

# JGSS

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Master's Programs in International Relations  
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## **NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

**Yohanes Sulaiman**

As the executive editor, I welcome our readers to our inaugural issue of Journal of Global Strategic Studies.

Journal of Global Strategic Studies aims to become one of the preeminent journals in Political Science, specifically in the subfields of international relations, comparative politics, and area studies. At this point, we publish issues twice a year, in June and in December. Depending on the number of submissions, we may be increasing the frequency of our publication in the future.

We welcome submissions on foreign policy, security studies, democracy, political psychology – anything that is interesting and high quality relating to global strategic studies. As we also aim to inform policy makers and stimulate debates in political science, we are publishing both research articles and essays – so this journal will be part academic and part policy journal. We also welcome and will publish book reviews and short essays that question the findings and arguments in articles that we published.

We are honored that several distinguished scholars have contributed articles to the first issue of Journal of Global Strategic Studies.

The lead article comes from John Mueller, a senior research scientist at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies, a member of in the Department of Political Science at the Ohio State University, and also a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. Like much of his previous work, his article, “International War: Decline, Consequences, and ‘Pax Americana,’” is both fascinating and controversial, as it declares that the world is presently relatively peaceful not due to American primacy, but because states no longer think war as something normal and desirable. Truly, this article is perfect for the inaugural issue of this journal.

Saiful Mujani, Professor in Political Science at Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta and R. William Liddle, Emeritus Professor in Political Science at the Ohio State University collaborated to give us our first

article in *Comparative Studies*, on democratic deconsolidation. Facing the arguments that democracy is declining all over the world, including in Indonesia, Mujani and Liddle set forth a reassuring argument, asserting that economic performance and level of education are both important factors in maintaining support for democracy. Considering that the level of education continues to increase in Asian countries, the future trend for democracy is encouraging.

Leonard C. Sebastian, Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Indonesia Programme, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University and Sigit S. Nugroho, a Research Analyst, at the Indonesia Programme, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, assess U.S. grand strategy in Southeast Asia. They argue that newly elected U.S. President Joe Biden will pursue a selective grand strategy, in which he will focus on China while paying less attention to Southeast Asia. This article offers invaluable insights for decision makers in capitals throughout Southeast Asia.

John Blaxland, Professor of International Security and Intelligence Studies at the Australian National University, argues that despite ups and downs in relations between Australia and Indonesia, both countries still share so many overlapping interests that it would be best for both countries to deepen and broaden their bilateral relationship, particularly through more bilateral and multilateral engagement. Blaxland's argument is timely and his advice is sound and important, considering growing tensions in the region due to the increased assertiveness of China. Additionally, in light of the observations made by Sebastian and Nugroho, that United States may de-emphasize Southeast Asia, Blaxland's claims take on added urgency. Therefore, this article is a must-read for decision-makers in Jakarta and Canberra.

Alexander R. Arifianto, a Research Fellow at the Indonesia Programme, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International

Studies, Nanyang Technological University, wrote an impressive article that discusses the politics of the Nahdlatul Ulama, considered by many as a large, respected, and moderate Islamic organization in Indonesia, famous for setting up youths to protect churches from attacks by radicals and terrorists. He makes a sober argument that questions the “moderate” thesis, contending that with the rise of conservative Islamism in Indonesia, the Nahdlatul Ulama has embraced illiberal policies and tactics against its conservative opponents, notably by aligning itself with the current Indonesian President Joko Widodo and using the state’s apparatus to crack down on its opponents. For those interested in Islam and theories about “democratic backsliding,” this article is especially relevant and insightful.

Last but not least, Mariane Olivia Delanova, an associate professor in International Relations at Universitas Jenderal Achmad Yani (UNJANI) and Professor Yanyan Mochamad Yani of Universitas Padjajaran (UNPAD) collaborated on an article analyzing Indonesia’s security strategy in Southeast Asia as a middle power.

Finally, allow me to thank you for your time and willingness to read this note, and I do hope that this inaugural edition will be the beginning of a beautiful friendship between us and you, dear readers.

Cimahi and Bandung, June 2021

**Yohanes Sulaiman**

Executive Editor

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