity. The events of the Russia-Ukraine War, the conflict in the Middle East that is heating up, in addition to climate change that results in various catastrophes are among some bitter facts as a hard lesson for all of us. Parallel to this development, this edition of *SINERGI* covers a wide range of topics, such as the US-China competition and democratic leadership in the context of ASEAN, as well as China's Belt and Road Initiative and its effects on Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The collection also examines the geopolitical significance of locations such as the Strait of Hormuz and reassesses historical personalities like the case of the Empress Dowager Cixi. Overall, this compilation provides valuable, insightful information about the intricacies of international politics, economic manoeuvres, and regional security, which presenting a wide range of viewpoints to guide scholarly discussion and policy.

Keywords: December 2023, *SINERGI*'s editorial note.

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NOTA EDITOR**MEREDAH PERUBAHAN GEOPOLITIK DAN PERGOLAKAN: ANALISIS
PELBAGAI RUPA HUBUNGAN ANTARABANGSA**

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ABSTRAK

Tahun 2023 yang bakal melabuhkan tirainya merakamkan pelbagai perubahan geopolitik dan isu mencabar. Hal ini berikutan interaksi kompleks pelbagai pihak yang memerlukan penyelesaian menyeluruh untuk kepentingan manusia sejagat. Perang Russia-Ukraine, konflik di Timur Tengah yang semakin panas, selain daripada perubahan iklim, yang mengakibatkan pelbagai malapetaka adalah antara beberapa fakta pahit untuk dijadikan pengajaran kita semua. Selari dengan perkembangan ini, edisi SINERGI kali ini merangkumi pelbagai topik, seperti persaingan AS-China dan kepimpinan demokratik dalam konteks ASEAN, serta Inisiatif Jalur dan Jalan China dan kesannya terhadap Kazakhstan dan Turkmenistan. Koleksi ini juga mengkaji kepentingan geopolitik lokasi seperti Selat Hormuz dan menilai semula personaliti sejarah seperti Empress Dowager Cixi. Secara keseluruhannya, kompilasi ini menyediakan maklumat yang berharga dan bernas mengenai selok-belok politik antarabangsa, gerakan ekonomi dan keselamatan serantau, membentangkan dari pelbagai sudut pandangan sebagai pendorong perbincangan ilmiah dan dasar.

Kata kunci: *Disember 2023, nota editorial SINERGI*

Introduction

This edition thoroughly examines the complex and dynamic international relations and strategic studies sub-field. The essays in this collection provide new insights and analytical frameworks to comprehend the strategic moves of states and non-state actors, which are indeed complex. Within the larger framework of international relations, they offer a nuanced study of geopolitical issues, strategic economic manoeuvres, and the quest for sustainable development.

These discussions are cited against the dynamic backdrop of regional conflicts, global powers, and strategic economic ties. Through the examination of particular cases of these interactions—which range from China’s sweeping economic ambitions in Central Asia to the delicate bilateral relations with neighbouring Southeast Asian countries—each item adds to the larger discourse. As the world contends with various issues such as economic sustainability, security concerns, and diplomatic challenges, the insights offered by these scholars are particularly timely and relevant. They dissect the current state of affairs and project potential future scenarios and strategies, thus providing a comprehensive view of international relations.

In the first research article, Hidayatullah Khan (2023, 6-26) explores China’s strategic approach to addressing its internal economic problems through the Belt and Road Initiative. With the help of preferential financing and non-competitive bidding, projects in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have provided Chinese State-Owned Enterprises as well as enterprises with new markets and insights into China’s broad economic policies.

The second article by Fredy B. L. Tobing and Ferga Aristama (2023, 27-45) investigate ASEAN’s possible place in the US-China conflict. It talks about how democratic leadership is essential to getting the best results and how ASEAN should strategically orient itself to promote economic growth and effectively handle external ties.

An interesting discussion on China continues with Norhidayat Zainal and Andrew Kam Jia Yi (2023, 46-66), who evaluate how China’s FDI affects Malaysia’s SDGs. Their analysis covers the wider socio-political ramifications of Chinese investments while thoroughly examining how these undertakings have affected Malaysia’s economic development, human capital, and environmental sustainability.

The fourth article by Maifuza Abdul Malik and Riki Rahman (2023, 67-89) explore the current peace and war in Europe, specifically, the post-Soviet Union dynamics between Russia and Ukraine. The study observes the causes of conflict between the two neighbouring nations, offering a fascinating scrutiny of the internal and external aspects, including the role of major powers and regional security concerns, shaping their contentious relationship.

Focusing on the strategic issues in the world is incomplete without discussing Southeast Asia. Given the recent changes in geopolitics, Ruhanas Harun (2023, 90-102), reexamines the long-standing bilateral relations between Malaysia and Indonesia. The essay challenges the applicability of the conventional “serumpun” notion and promotes creative diplomatic techniques to improve ties between the two major Southeast Asian

countries.

Our focus has once again centred on China. This time Muhammad Daniel Ibrahim Yaacob, Siti Zulaiha Razali, and Muhammad Febriansyah (2023, 103-122), advance a critical reappraisal of Empress Dowager Cixi's leadership and contributions to China's reformation. The essay discusses a female historical character in international relations and emphasises Cixi's diverse influence on China's social, political, and economic spheres.

While not neglecting the Middle East, Mohd Ridzuan Md Ariffin and Noraini Zulkifli (2023, 123-135), examine the Strait of Hormuz's strategic significance and its effects on Iran and Oman. In order to successfully address these issues, they examine the underlying causes of regional disputes and discuss possible collaboration between Iran and Oman.

The eighth article in this edition focusses on Shazwanis Shukri (2023, 136-139)'s review of the book *Kepentingan Nasional Jepun Di Selat Melaka* by Noraini Zulkifli and Zarina Othman. Because of its strategic location in the heart of the trade route between East and West, the Straits of Malacca is essential for trade and shipping, as this intriguing review emphasises. The author argues the importance of the Malacca Strait to Japan due to its advantages in providing the fastest maritime trade and a safer route for commercial ships as they are less exposed to the threat of nautical crimes such as piracy and sea piracy. This high dependence has further increased Japan's initiative to focus on economic and security cooperation with the coastal countries of the Strait of Malacca, namely Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.

In conclusion, the collection of articles in SINERGI's 2023 December issue offers an all-encompassing assessment of the intricacies of international relations and strategic studies. Collectively, this series enhances our comprehension of the geopolitical landscape, offering conceptual, theoretical, and practical insights into navigating the complex territories of international politics and security. The thought-provoking analyses and conclusions presented here will undoubtedly contribute to the ongoing international relations and strategic studies discourse as we progress in an increasingly interconnected world.

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