

Prabowo's Foreign Visits and Indonesia's Strategic Autonomy



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Abstract

Prabowo Subianto made 127 country stops in 39 countries between 23 October 2019 and 8 October 2026, first as defense minister and then as president. Public debate stops at the count. This paper asks whether the visits strengthened Indonesia's strategic autonomy in an unstable multipolar order, and how they could be redesigned to do so. It argues that the visits succeeded on diversification but not yet on conversion: they opened many doors, and few were walked through.

Using the framework of the LAB45 monograph Strategic Autonomy in a Multipolar Era, the paper codes each stop and its outcomes against the Autonomy Triangle of vulnerability, buffers and leverage, and tests four working hypotheses. The data are secondary: official releases, press archives, SIPRI and specialist defense reporting.



The visits were widely dispersed. The effective number of partners is 22.4, and the three great powers received 14.2 percent of the stops while holding 51.3 percent of world military spending. Conversion was thin: of thirty coded outcomes, only eight (27 percent) are material, seventeen remain frameworks and five were not realized. Arms procurement shows the same pattern. Of 23 programs that have reached contract or delivery, 22 come from NATO members or a European consortium, so diversification has stayed within one bloc.

A visit without conversion is a signal, not autonomy. Each stop should add one node of indispensability: every memorandum should carry a conversion date, a program owner and a co-production clause; every visit briefing should map the choke points of the sectors on the agenda; and arms diversification should cap platform families and secure a second source for munitions and spares outside the same bloc.

Keywords: strategic autonomy; foreign visits; Indonesia; multipolar order; defense procurement; diversification.

Introduction: 127 Stops, One Question

Few Indonesian leaders of the reform era have traveled abroad as often as Prabowo Subianto has over the past seven years. The question is not how often, but to what end.

Between 23 October 2019 and 8 October 2026, Prabowo Subianto made 127 country stops in 39 countries, 71 as defense minister, including 21 as president-elect, and 56 as president. His pace tripled after the inauguration, from an average of 11 stops a year in 2020–2023 to 34 in 2025. Two public readings compete. One treats the travel as personal diplomacy that opens doors to capital, technology and arms. The other questions its priorities, especially when trips coincided with disasters at home (*Jakarta Post* 2026).

Both readings stop at the count. This paper moves the question to the level of structure. The international system has returned to multipolarity, with the United States, China and Russia as the great powers and the United States the most powerful of the three (Mearsheimer 2026). In such an order, interdependence can be weaponized and middle powers are pushed to choose sides early (Farrell and Newman 2019). A head of government's visit is one of the costliest and most visible instruments for managing that pressure. It therefore deserves to be tested as an instrument of strategic autonomy.

Research Questions

1. How were the 127 stops of 2019–2026 distributed between the great powers and middle powers, and how did the pattern change from the defense-minister years to the presidency?
2. How far did the outcomes of the visits work on the three nodes of the Autonomy Triangle: reducing vulnerability, enlarging buffers and building leverage?
3. How could visits be redesigned to strengthen Indonesia's strategic autonomy in an unstable multipolar era?

The argument is that Prabowo's visits have succeeded on diversification but not yet on conversion. They opened many doors; few were walked through. In the parent monograph, strategic autonomy is *engineered indispensability*: other states need Indonesia, and no single state dominates Indonesia's critical supplies (Widjajanto 2026). Visits become an instrument of that engineering only when each stop adds one node of indispensability, whether a contract, a co-production line, a reserve or a membership that binds others to Indonesia.

The paper proceeds as follows. It first sets out the framework, data and method, and then maps the visits. It reads them through the iron cage and the Autonomy

Triangle, and devotes a section to the diversification of weapons systems in 2024–2026. It then takes up Rodrik’s trilemma and weaponized supply chains, and the dimension of time. It tests the hypotheses, places Indonesia in the typology, and closes with recommendations and a research agenda.

Framework, Data, and the Pattern of Visits

Visits are treated as the independent variable, strategic autonomy as the dependent variable, and the conversion of visit outcomes as the intervening variable.

The framework of the parent monograph

Strategic Autonomy in a Multipolar Era defines strategic autonomy along three dimensions: decision autonomy, the ability to choose without an effective threat of cutoff; capability autonomy, the ability to act on a choice with resources others do not control; and temporal autonomy, the ability to choose when to decide. The Autonomy Triangle drives all three. A state reduces its vulnerability, enlarges its buffers and turns residual dependence into leverage. The triangle operates inside three structural constraints: the iron cage of international anarchy, Rodrik’s trilemma, and weaponized supply chains (Widjajanto 2026; Mearsheimer 2026; Rodrik 2011; Farrell and Newman 2023). The framework draws on the *bebas-aktif* tradition (Hatta 1948; 1953), work on power in trade and interdependence (Hirschman 1945; Keohane and Nye 1977), structural realism (Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001), and structural power (Strange 1988).

This paper applies the framework to one instrument of policy, the foreign visit by a head of government or a minister. A visit contributes to autonomy when its outcome can be mapped onto a node of the triangle or onto a commitment anchor that makes Indonesia’s ambiguity credible.

Working hypotheses

The framework yields four working hypotheses, on diversification, conversion, the value of time and commitment anchors. They are set out in Figure 1 and tested against the indicators defined in this section, in “Testing the Hypotheses and Locating Indonesia in the Typology.”

Figure 1. The four working hypotheses (WH-1 to WH-4), tested in Table 7.

WH-1 Diversification Visits enlarge outside options when they are spread across competing poles and middle powers rather than concentrated on one pole.	WH-2 Conversion Visits strengthen autonomy only when they are converted into buffers and industrial depth, not when they end in pledges.
WH-3 Value of time Visits to competing poles add option value to delay as long as irreversible decisions have not passed the entrapment irreversibility point.	WH-4 Anchors Multi-alignment through visits is credible only when tied to red lines and to a few costly commitments.

Source: Author.

Data and unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is the *country stop*, one country visited in person on one trip, operationalized through the 5W1H frame in Table 1. Data were compiled from press releases of the Ministry of Defense (2019–2024), the Cabinet Secretariat and the Ministry of State Secretariat (2024–2026), the archives of Antara, Tempo, Detik and *The Jakarta Post*, and a list of presidential trips cross-checked against official sources (the full chronology is in Table 9). Virtual meetings are excluded. Some 2020–2022 dates are approximate, and one stop (Qatar, July 2020) has an unconfirmed location. Military-spending data come from SIPRI (2026b).

Table 1. Operationalizing the visit variable with the 5W1H frame.

5W1H element	Operationalizing the visit variable
What	127 country stops; 30 codable visit outcomes (contracts, frameworks, memberships, partnerships)
Who	Prabowo Subianto as defense minister (23 Oct 2019 – 19 Oct 2024; declared winner by the KPU on 20 Mar 2024) and as president (from 20 Oct 2024); counterpart heads of state, defense ministers and state firms
When	23 October 2019 – 8 October 2026, in four phases (Figure 4)
Where	39 countries in seven regions; multilateral forums (ADMM, Shangri-La Dialogue, ASEAN, APEC, G20, BRICS, D-8, WEF, Board of Peace)
Why	Arms procurement, investment and trade, summit attendance, Gaza diplomacy, and strategic partnerships
How	Bilateral and state visits, defense exhibitions (IDEX, DSEI, LIMA, Paris Air Show), security forums, and multi-country tours

Source: Author, compiled from various sources.

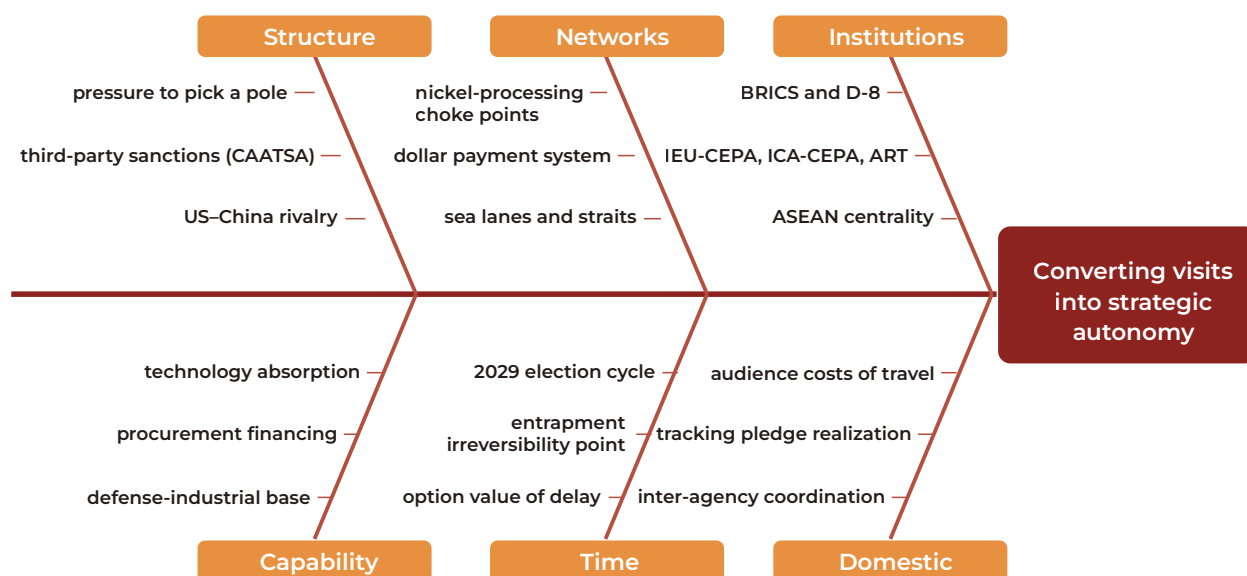
Indicators

Four indicators are used. The **effective number of partners**, $N_{\text{eff}} = 1/\sum s_i^2$, where s_i is country's share of stops, measures the breadth of diversification. The **pole share** measures the fraction of stops that fall on the three great powers. **Diplomatic D***, the largest share held by any one pole, borrows the minimax logic of proposition P1 in the parent monograph. It measures attention, not dependence, and serves only as a proxy. The **conversion ratio**, CR, is the share of material outcomes among all coded outcomes.

Visit outcomes are coded into four categories: the vulnerability node, the buffer node, the leverage node, and commitment anchors. Each outcome carries one of three statuses. *Material* means a contract, co-production, membership or treaty in force. *Framework* means a memorandum, political agreement, investment pledge or partnership label. *Not realized* means an opportunity that was discussed but dropped or cancelled. The coding is the author's and is reported in full in Table 4 so that it can be replicated.

Figure 2. Fishbone diagram of the intervening variables.

Fishbone (Ishikawa) diagram of this study's intervening variables



Source: Compiled by the author from the framework of *Strategic Autonomy in a Multipolar Era* (Widjanto 2026).

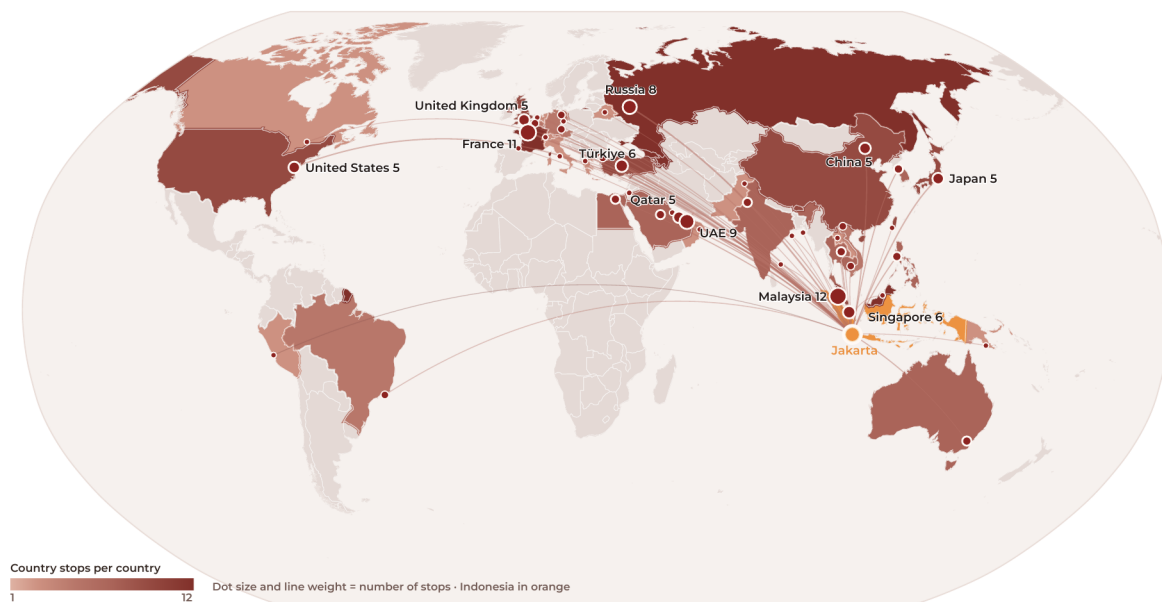
The fishbone diagram in Figure 2 makes one point: visits do not turn into autonomy by themselves. Structure and networks set the limits, institutions provide the vessels, capability determines how much can be absorbed, time sets the window, and domestic factors decide whether promises made abroad are pursued until they are realized. The sections that follow take up each group of factors in turn.

Mapping the visits, 2019–2026

The visits stretched from Lima to Canberra, but their weight fell on three regions: Europe, Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

Figure 3. Map of Prabowo Subianto's visits as defense minister and president.

Lines connect Jakarta with the capital or main city of each stop; countries shaded by number of stops

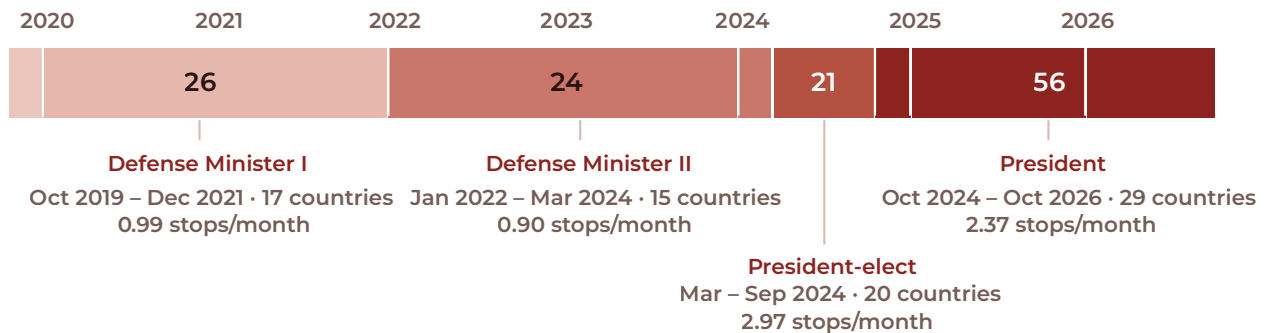


Note: Natural Earth projection. Source: Computed by the author from the visit chronology (Table 9), compiled from Ministry of Defense (2019–2024), Cabinet Secretariat (2024–2026) and Antara (2019–2026) records; see the data note under References.

Figure 3 shows a reach that is almost global, with sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia the main exceptions. The center of gravity is clear: Malaysia (12 stops), France (11), the United Arab Emirates (9) and Russia (8), as Figure 6 shows. These four countries account for 40 stops, or 31 percent of the total. The United States, China, Japan, Qatar and the United Kingdom were each visited only five times.

Figure 4. Four phases of travel.

Country stops per phase (figure inside each bar); the timeline is to scale

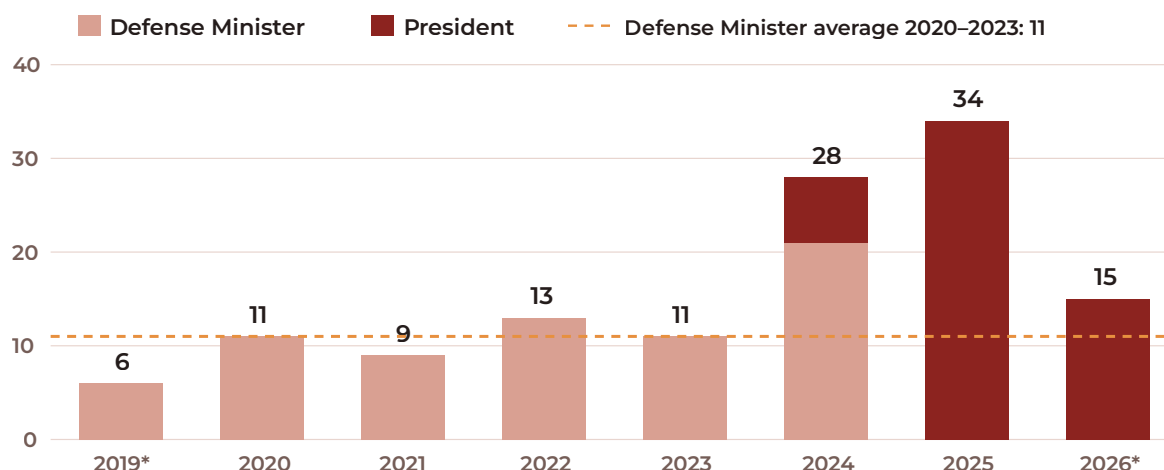


Note: Rates are stops divided by the length of each phase in months. Source: Computed by the author from the visit chronology (Appendix).

Each phase had its own character (Figure 4). The first defense-minister phase (October 2019 – December 2021) was dominated by the search for fighter aircraft and by the reopening of defense ties with the United States: Moscow for the Su-35, Vienna for used Eurofighter Typhoons, Paris for the Rafale, and the Pentagon in October 2020. The second (2022–2023) shifted toward forum diplomacy at the Shangri-La Dialogue, the ADMM, IDEX, LIMA and the Paris Air Show. The president-elect phase (March – September 2024) was the most intense, with 21 stops between late March and September, beginning in Beijing. The presidency (from October 2024) moved the agenda from arms to capital, memberships and Gaza. Figure 5 shows the annual pace and Table 2 summarizes it: across the full years 2020–2025 the mean is 17.7 stops a year, but the median is only 12.0, a very uneven pace

Figure 5. Country stops per year by office.

Country stops per year by office · * partial years (2019 from 23 Oct; 2026 to 8 Oct)

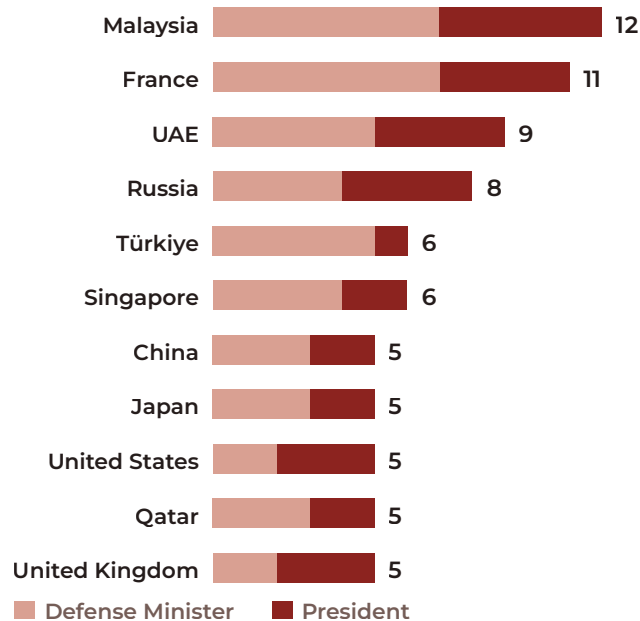


Note: The dashed line is the full-year average of the defense-minister years. Source: Computed by the author from the visit chronology (Appendix).

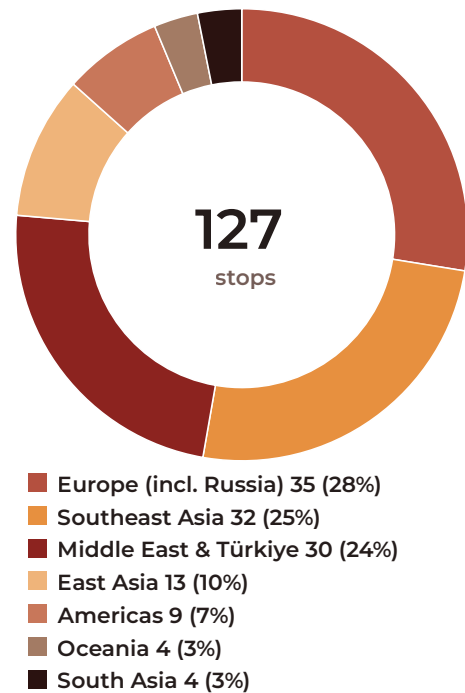
Figure 6. Destination countries and regions.

Left: stops per country by office (five countries tied at 5). Right: regional share of 127 stops

Top eleven countries



Distribution by region



Note: Stops counted per country per trip. Source: Computed by the author from the visit chronology (Appendix).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the visits.

Descriptive statistic (full years 2020–2025)	Value	Note
Mean stops per year	17.7	Pulled up by 2024 (28) and 2025 (34)
Median	12.0	More representative of the defense-minister years
Standard deviation (sample)	10.6	Coefficient of variation 0.60: a very uneven pace
Range	9–34	2021 lowest (pandemic restrictions), 2025 highest
Stops per trip (president)	1.9	56 stops on 29 trips
Effective number of partners N_{eff}	22.4	Defense minister 19.5; president 21.5

Source: Computed by the author from the visit chronology (Appendix).

Poles, Middle Powers, and the Autonomy Triangle

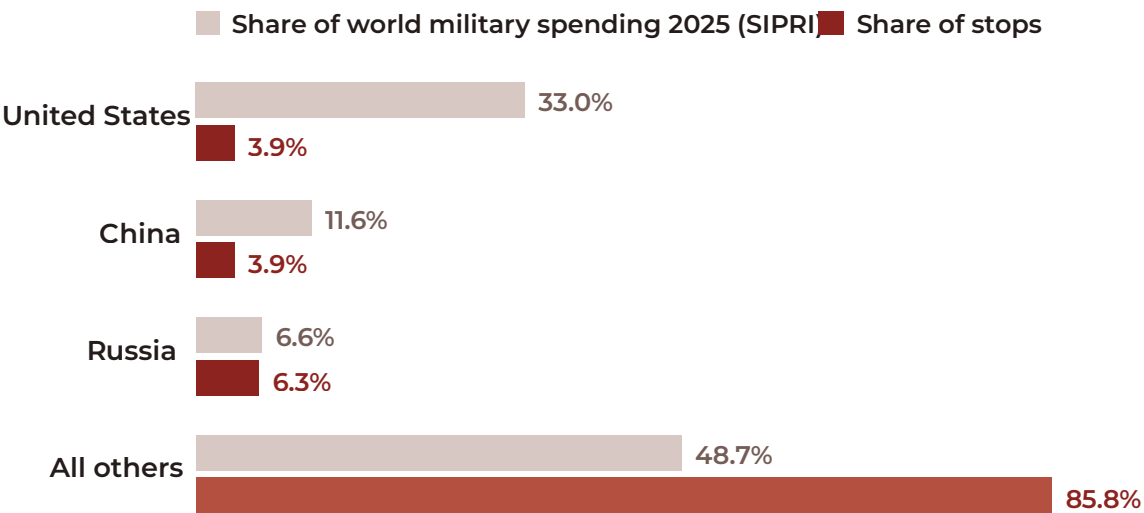
Visits inside the iron cage: poles and middle powers

Read from the position of a middle power, the iron cage presses states to pick a pole. The travel record shows Indonesia choosing not to choose, and filling the space between the poles with middle powers.

Mearsheimer (2026) describes international anarchy as an iron cage: security competition among the great powers is endemic to the modern state system, and with the return of multipolarity around 2017 he expects the next fifty years to be more dangerous than the last fifty. For middle powers, that pressure bears hardest on temporal autonomy. The fiercer the competition, the stronger the push to choose early. This section asks whether the pattern of Prabowo’s visits shows a tilt toward any pole.

Figure 7. Shares of the three great powers in world military spending and in Prabowo’s stops.

Military spending 2025: US US\$954bn, China US\$336bn (est.), Russia US\$190bn (est.), world US\$2,887bn



Source: Military spending from SIPRI (2026b); stops computed by the author.

Table 3. Concentration indicators of the visits.

Indicator	Value
Stops in the three poles (18 of 127)	14.2%
Diplomatic D*: largest pole share (Russia)	6.3%
Pole share, defense minister → president	12.7% → 16.1%
Effective number of partners N_{eff}	22.4

Source: Computed by the author from the visit chronology (Appendix).

Three findings stand out (Figure 7 and Table 3). First, the three poles hold 51.3 percent of world military spending but received only 14.2 percent of the stops. The other 109 stops went to 36 middle powers, small states and summit hosts. Second, no pole dominates. Russia is the most visited pole with eight stops, followed by the United States and China with five each. Diplomatic D* is only 6.3 percent. Third, the pole share rose slightly under the presidency, from 12.7 to 16.1 percent, and the number of pole stops was unchanged at nine in each office; the share rose because there were fewer stops in total.

The sequence of visits also sends signals. Beijing came first twice: the president-elect's first round of visits began there (31 March–2 April 2024), and the first presidential tour opened in Beijing (8–10 November 2024) before moving on to Washington. That signal was offset by the Pentagon visits of 2020 and 2023, by membership of the US-led Board of Peace in 2026, and by the reciprocal tariff agreement with the United States in February 2026. At the same time, Russia was visited four times during the presidency, including the 2025 St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, which Prabowo attended instead of accepting an invitation to the G7.

In the language of the iron cage, this is an active refusal to choose. Indonesia is not equidistant from the poles; it is present at all of them at low intensity and invests most of its time in competing middle powers such as the United Arab Emirates, Türkiye, France, South Korea, Japan and India. In theoretical terms, the strategy raises the disagreement point d in proposition P4: every bid by a rival pole or middle power increases Indonesia's share in its bargain with any pole (Nash 1950).

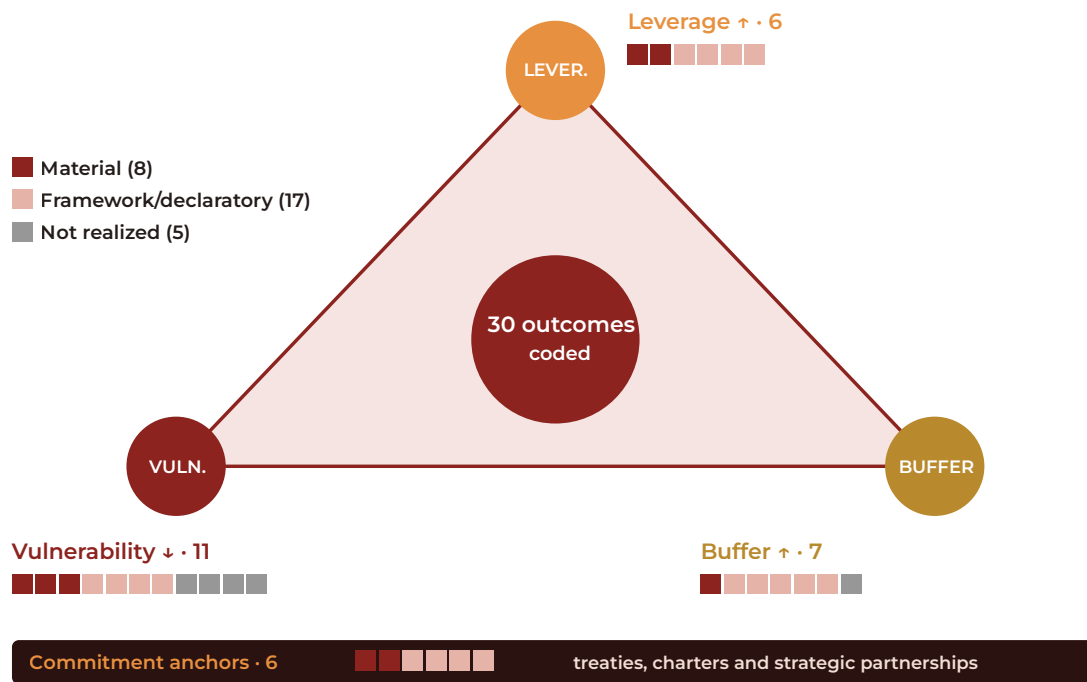
Visits and the Autonomy Triangle

The visits worked most often on the vulnerability node, by diversifying suppliers and investors. Most of their outcomes, however, stopped at the framework stage.

Figure 8. Visit outcomes by node of the Autonomy Triangle and by status.

The visits touched the vulnerability node most, but their outputs remain mostly declaratory

Thirty visit outcomes coded to the nodes of the Autonomy Triangle; one box = one outcome



Source: Author's coding; the full list is in Table 4.

Of the thirty coded outcomes (Figure 8), eleven work on the vulnerability node, seven on the buffer node, six on the leverage node, and six are commitment anchors. The overall conversion ratio is just 0.27: eight material outcomes, seventeen frameworks and five that were not realized. The vulnerability node shows the clearest pattern. The visits opened many prospective suppliers of fighter aircraft and many investors, yet only three were converted into contracts (the Rafale, the KAAAN and the BrahMos), while four opportunities lapsed (the Su-35, the used Typhoons, the Mirage 2000-5 and the F-15EX).

Table 4. Thirty coded visit outcomes.

Node	Visit outcome	Status
Vulnerability	Rafale, 42 aircraft (France; contract 2022, 6 delivered by May 2026)	Material
Vulnerability	KAAAN, 48 aircraft (Türkiye; contract Jul 2025, not yet effective)	Material
Vulnerability	F-15EX, 24 aircraft (US; MoU 2023, Boeing campaign ended Feb 2026)	Not realized
Vulnerability	BrahMos (India; discussed Jan 2025, contract Jul 2026)	Material

Node	Visit outcome	Status
Vulnerability	~US\$10bn business deals (China)	Framework
Vulnerability	~US\$8.5bn investment commitments (UK)	Framework
Vulnerability	US\$2bn for Danantara (Qatar)	Framework
Vulnerability	€2bn Danantara–RDIF fund (Russia)	Framework
Vulnerability	Su-35, 11 aircraft (Russia)	Not realized
Vulnerability	15 used Eurofighter Typhoons (Austria)	Not realized
Vulnerability	Mirage 2000-5 (Qatar; cancelled Feb 2024)	Not realized
Buffer	Arrowhead 140 frigates license-built by PT PAL (UK)	Material
Buffer	KF-21 local production (South Korea; dropped Jun 2026)	Not realized
Buffer	Defense-industry protocol and Pindad MoU (UAE)	Framework
Buffer	Defense equipment and technology transfer agreement (Japan)	Framework
Buffer	Cross-border electricity and CCS (Singapore)	Framework
Buffer	Energy and wheat (Russia, Dec 2025)	Framework
Buffer	Fertilizer and trade (Belarus)	Framework
Leverage	Full BRICS membership (6 Jan 2025)	Material
Leverage	D-8 chair from 2026	Material
Leverage	IEU-CEPA political agreement (Jul 2025)	Framework
Leverage	ICA-CEPA signed in Ottawa (Sep 2025)	Framework
Leverage	Reciprocal tariff agreement with the US (Feb 2026)	Framework
Leverage	CPTPP accession bid (filed Sep 2024; pursued at APEC Lima, Nov 2024)	Framework
Anchor	Treaty-level Defense Cooperation Agreement (Australia)	Material
Anchor	Board of Peace Charter (Davos, Jan 2026)	Material
Anchor	Strategic Partnership Declaration (Russia, Jun 2025)	Framework
Anchor	Special Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (South Korea)	Framework
Anchor	Strategic Partnership (Egypt, Apr 2025)	Framework
Anchor	Strategic Partnership (Thailand, May 2025)	Framework

Note: Material = contract, co-production, membership or treaty in force; Framework = MoU, political agreement, pledge or partnership label. Source: Compiled by the author from the visit chronology (Appendix).

The vulnerability node: diversifying suppliers

Fighter procurement is the clearest illustration. Over seven years the visits reached seven prospective suppliers: Russia, Austria, France, the United States, South Korea, Türkiye and Qatar. Such diversification lowers the risk of single-source dependence that proposition P1 warns against. But diversification that is not converted carries its own cost: a mixed fleet requires mixed logistics, training and spare parts. Diversification reduces vulnerability only when it is paired with interoperability in the supporting layers and sovereignty in the decisive layers of command, cryptography and data.

Investment pledges follow the same pattern. Business-to-business commitments of about US\$10 billion signed at the Indonesia–China business forum in Beijing in November 2024 (Bisnis Indonesia 2024), investment pledges of about US\$8.5 billion from UK firms in London later that month (Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia 2024), a US\$2 billion Qatari commitment to a US\$4 billion joint fund with Danantara in April 2025 (Danantara Indonesia 2025a), and a Danantara–RDIF investment platform of up to €2 billion with Russia in June 2025 (Danantara Indonesia 2025b) show capital arriving from more than one pole. All of these are announced figures; their realization cannot yet be verified from open data.

The buffer node: co-production and reserves

The outcome closest to the logic of buffers is the Arrowhead 140 frigate license for PT PAL from the United Kingdom; the first ship was launched in December 2025. The program moves part of the production capacity onshore, so that a supply shock becomes a delay rather than a crisis (Gholz and Hughes 2021). The KF-21 moved the other way: plans for local production were dropped in June 2026. Other outcomes, such as the defense-industrial protocol with the United Arab Emirates, the technology-transfer agreement with Japan, and cross-border electricity and carbon capture with Singapore, remain frameworks.

The leverage node and commitment anchors

Leverage came most visibly from overlapping memberships. Indonesia became a full member of BRICS on 6 January 2025, chairs the D-8 from 2026, concluded the IEU-CEPA, signed the ICA-CEPA, opened CPTPP accession, and signed a reciprocal tariff agreement with the United States. The combination places Indonesia inside several networks at once, so that no single network can cut all of its access. The costliest commitment anchors are the treaty-level Defense Cooperation Agreement with Australia (2024) and the Board of Peace Charter (2026). Both give substance to Indonesia’s ambiguity, but both also tie Indonesia to particular partners.

Diversifying Weapons Systems, 2024–2026

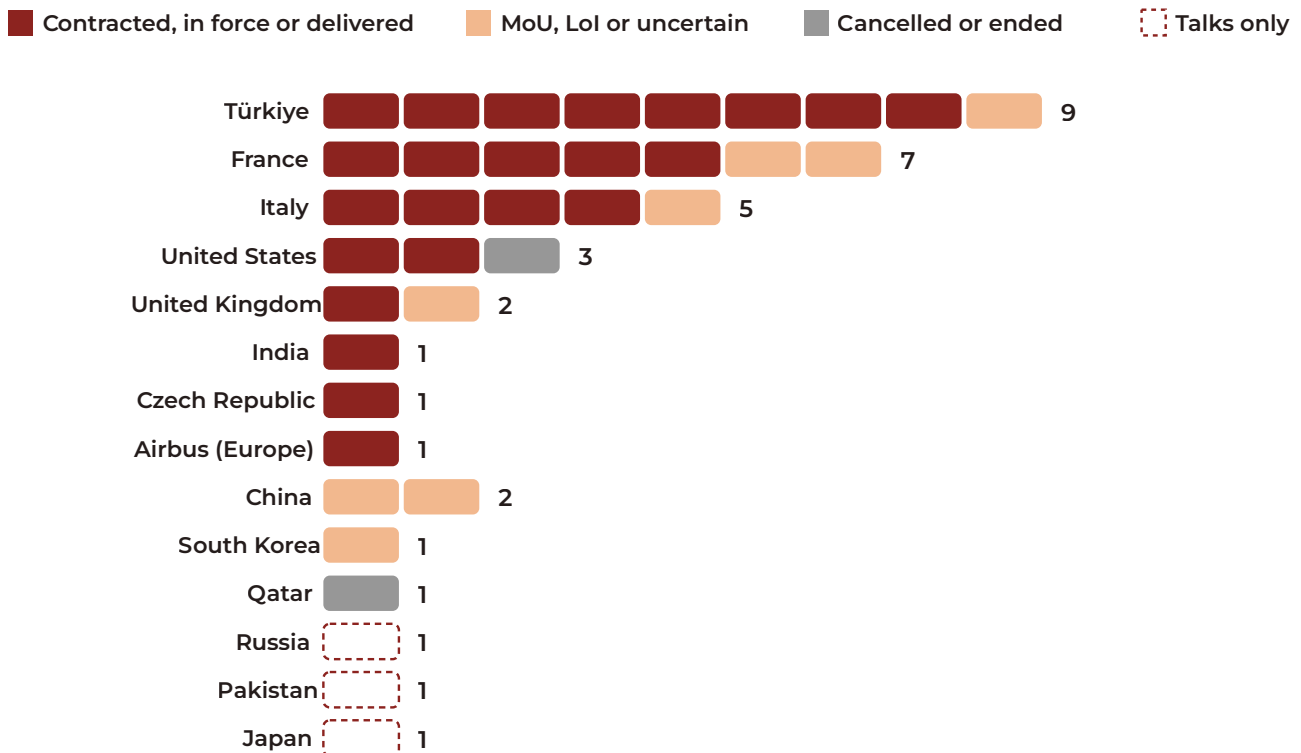
In under three years, Indonesia tied weapons programs to eight suppliers and had programs with six other countries still at the MoU, talks or cancellation stage. The diversification reduces dependence on any single supplier, but it brings a new cost: a fragmented force.

Weapons procurement is where visits turn most quickly into material decisions. This section examines the weapons-system programs active between January 2024 and October 2026: contracts signed, contracts entering into force, deliveries, memoranda and talks. The unit of analysis is the *program*, meaning one platform,

ship class, missile system, radar or munitions package from one supplier. Data come from the Ministry of Defense, Antara, Janes, Naval News, The Aviationist and SIPRI (2026a). Contract values not officially announced are treated as reported.

Figure 9. Weapons-system programs by supplier and status.

Weapons-system programs by supplier and status, January 2024 – October 2026



One box = one program (platform, ship, missile, radar or munitions package) active between Jan 2024 and Oct 2026

Source: Computed by the author from Ministry of Defense, Antara, Janes, Naval News and The Aviationist reporting; status as of 8 October 2026.

Eight suppliers, one NATO axis

Twenty-three programs have reached contract, entry into force or delivery (Figure 9 and Table 5). Türkiye leads with eight: the KAAN, İstif frigates, Anka-S and Kizilelma drones, Atmaca and KHAN missiles, fast missile boats and the Harimau medium tank. France follows with five, including the Rafale, whose first jets arrived in January 2026, and two Scorpène Evolved submarines on which PT PAL began cutting steel in August 2026. Italy has four, including two PPA ships delivered in 2025 and 2026 and the aircraft carrier Garibaldi, donated and arriving in Jakarta in September 2026. The United States, the United Kingdom, India, the Czech Republic and Airbus complete the list.

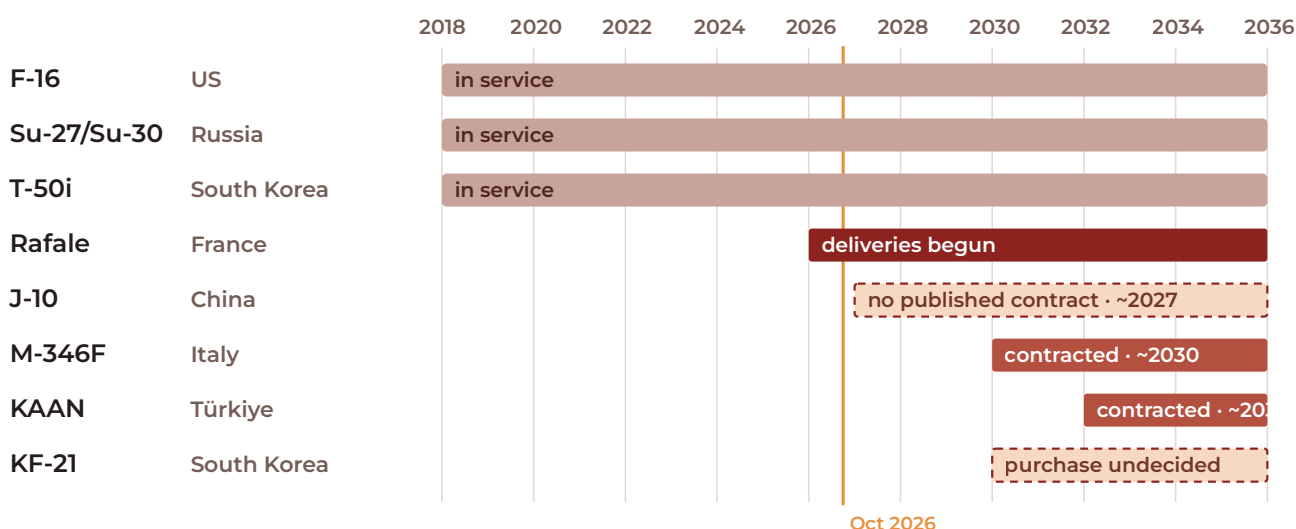
Two numbers sum up the pattern. First, the effective number of suppliers by program is only 4.7, far below the breadth of visit diplomacy (N_{eff} 22.4). Second, supplier D^* , the program share of the largest supplier, reaches 35 percent for Türkiye. More important, 22 of the 23 material programs come from NATO

member states or, in Airbus's case, a European consortium. The only exception is India's BrahMos. The non-Western options, China's J-10, a Russian package and Pakistan's JF-17, remain at the stage of talks or lack a published contract. Indonesia's arms diversification is therefore diversification within one bloc, not across poles.

SIPRI (2026a) reports that in 2021–2025 Indonesia was Southeast Asia's largest arms importer, with Italy (40 percent), the United States (16 percent) and France (14 percent) as its main suppliers. SIPRI measures deliveries, not contracts, so Türkiye barely registers yet. As Turkish programs begin to deliver in the late 2020s, Indonesia's supplier D* is likely to shift from Italy to Türkiye.

Figure 10. Combat platforms by country of origin and status.

Fighter and light-combat platforms by country of origin and status, 2018–2036



Bars start at entry into service or expected delivery; dashed = uncertain. F-16, Su-27/30 and T-50i are drawn from 2018 as the baseline.

Source: Rafale first arrival from Indonesia Business Post (2026b); M-346F delivery year from Star (2026); KAAN delivery year from Indonesia Business Post (2026a), quoting the TAI chief executive; J-10 timing from Migflug (2026b), quoting the Air Force chief of staff; KF-21 status from Migflug (2026a). The J-10 has no published contract.

A fragmenting combat fleet

Indonesia's core combat fleet today rests on three countries of origin: the F-16 from the United States, the Su-27/Su-30 from Russia and the T-50i from South Korea. If every 2024–2026 plan is realized, the fleet will draw on seven countries by the early 2030s (Figure 10), adding the Rafale, J-10, M-346F, KAAN and possibly the KF-21. The F-15EX and Mirage 2000-5 options are closed, but the number of platform families keeps growing.

Within the Autonomy Triangle, this fragmentation cuts both ways. At the vulnerability node, no single country can ground the whole fleet with a spare-

parts embargo, which keeps D* low in the sense of proposition P1. At the buffer node, every platform family needs its own logistics chain, simulators, weapons and certification. Life-cycle costs rise, readiness becomes harder to sustain, and linking data across platforms becomes a task of its own. Diversification that protects against embargo can erode readiness in peacetime.

Table 5. Main weapons-system programs, 2024–2026.

Domain	System	Supplier	Qty	Status	Local content
Air	Rafale F4	France	42	Deliveries begun	–
Air	KAAN	Türkiye	48	Contract	PTDI, Republikorp
Air	J-10	China	42*	Uncertain	–
Air	M-346F	Italy	12	Contract	MRO
Air	A400M MRTT	Airbus	2	Delivered	–
Air	S-70M Black Hawk	US	22	Contract	PTDI
Air	Anka-S · Kizilelma	Türkiye	12 · 12	Deliveries begun · Contract	PTDI · MRO
Air	F-15EX	US	24	Ended	–
Naval	Scorpène Evolved	France	2	In force	PT PAL
Naval	PPA (Thaon di Revel)	Italy	2	Delivered	–
Naval	İstif (MİLGEM)	Türkiye	2	Contract	–
Naval	Merah Putih (Arrowhead 140)	UK	2 (+2)	Contract	PT PAL
Naval	Garibaldi (KRI Sriwijaya-100)	Italy	1	Delivered	gift
Missiles & radar	BrahMos	India	–	Contract	–
Missiles & radar	Atmaca · KHAN	Türkiye	–	Contract · Delivered	Republikorp
Missiles & radar	Radar GM400α · Retia	France · Czech Republic	13 · 12	Contract	PT Len

Note: * J-10 quantity unofficial. Status as of 8 October 2026. Source: Compiled by the author from Ministry of Defense releases and from Janes (2024; 2025), Aviationist (2025), IDN Financials (2025), Defense Post (2023), Naval News (2025; 2026a; 2026b) and the sources of Figure 10.

Local content and financing

Some programs carry local content. The Scorpène Evolved submarines and Merah Putih frigates are being built at PT PAL; the KAAN, Anka-S and Black Hawk involve PTDI; Turkish missile deals created joint ventures with Republikorp; and Thales radars are supported by PT Len. But the largest programs, such as the Rafale, PPA, M-346F and BrahMos, carry no local production beyond maintenance. The KF-21 even moved backward: Indonesia's cost share was cut from about 1.6 trillion won to 600 billion won (Korea Times 2024), and in June 2026 local production was dropped in favor of a direct purchase, with 16 aircraft under negotiation (Migflug

2026a). Many programs rest on foreign loans, such as a reported loan of about US\$1.25 billion for the two PPA ships (Defence Security Asia 2024) and foreign financing for the KAAN (Bisnis Indonesia 2026). Diversifying suppliers has thus also meant diversifying creditors.

Three rules for arms diversification

- 1. Diverse platforms, one decisive layer.** Let platforms come from many suppliers, but keep national control of data links, cryptography, and command-and-control systems, so that a multi-origin force still fights as one.
- 2. Cap platform families, not suppliers.** Set a ceiling on the number of fighter and surface-combatant families per service, and make technology transfer and onshore maintenance a condition of every new family.
- 3. Diversify across poles at the munitions and spares layer.** The dependence that cripples fastest in a crisis is munitions and spare parts. That is where a second source outside the same bloc, including joint production onshore, has the greatest value.

Rodrik's Trilemma, Supply Chains, and Time

Visits choose a level of integration. Every CEPA, membership or tariff deal is a decision about how much policy sovereignty to trade for access.

Rodrik (2000; 2011) shows that a country cannot simultaneously have deep economic integration, national sovereignty and democratic politics. At most two of the three can be had together. This section reads the outcomes of the 2024–2026 visits as a series of decisions about which of those goals to weight, and about what policy space to trade for access.

Three choices inside the triangle

The trilemma works like a triangle on which only one side can be occupied at a time. The first side, deep integration plus sovereignty, produces what Friedman (1999) called the *golden straitjacket*: the state remains formally sovereign, but its policy space is set by market demands and treaty rules. The second, deep integration plus democracy, requires global governance above the state, as in the European Union. The third, sovereignty plus democracy, produces the *Bretton Woods compromise*: bounded openness that leaves governments free to choose the industrial, social and fiscal policies their voters want.

For Indonesia, each corner has a concrete institutional form. The integration corner is represented by trade and investment agreements carrying disciplines on tariffs, standards, procurement and the treatment of state-owned enterprises. The sovereignty corner is represented by instruments such as the nickel-ore

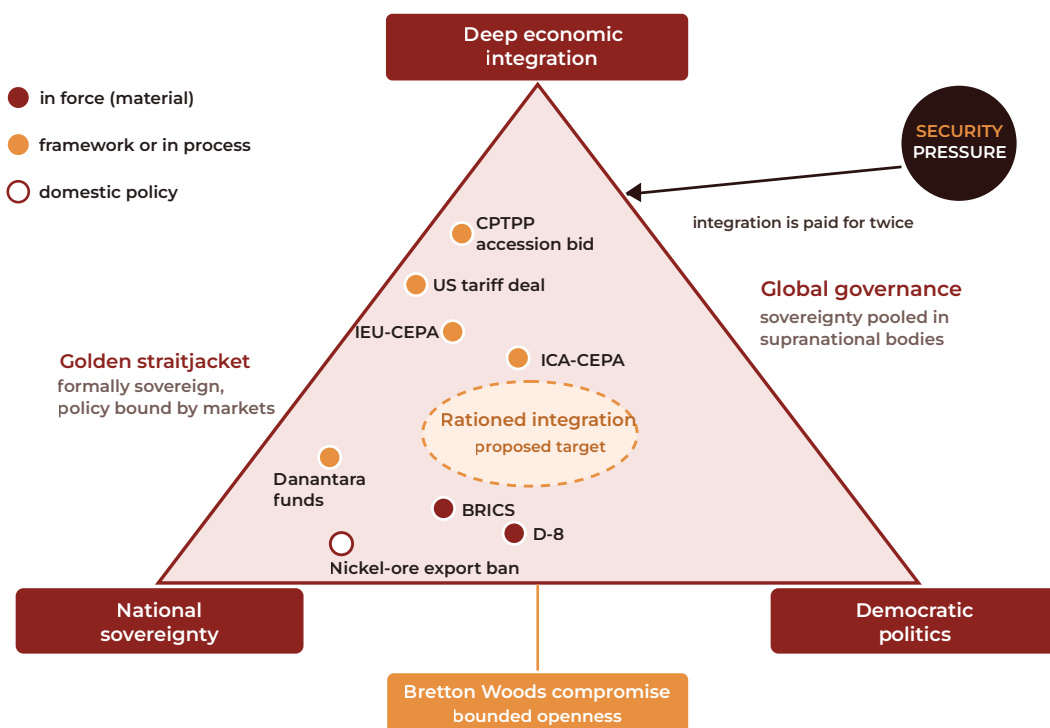
export ban, downstreaming requirements, and Danantara as the manager of state capital. The democracy corner is represented by the government's obligation to seek the House of Representatives' (DPR) approval of international agreements with broad and fundamental effects, affirmed by Constitutional Court Decision No. 13/PUU-XVI/2018 (Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia 2018), and by the audience costs the government bears when an agreement is seen to hurt domestic groups.

The double price of integration under multipolarity

Rodrik framed his trilemma to explain the tension between globalization and democracy. The parent monograph adds a security dimension. When interdependence can be weaponized, every step toward the integration corner not only narrows economic policy space but also opens channels of coercion for whichever pole controls the network hubs (Farrell and Newman 2019). Integration is paid for twice, once in policy space and again in security vulnerability. The optimum for a middle power therefore shifts away from the golden straitjacket toward a new version of the Bretton Woods compromise, *rationed integration*: openness in non-critical sectors and rationed openness where the choke points lie.

Figure 11. Rodrik's trilemma and the positions of agreements and policies linked to the 2024–2026 visits.

Rodrik's trilemma with eight agreements and policies linked to the 2024–2026 visits



Positions are interpretive: the closer to a corner, the more weight that goal receives

Source: Adapted by the author from Rodrik (2000; 2011) and the monograph *Strategic Autonomy in a Multipolar Era*; positions are interpretive

Reading the visit outcomes on the triangle

Figure 11 places eight agreements and policies linked to the 2024–2026 visits inside the triangle, and Table 6 maps them one by one. Three patterns emerge. First, the trade agreements that came out of visits to Western capitals pull Indonesia toward the golden straitjacket. CPTPP accession pulls hardest, because that agreement carries disciplines on state-owned enterprises, cross-border data flows and government procurement. The IEU-CEPA and the ICA-CEPA sit slightly below it. The reciprocal tariff agreement with the United States also sits on this side, but its character differs. It was born of a tariff threat and so reflects security pressure entering the space of trade.

Second, memberships and state-capital instruments hold Indonesia on the sovereignty side. BRICS and the D-8 carry no binding market disciplines, so they widen Indonesia's networks without cutting its policy space. The funds pledged by Qatar and the joint fund with Russia are channeled through Danantara, a state-controlled conduit for capital. The nickel-ore export ban, challenged by the European Union at the WTO and ruled against Indonesia at panel level in 2022 (WTO 2022), shows that the sovereignty corner has its own price.

Third, the democracy corner is the least visited. Nearly every agreement was negotiated by the executive on a visit and only then processed at home. Law No. 7 of 2014 on Trade (Republic of Indonesia 2014) requires international trade agreements to be submitted to the DPR after signature, with the DPR deciding whether ratification requires a statute. Yet public debate about the policy space being surrendered remains thin. That gap makes integration look like a decision taken on the road rather than a decision of domestic politics.

Table 6. Trilemma map of agreements and policies linked to the visits.

Agreement or policy	Integration opened	Policy space at stake	Tendency in the triangle
CPTPP accession (application Sep 2024)	Markets of CPTPP members	Disciplines on state-owned enterprises, cross-border data flows, government procurement	Golden straitjacket, strongest pull
IEU-CEPA (political agreement Jul 2025)	EU market	Sustainability standards, rules of origin, procurement	Golden straitjacket
ICA-CEPA (signed Sep 2025)	Canadian market	Tariff and investment commitments	Golden straitjacket, lighter
US reciprocal tariff agreement (Feb 2026)	Avoiding higher tariffs	Tariff and non-tariff concessions negotiated under threat	Golden straitjacket under security pressure
BRICS membership (Jan 2025)	Alternative political and financial networks	Almost no market discipline	Sovereignty

Agreement or policy	Integration opened	Policy space at stake	Tendency in the triangle
D-8 chair (from 2026)	Trade cooperation among eight Muslim-majority states	Loose	Sovereignty
Funds via Danantara (Qatar, Russia)	Capital entering through a state channel	Concentration of capital in particular partners	Sovereignty
Nickel-ore export ban	Domestic downstreaming	WTO dispute with the European Union	Sovereignty, near Bretton Woods

Note: The third column shows potential, not measured, effects. Source: Author's assessment.

Three rules of rationed integration

- 1. Ration by choke point, not by partner.** Open non-critical sectors broadly, but ration openness in sectors that contain choke points: mineral processing, data, staple food, energy and munitions.
- 2. Balance the pull across networks.** Every commitment that pulls Indonesia toward the golden straitjacket in one network should be offset by memberships that preserve policy space in another, so that no single pole writes the rules.
- 3. Bring the democracy corner to life.** Attach a policy-space analysis to every agreement submitted to the DPR, so that integration is chosen deliberately and audience costs are managed before signature rather than after.

With these three rules, visits become a tool for choosing a point inside the triangle on purpose. Without them, Indonesia's position is set by the order of invitations and the threat of tariffs.

Weaponized supply chains

The parent monograph stresses that what matters is often not control of the mine but control of the processing stage. The deals announced in Beijing in November 2024, including a high-pressure nickel-processing project, show the risk. Downstreaming yields leverage only when processing capital and technology are not concentrated in one pole. When they are, dependence simply moves from the mine to the refinery.

This is where visits to middle powers have strategic value. Capital from the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, the United Kingdom, South Korea and Japan can diversify the processing and logistics stages. Visits should tie such pledges to specific choke points, not to headline totals.

Implications for the design of visits

The iron cage explains why visits to the poles must be balanced. **Rodrik's trilemma** explains why every trade agreement must be judged by the policy space it gives up. **Weaponized supply chains** explain why investment pledges must be mapped onto stages of the chain rather than onto countries of origin. The three meet in one rule: every visit should carry a choke-point map of the sectors under discussion.

Time as a resource: delay, option value, and the EIP

Many visits produced options that were not exercised at once. In an unstable multipolar order those options have value, but only up to the point of no return.

Proposition P5 of the parent monograph holds that an irreversible decision should be deferred as long as the value of waiting exceeds the value of deciding now plus the cost of delay (Dixit and Pindyck 1994). The point at which the two are equal is the entrapment irreversibility point (EIP). Beyond it, delay turns into exclusion from the order that is taking shape.

Fighter procurement illustrates that logic. Visits to Moscow, Vienna, Paris, Washington, Seoul and Ankara opened several options at once. Some were held open for a long time before being exercised. BrahMos was discussed in January 2025 and contracted only in July 2026. That delay preserved option value while prices, technologies and sanctions risks became clearer. But delay also has costs. The Su-35 plan lapsed amid the risk of US sanctions, the Mirage 2000-5 contract was cancelled in February 2024, and Boeing ended its F-15EX campaign in February 2026 after the 2023 memorandum was never converted. The iron cage shortens the window of choice, and options left open too long can be closed by others.

Figure 12. Horizon scan, October 2026 – 2029.

Scheduled events above the timeline; trends and signals below. Compiled by the author



Horizon scan: trends and signals that shape the value of visits

- Hormuz disruption since 28 Feb 2026 (strong signal)
- US–China competition in East Asia (trend)
- Russia–Ukraine war and secondary sanctions (trend)
- Technology and critical-mineral export controls (trend)
- AI and data-center governance (weak signal)

Source: Event dates from the Philippine government (ASEAN Summit, Manila, 16–18 November 2026; Philstar Life 2026) and the Longgang District Government of Shenzhen (APEC, 18–19 November 2026; Longgang District Government 2026); timing of the 2029 election from Tempo (2026) and Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia (2025); start of the Hormuz disruption from SeaVantage (2026). Classification of trends and signals by the author.

The horizon scan in Figure 12 shows the next decision window. Three summits in November and December 2026 (ASEAN in Manila, APEC in Shenzhen and the G20 in the United States) bring Indonesia face to face with all three poles within six weeks. The years 2027–2028 will test the realization of investment pledges and the schedules of arms contracts. The 2029 national election, whose voting day the KPU has yet to set (Tempo 2026), will squeeze the government’s temporal autonomy, as large decisions tend to be accelerated or deferred to fit the political cycle. In the background, the disruption of the Strait of Hormuz since 28 February 2026, the Russia–Ukraine war and technology export controls raise the volatility of the system. Under the logic of P5, higher volatility raises the value of options; a shorter window means the EIP arrives sooner.

Testing the Hypotheses and Locating Indonesia in the Typology

One hypothesis is supported and three are partly supported (Table 7). The visits have moved Indonesia to the right of the typology, but only slightly upward.

Table 7. Results of the working-hypothesis tests.

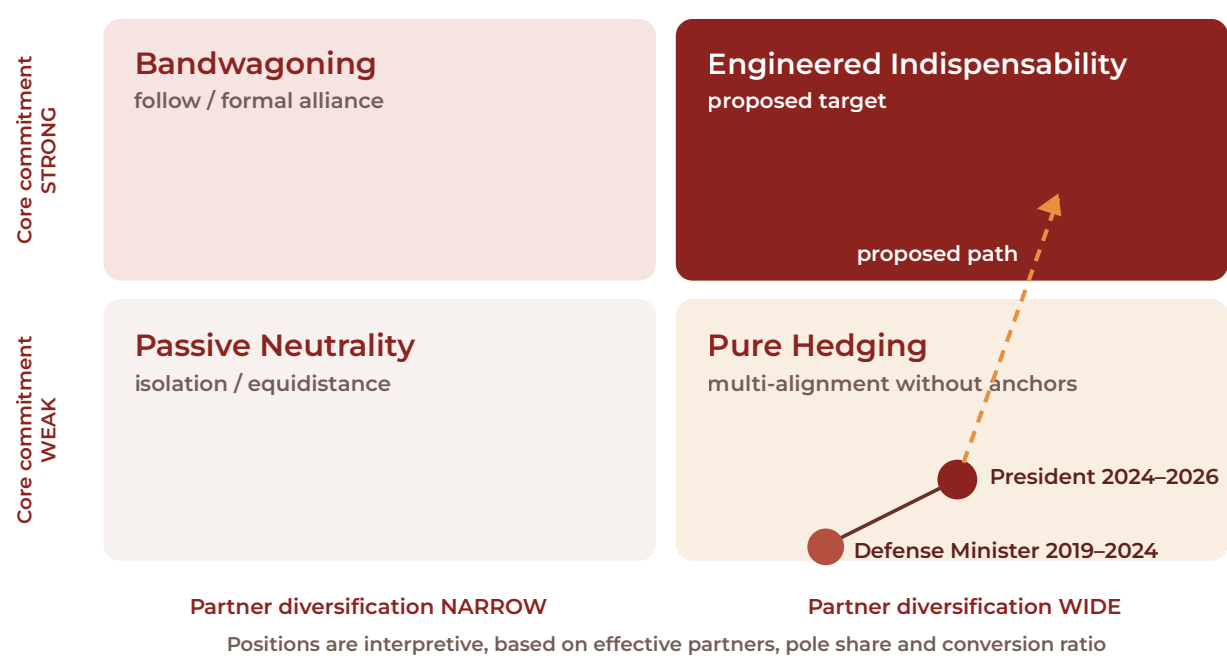
Hypothesis	Main evidence	Result	Note
WH-1 Diversification	N_{eff} 22.4; diplomatic D^* 6.3%; 86% of stops outside the three poles	Supported	Diversification rose under the presidency (19.5 → 21.5)
WH-2 Conversion	CR 0.27; 17 of 30 outcomes remain frameworks and 5 were not realized	Partly supported	Conversion limited to Rafale, KAAAN, BrahMos and Arrowhead
WH-3 Value of time	BrahMos option held open for 18 months, then contracted; Su-35, Mirage and F-15EX closed	Partly supported	Delay had value, but structural pressure closed some options
WH-4 Anchors	Defense treaty with Australia, Board of Peace, BRICS; clarification of the 2024 joint statement with China	Partly supported	Anchors exist, but signals sometimes conflict

Source: Author’s assessment based on the indicators defined in the framework and method section.

The note on WH-4 needs explanation. The Indonesia–China joint statement of November 2024 referred to joint development in areas of overlapping claims. The Foreign Ministry later stated that Indonesia’s sovereignty over the Natuna waters was unaffected. The episode shows the cost of ambiguity without credible commitment anchors (Schelling 1960): a single sentence on a visit can be read as a shift of position, and correcting it spends credibility.

Figure 13. Indonesia’s position in the typology of middle-power strategies.

Middle-power strategy typology from the Strategic Autonomy monograph, with Indonesia’s 2019–2026 path



Note: The path is interpretive. Source: Author.

In the typology of the parent monograph, the visits of 2019–2026 have moved Indonesia toward wide partner diversification, as Figure 13 shows. Core commitment and material depth, however, are not yet strong enough to enter the quadrant of engineered indispensability. Indonesia now sits closest to pure hedging, moving only slightly upward (Kuik 2008; Goh 2007/08). Its main risk is being discounted by every pole: each pole welcomes Indonesian visits, but none is convinced that Indonesia cannot be replaced. The path to the upper-right quadrant runs through two things that visits alone cannot produce, buffers and industry.

Recommendations and Conclusion: Engineering Visits for Indispensability

The visits need not be fewer. They need to be designed so that each stop adds one node of indispensability.

Figure 14. Eisenhower matrix of policy recommendations.

Policy recommendations sorted by importance for strategic autonomy and by urgency



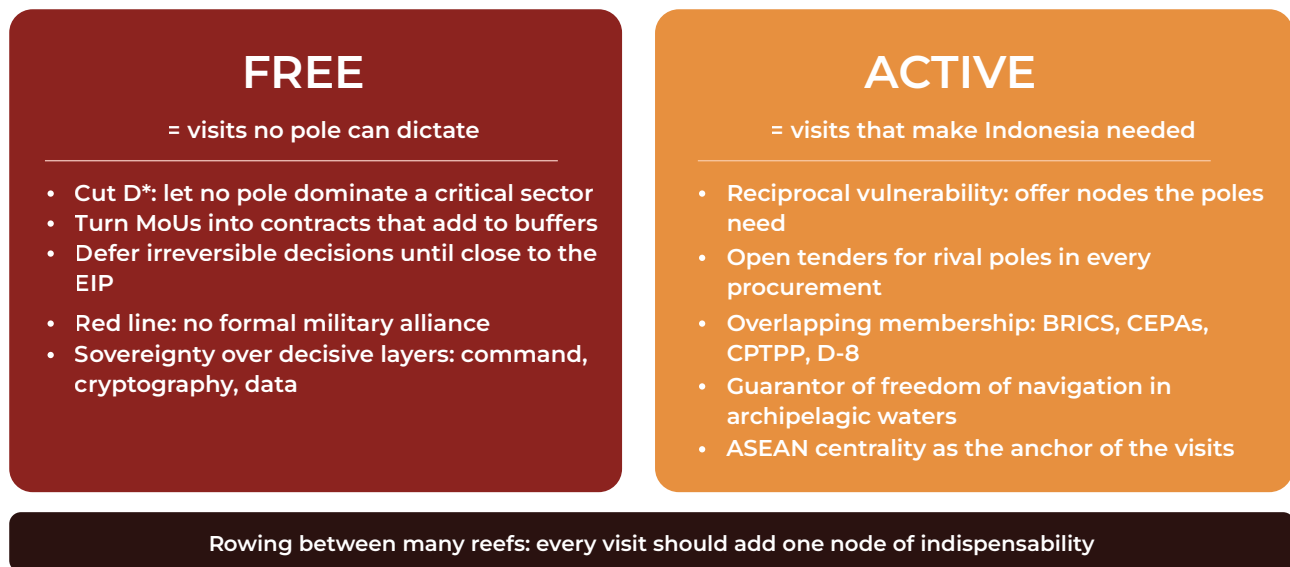
Source: Author, based on the analysis in this paper.

The do now quadrant of the Eisenhower matrix (Figure 14) targets the conversion ratio. Every MoU produced by a visit should carry a conversion date, a program owner and a co-production clause. Every visit briefing should include a D* card listing the choke points of each sector on the agenda and the current supplier shares. Announced investment commitments should be tracked in public so that pledge figures do not end as signals.

The *plan* quadrant targets buffers. Reserves of energy, food and munitions should be sized to the market adjustment period T of proposition P3. Downstreaming capital should come from more than one pole at the processing stage. Red lines and operating principles for visits should be codified so that Indonesia's ambiguity is not read as unreliability. Figure 15 sets out these principles as a rereading of *bebas-aktif* as a doctrine for visits.

Figure 15. Bebas-aktif as a doctrine for visits.

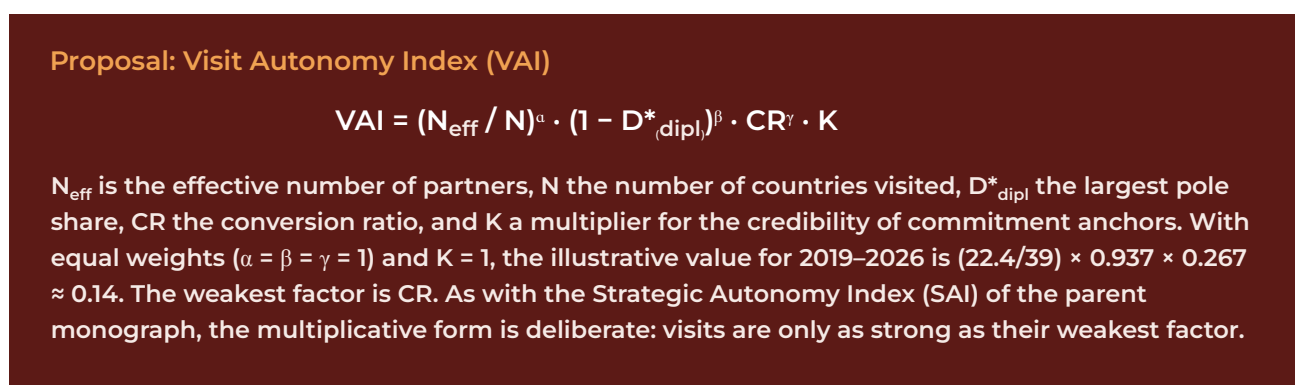
Compiled by the author from the Strategic Autonomy monograph framework



Source: Author, adapted from Hatta (1948; 1953) and Widjajanto (2026).

Figure 16 proposes a Visit Autonomy Index (VAI) that combines the indicators defined earlier in this paper.

Figure 16. Proposed Visit Autonomy Index (VAI).



Source: Author.

Conclusion

The visits have bought options. The next task is to pay for those options with material depth.

This paper has shown that Prabowo Subianto’s 127 country stops of 2019–2026 form a pattern consistent with strategic autonomy on one axis of the typology, diversification. The visits were widely spread, not concentrated on any pole, and directed mostly at middle powers. The pattern raises Indonesia’s disagreement point in its bargaining with every pole. On the dimension of capability, however, the yield is thin. Only about a quarter of visit outcomes were converted into contracts, co-production, memberships or treaties.

The core message is simple. A visit without conversion is a signal, not autonomy. Diversification without buffers is pure hedging, and pure hedging is easily discounted. In an unstable multipolar era, Indonesia should treat every visit as a project in engineering indispensability, armed with a D* card, a conversion date and a commitment anchor, before the EIP closes the window of choice.

Further research agenda

Table 8 lists the questions this paper leaves open, with a proposed approach to each.

Table 8. Further research agenda.

No.	Question	Proposed approach
1	Realization of visit pledges	Match investment pledges and MoUs against realized investment and procurement contracts, 2019–2028
2	Calibrating the Visit Autonomy Index	Compute the VAI by year and by phase, and compare it with the SAI of the parent monograph
3	Sequencing and signaling	Sequence analysis of the order of visits to the poles to test signaling effects on pole responses
4	Cross-national comparison	Compare the travel patterns of the leaders of India, Türkiye, Brazil, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam over the same period

Source: Author.

Acknowledgment of AI use

The author prepared this paper with the assistance of Claude, an AI system developed by Anthropic, working under the author's direction and within the framework of the parent monograph. Claude searched public sources and compiled the visit chronology (Table 9) and the weapons-program data (Figures 9–10 and Table 5); coded the thirty visit outcomes into the author's categories (Table 4); computed the descriptive and concentration indicators (Tables 2–3 and Figures 4–7); drafted the text in English and Indonesian from the author's research question, framework and instructions; and produced all figures and the original layout. In the October 2026 revision round, Claude also checked the claims attributed to Mearsheimer (2026), the arms-program details and the investment-pledge figures against original or primary sources, revised the affected passages and source lines, and redrew Figures 2, 3, 6 and 9–15. The author set the research question and framework, directed and reviewed each stage, and is fully responsible for the analysis, the conclusions and any errors.

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Sources of visit data

Data note. The visit chronology (Table 9) and the weapons-program data (Figures 9–10 and Table 5) were compiled trip by trip for 23 October 2019 – 8 October 2026 from four kinds of public record, last accessed between 8 and 15 October 2026: (1) official releases of the Ministry of Defense (kemhan.go.id, 2019–2024), the Cabinet Secretariat (setkab.go.id, 2024–2026) and the Ministry of State Secretariat (setneg.go.id, 2024–2026); (2) the news archives of Antara (antaranews.com), Tempo, Detik and the Jakarta Post; (3) specialist defense reporting by Janes, Naval News and The Aviationist; and (4) company and agency releases for individual contracts. Items that support a specific figure or claim in the text are listed individually in the References above.

APPENDIX

Chronology of Country Stops, 2019–2026

Table 9. Chronology of country stops, 2019–2026.

Year	Office	Countries (month)	Σ
2019	DM	Malaysia (Nov) · Thailand, ADMM (Nov) · Türkiye (Nov) · China (Dec) · Japan (Dec) · Philippines (Dec)	6
2020	DM	France (Jan) · Russia (Jan) · UAE (Feb) · Russia (Jun) · Türkiye (Jul) · Qatar (Jul, unconfirmed) · India (Jul) · United States (Oct) · Austria (Oct) · France (Oct) · Türkiye (Oct)	11
2021	DM	United Kingdom (Mar) · Russia (Mar) · Japan (Mar) · South Korea (Apr) · France (Jun) · Germany (Jul) · United Kingdom, DSEI (Sep) · Malaysia (Oct) · Bahrain, Manama Dialogue (Nov)	9
2022	DM	Saudi Arabia (Mar) · Greece (Mar) · France (Mar) · UAE (Mar) · Qatar (Mar) · Vietnam (May) · Singapore, Shangri-La (Jun) · Cambodia, ADMM (Jun) · UAE (Jun–Jul) · China, Xi'an (Nov) · Cambodia (Nov) · Italy (Dec) · France (Dec)	13
2023	DM	Türkiye (Feb) · Australia, 2+2 (Feb) · UAE, IDEX (Feb) · Germany, Hannover Messe (Apr) · Malaysia, LIMA (May) · Singapore, Shangri-La (Jun) · Malaysia (Jun) · France, Paris Air Show (Jun) · United States (Aug) · Singapore (Nov) · Malaysia (Nov)	11
2024	DM / President-elect	China · Japan · Malaysia (Mar–Apr) · UAE · Qatar (May) · Singapore, Shangri-La (May–Jun) · Jordan · Saudi Arabia (Jun) · France · Serbia · Türkiye · Russia (Jul) · Australia · Papua New Guinea (Aug) · Brunei · Laos · Cambodia · Thailand · Malaysia · Vietnam · Philippines (Sep)	21
2024	President	China · United States · Peru, APEC · Brazil, G20 · United Kingdom · UAE (Nov) · Egypt, D-8 (Dec)	7
2025	President	Malaysia · India · Malaysia (Jan) · Malaysia (Apr) · UAE · Türkiye · Egypt · Qatar · Jordan (Apr) · Brunei · Thailand · Malaysia, ASEAN Summit (May) · Singapore · Czech Republic · Russia (Jun) · Saudi Arabia · Brazil, BRICS · Belgium · France · Belarus (Jul) · Singapore (Aug) · China · Qatar · UAE · Japan · United States, UNGA · Canada · Netherlands (Sep) · Egypt · Malaysia, ASEAN Summit · South Korea, APEC (Oct) · Australia (Nov) · Pakistan · Russia (Dec)	34

Year	Office	Countries (month)	Σ
2026	President	United Kingdom · Switzerland, WEF · France (Jan) · United States, Board of Peace · United Kingdom · Jordan · UAE (Feb) · Japan · South Korea (Mar–Apr) · Russia · France (Apr) · Philippines, ASEAN Summit (May) · France (May) · Russia, EEF (Sep) · India, BRICS (Sep)	15
Total		39 countries	127

Note: One stop = one country on one trip; DM = defense minister. Virtual meetings excluded. Source: Compiled by the author from the Ministry of Defense, Cabinet Secretariat, State Secretariat, Antara, Tempo, Detik and The Jakarta Post.