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The Impact of the Iran-Israel Conflict on Government Policies in Developing Countries: A Critical Study of the Role of ASEAN and Indonesian

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of the Iran-Israel conflict on government communication narratives and crisis communication strategies in Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on Indonesia and ASEAN. The study is qualitative with an exploratory approach and uses secondary data obtained from online media, official government social media accounts, and relevant academic journals. Thematic coding and content categorization were performed using NVivo 12 Plus. These procedures include word frequency analysis, clustering of diplomatic themes and mapping of crisis communication narrative patterns. The results show that Indonesia has developed a unique crisis communication strategy in response to the Iran-Israel conflict, which is different from Indonesia's response to previous geopolitical conflicts. The content analysis of government social media reveals three prevailing patterns: (1) humanitarian framing that emphasizes the suffering of Palestinian civilians; (2) sovereignty and non-intervention narratives as the foundation of diplomatic communication; and (3) multilateral platforms (ASEAN, the UN and the OIC) as amplification platforms for messages. Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy is acknowledged as a soft power strategy to cultivate a regional leadership image and facilitate balanced relationships with Western partners by means of principle-based rhetoric instead of bloc alignment. Conversely, ASEAN's official statement is usually neutral and procedural because of the divergence of interests among its member states. Indonesia, in contrast, consistently positions itself as a proactive communication actor through humanitarian, multilateral, and bilateral channels, exhibiting a crisis communication pattern that is notably different from other ASEAN nations.

Keywords: Iran-Israel conflict, government crisis communication, humanitarian diplomacy, soft power, ASEAN-Indonesia diplomacy.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji dampak konflik Iran-Israel terhadap narasi komunikasi pemerintah dan strategi komunikasi krisis di Asia Tenggara dengan penekanan khusus pada peran Indonesia dan ASEAN. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif eksploratif dengan memanfaatkan data sekunder yang bersumber dari media daring, akun media sosial resmi pemerintah, serta jurnal akademik yang relevan. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan NVivo 12 Plus untuk melaksanakan proses pengodean tematik dan kategorisasi konten. Prosedur analisis mencakup analisis frekuensi kata, pengelompokan tema-tema diplomatik, serta pemetaan pola narasi komunikasi krisis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Indonesia mengembangkan strategi komunikasi krisis yang khas dalam merespons

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konflik Iran–Israel, yang berbeda dari pola respons Indonesia terhadap konflik geopolitik sebelumnya. Analisis terhadap konten media sosial pemerintah mengidentifikasi tiga pola utama: (1) pembingkaihan humaniter yang menekankan penderitaan warga sipil Palestina; (2) narasi mengenai kedaulatan dan prinsip non-intervensi sebagai landasan komunikasi diplomatik; serta (3) pemanfaatan platform multilateral, seperti ASEAN, PBB, dan OKI, sebagai sarana untuk memperkuat dan memperluas pesan diplomatik. Diplomasi humaniter Indonesia dipandang sebagai strategi soft power yang bertujuan membangun citra kepemimpinan regional sekaligus mempertahankan hubungan yang seimbang dengan mitra-mitra Barat melalui penggunaan retorika berbasis prinsip, bukan melalui keberpihakan pada blok tertentu. Sebaliknya, komunikasi resmi ASEAN cenderung bersifat netral dan prosedural sebagai konsekuensi dari adanya perbedaan kepentingan di antara negara-negara anggotanya. Indonesia, berbeda dengan pola tersebut, secara konsisten memosisikan dirinya sebagai aktor komunikasi yang aktif melalui saluran humaniter, multilateral, dan bilateral. Hal ini menunjukkan adanya pola komunikasi krisis yang secara signifikan berbeda dari pola komunikasi negara-negara ASEAN lainnya.

Kata Kunci: Konflik Iran-Israel, komunikasi krisis pemerintah, diplomasi kemanusiaan, kekuatan lunak (soft power), diplomasi ASEAN-Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

The Iran-Israel conflict is one of the most complicated geopolitical interactions in the Middle East, and it has been going on for decades (Dzulhisham, 2025). The tensions between the two countries escalated significantly in April 2024, when Iran launched a direct missile and drone attack on Israel (Ali, 2025). The incident was one of the worst escalations in the history of the two countries' relations. This raised worldwide concerns about the potential escalation of conflict in the Middle East (Aeker, 2025). With globalization, such geopolitical conflicts have broader implications on global political and economic stability and are not limited to regional boundaries (Nisa, 2025).

These conflicts are typically reflected in the volatility of financial markets, commodity price fluctuations and changes in international investment flows (Personal, Archive & Kohnert, 2024). As uncertainty increases, global investors usually move their portfolio to safe haven assets including the U.S. dollar and the government bonds of advanced economies (Romadhon et al., 2024). Developing countries become more prone to the external economic forces (Shahid Jan Afridi, Dr Imtiaz Ahmad, Dr Usman Khan, & Ahmad Khan, 2025). Thus, policies need to be adopted to counter these changes and communicated to the public in a transparent and credible way to maintain economic stability and confidence (Converse & Mallucci, 2025).

In the present global geopolitical crisis era, the main challenge for developing countries is not only to formulate economic and diplomatic policy responses but also to communicate these responses to domestic audiences and the international community (Greenberg et

al., 2024). Effective policy communication can affect the public perceptions, reduce uncertainties around information, and increase the legitimacy of government actions (Aharon, 2025). Diplomatic narratives are the instrument governments use to strategically communicate their positions, maintain domestic harmony, and engage with regional and global actors. The international approach to conflict in Southeast Asia is often ASEAN's regional diplomacy of peace, dialog and stability (Karkazis, Anastasiadou & Markopoulos, 2024). Indonesia is a key player in ASEAN and has an important role in shaping and spreading diplomatic narratives on global crises such as the Iran-Israel conflict. Hence, it is appropriate to analyze ASEAN and Indonesia's diplomatic responses to explore how developing states respond to global geopolitical conditions by means of policy communication strategies (Note, 2025).

In fact, the escalating tensions between Iran and Israel are influencing the countries of ASEAN significantly, particularly when considering international diplomacy and economic stability, even when the conflict is taking place outside of Southeast Asia (Ullah, 2025). ASEAN with over 670 million people is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. It is influenced by global geopolitical events and is expected to respond with coordinated diplomatic positioning and policy communication (Florida & Mahmoudian, 2024). The geopolitical situation in the Middle East has a direct impact on the economic stability of developing countries such as Indonesia. This can be observed in the recent increase in energy prices and uncertainty in the market because of the Israel – Iran conflict (Maher, 2025). The governments should design economic policies and react to them in a manner that is well communicated to keep the country stable and maintain the confidence of the people (Khurshid & Yasin, 2026).

Diplomatic narratives are an important tool for developing countries to communicate their policy positions at the regional and international levels in the midst of global geopolitical tensions. In the past, ASEAN's reaction to global conflicts has been grounded in regional stability, dialog, and peace (Bukhari, Jalal, & Mujaddid, 2025). However, the rising global geopolitical tensions are forcing the ASEAN member states to formulate responses that are not only normative but also strategic and communicative (Rimapradesi & Wijaya, 2025). Indonesia, a key member of ASEAN, is an influential actor in shaping and communicating diplomatic narratives of international crises like the Iran–Israel conflict (Popalzay, Mir, & Mol, 2025).

The conflict has also reconfigured alliances across the Middle East, potentially adding to global uncertainty. In developing countries, policy communication needs to be managed well, including the disclosure of diplomatic stances on international conflicts (Roomi, 2023). Therefore, it is important to examine how ASEAN and Indonesia develop and spread their diplomatic narratives to understand how they carry out policy communication strategies in times of global geopolitical crises (Karso, 2025).

However, ASEAN's ability to respond constructively to the Iran–Israel conflict is hampered by internal diplomatic differences among its member states. That no common statement was issued by ASEAN on the conflict highlights the different historical, political and domestic perspectives that member states hold on the issue. These differences impede ASEAN's capacity to articulate a cohesive collective stance and to project a consistent diplomatic story. The response of ASEAN member states has been, in general, varied in its orientation. While some countries maintaining diplomatic ties with Israel tend to avoid taking a strong stance and emphasize the right to self-defense and stability, others, particularly those with a Muslim majority such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, show stronger solidarity with Palestine and more strongly criticize Israel's military actions.

These conflicting positions illustrate the difficulty of policy communication in a regional organization organization composed of states with different domestic sensitivities and foreign policy priorities. ASEAN's responses have been in the form of broader calls for restraint, dialog and peaceful resolution, rather than a unified position. This situation points to a bigger problem for ASEAN communication: how to be credible and consistent in its diplomatic communication in times of international crises while managing its internal diversity. This makes the Iran-Israel conflict a significant opportunity to examine how ASEAN and its major member states, especially Indonesia, construct and disseminate diplomatic narratives in response to geopolitical tensions.

The Iran-Israel conflict has added to the geopolitical uncertainty around the world which has had a major impact on energy security and economic stability, especially in developing countries which are still heavily dependent on energy imports. The Middle East is the heart of the world's energy supply. So that the instability in Iran, one of the main players of OPEC can increase the inflationary pressures and volatility of oil price in the region including Southeast Asia (Yunanto & Damayanti, 2017). Furthermore, the geographical position of the Middle East in the world trade and energy distribution chains means that the geopolitical tensions in the region have a broader economic impact as reflected in more recent studies . These dynamics create economic and policy messaging challenges for developing countries such as Indonesia. To manage global uncertainty

successfully and maintain order at home, governments must build policy narratives. Official statements frequently refer to the national economy's resilience, mentioning strategies for diversifying energy sources, fiscal discipline and adjustments to energy subsidies. The policy literature also mentions the need to diversify trade partners and to de-emphasize dependence on vulnerable strategic routes such as the Strait of Hormuz (Koloay, Cecep, & Miknamara, 2024). But these are typically told in macro-economic and geopolitical terms rather than in more specific sectoral policy terms.

Previous studies have focused on the economic and geopolitical consequences of the Iran-Israel conflict, and little attention has been paid to how global escalation narratives are framed in state policy communication and media discourse. The international media discourse often links the conflict to the possibility of a global conflagration, talking about "World War III." Therefore, this study explores how media coverage and government policy communication in Indonesia and ASEAN frame narratives of conflict escalation and geopolitical uncertainty. NVivo 12 is employed in this research to thematically classify media reports, policy documents and official government statements to identify discourse patterns related to escalation, security concerns and global stability to ensure a systematic analysis (Yunanto & Damayanti, 2017).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used an explanatory qualitative approach. The main data sources were official government statements and online news articles published during the geopolitical escalation in April-June 2024. The news articles were collected from big Indonesian national media (Kompas.com, Tempo.co, CNN Indonesia and Republika Online), Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, and Communications of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on Regional Policy. Data were collected through purposive sampling. The dataset was made up of 68 online news articles and 12 official statements based on these criteria.

Data were analyzed using NVivo 12 Plus with a structured thematic coding scheme developed deductively and inductively. Analytical rigor was maintained by conducting the analysis in three main stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the first stage (open coding), all textual data from online media articles and official government documents were imported into NVivo and segmented into units of analysis at the paragraph level. The first codes were inductively created by searching for patterns that repeated themselves and important ideas that emerged from the data. In the second stage (axial

coding), the initial codes were sorted into analytical nodes in NVivo. A hierarchical coding structure was developed, composed of parent nodes (main themes) and child nodes (sub-themes). The main thematic categories were military and security escalation, economic and energy implications, diplomatic positioning, humanitarian diplomacy and Palestinian discourse, regional stability and ASEAN, and narratives of global escalation and uncertainty.

Each parent node had a number of sub-nodes representing more specific dimensions of the discourse. For example, the node 'security and military escalation' contained sub-nodes such as maritime security risks, threat perception and regional instability. The hierarchical structure enabled a more systematic and nuanced organization of qualitative data. In the third stage (selective coding) we examined interrelations between motifs in an effort to develop more holistic analytical narratives. For systematic cross-source analysis, the matrix coding query feature of NVivo was used to compare the distribution of themes across data sources (government documents vs media).

NVivo visualization tools were implemented to improve the analysis transparency and validity. They were: discourse emphasis and dominant terms were identified through word frequency analysis; visualization of Word Clouds to highlight prominent narrative patterns; and exploration of relationships between themes and sources through clusters. These results were used as both exploratory tools and evidence to support thematic interpretation. Through an iterative review process, coded segments were repeatedly scrutinized and refined to ensure consistency across themes.

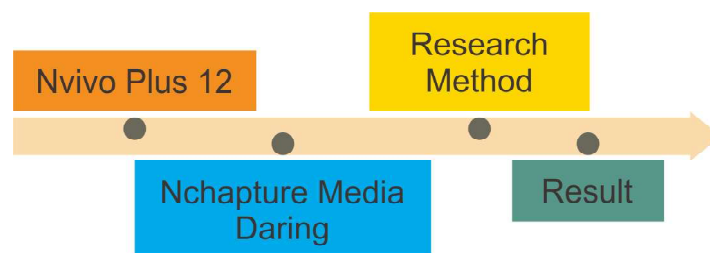


Figure 1. Data Analysis Techniques

Data coding was conducted using a systematic procedure and explicit criteria were used to select the sources of data to ensure that the data was valid and the analysis was reliable. The data sources were divided into two types: Official publications of government and regional agencies, and the Indonesian national media. We gathered news articles from popular Indonesian online media sources, such as Kompas.com, Tempo.co, CNN Indonesia, and Republika Online. The reasons for selecting these sources were their

editorial credibility, their coverage of the Iran-Israel conflict during the observation period, and their relevance to the discourse on the Indonesian foreign policy and the geopolitical context of Southeast Asia. The study also analyzed regional communications from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and official statements from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. This categorization provides a more distinct separation between Indonesia's national policy perspective and the wider ASEAN diplomatic framework, and allows the diplomatic narratives examined to be traceable to their institutional sources.

The coding process followed an a priori thematic framework to reduce subjectivity in qualitative interpretation in line with the study objectives. In both news articles and official documents, each paragraph was coded according to the relevant themes, thus defining the unit of analysis as the paragraph. The data were also analyzed in terms of the same thematic categories, but online media were categorized as representations of public discourse and official government statements as institutional policy communication. Iterative evaluation and cross-checking of coded segments were used to ensure thematic coherence and preserve coding consistency. This method increases the reliability of the findings. It increases the analytical transparency of the analysis on the impact of geopolitical conflict narratives on government communication strategies in Indonesia and ASEAN.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Iran and Israel are two key players shaping the security architecture of the Middle East. The growing tensions between the two will have consequences beyond the region, affecting countries outside the conflict zone like Indonesia. In recent years, the rivalry between the two countries has been manifested not only in the military and security competition but also in the construction of political narratives that shape the perception of the public at home and abroad. International conflict here is not only a geopolitical phenomenon but also one that requires a policy response and government communication strategies to control public opinion, maintain diplomatic positioning and consistent foreign policy. Such dynamics are strategically relevant to Indonesia, given the possible impact on global energy stability, Indonesia's diplomatic role in multilateral forums and the domestic sensitivity to Middle Eastern issues. The Iran-Israel conflict is thus a context in which states have to develop policy narratives that can connect national interests, public expectations and commitments to international norms.

The great power competition through military, economic and diplomatic tools by external actors such as the United States, Russia and China has further complicated the regional complexities in the Middle East (Buana et al., 2024).

In this configuration, Iran and Israel are well-positioned in the regional security architecture, as evidenced by their relatively large military potential in the Global Firepower 2024 classification. Nevertheless, the existing literature is predominantly concerned with security and geopolitical issues, while the role of governmental policy communication in resolving international conflicts remains relatively under-examined. Thus, the focus of analysis is shifted from the mere description of the conflict to the analysis of policy communication as a strategic instrument of the state. The article discusses how the Indonesian government frames the Iran-Israel conflict in its foreign policy communication and how such framing is constructed and communicated within the framework of ASEAN regional diplomacy and domestic public opinion (Seran & Marzaman, 2025).

The tension between Iran and Israel continues and has a transnational dimension that extends beyond the Middle East and the broader international sphere. Refugee flows, security challenges and economic risks have consequences. But the importance of this situation extends beyond its geopolitical and security dimension for countries outside the zone of conflict. But it also depends on how governments narrate and communicate these developments in their foreign policy narratives. The current conflict is a stark reminder to Indonesia and the ASEAN members that they must develop diplomatic positions that balance strategic interests, regional stability, and humanitarian concerns. External conflict, in fact, generates policy communication as governments are compelled to develop narratives to justify their diplomatic postures, to maintain their internal legitimacy, and to sustain their regional credibility.

Whether Middle Eastern tensions will spill over into global energy markets or regional instability is a question of context. Governments, from a communications policy point of view, consider the nature of their responses. Preliminary research has shown that the economic fragility and security problems stemming from instability in the Middle East impact energy-importing economies, including some of ASEAN countries (Baharrudin, 2020). But for developing countries, the main question is how such risks are translated into coherent diplomatic messages and public communication strategies. Instead of just reacting to geopolitical developments, governments are proactive in weaving international conflicts into broader narratives of regional cooperation, humanitarian duty and stability. This framing allows policymakers to manage domestic expectations as well as to reinforce Indonesia's long-held commitment to a balanced and principled approach to foreign policy.

Mobilization of competing political narratives is a common feature of international conflict that shapes discursive environments in an effort to sustain legitimacy. Earlier studies have suggested that entrenched rivalries can perpetuate cycles of hostility and mutual threat perception through the reinforcement of political narratives in competing states (Machold, 2018; Ilham, 2019). Such dynamics are part and parcel of the larger geopolitical context. Their relevance to this study lies in how external conflicts are redefined as communicative assets for governments outside the region. Therefore, the Iran-Israel confrontation is a discursive reference for Indonesia to set and express the government's diplomatic position in regional and global fora, not a direct security concern. Understanding this process is important when trying to assess the strategic role of policy communication in Indonesia's relations with complex international conflict (Ilham, 2019).

The Iran-Israel conflict is relevant to the ASEAN members not only as but also as a context of shaping the way in which governments communicate their foreign policy positions. The ASEAN countries are responding not by directly entering the conflict, but by diplomatic communication, highlighting neutrality, de-escalation and multilateral dialog. In this sense, communication is a policy tool enabling governments to signal humanitarian concerns without upsetting diplomatic balance and regional credibility. This approach is indicative of the normative foundations of ASEAN, especially the tenets of consensus and non-interference that guide the manner in which member states articulate their positions at international fora (Shujahi & Saeed, 2024).

External threat is the excuse for internal oppression and internal control is the source of external conflict. It's a two way street. This logic must be embedded in the diplomatic strategy and ASEAN's engagement in the Middle East peace process can never be complete without it. "The experience of conflict in ASEAN shows structural limitations of the collective response mechanism of the organization. ASEAN is guided by the principles of consensus-based decision-making and non-interference; however, these norms can also limit the organisation's ability to articulate a coherent and assertive geopolitical stance. ASEAN's communication framing continues to be cautious, emphasizing dialog and regional neutrality over normative positioning and highlighting stability. Thus, although non-interference is important for regional unity, it could also reduce the capacity of ASEAN to respond collectively and more effectively to external crises.

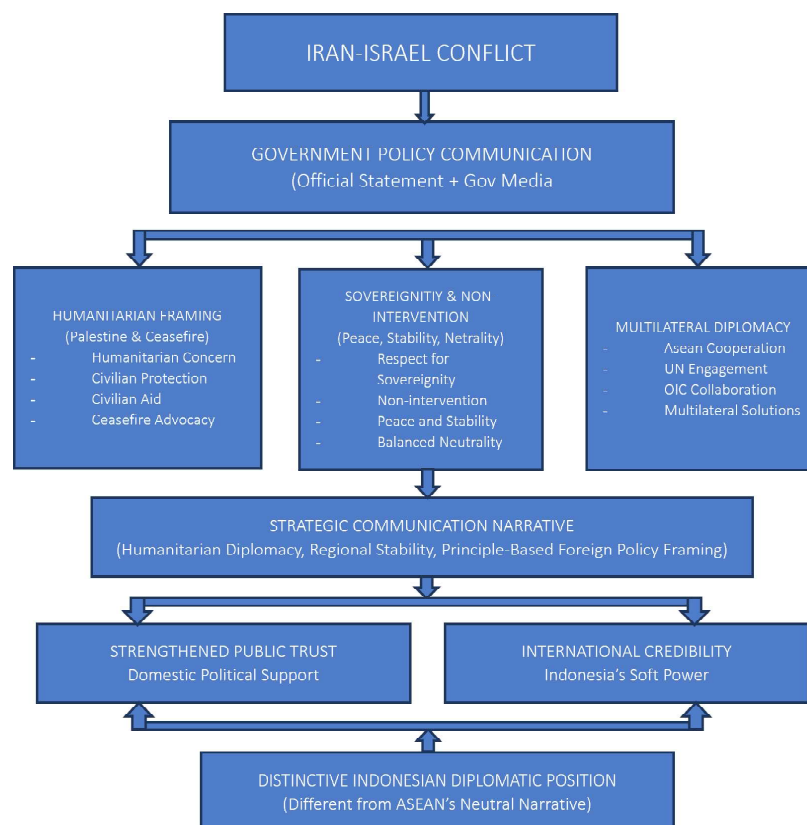


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of Indonesia's Strategic Policy Communication on the Iran-Israel Conflict

Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual model of Indonesia's policy communication strategy in response to the Iran-Israel conflict. As the figure shows, the first external stimulus that triggers government policy communication through official statements and government media is the geopolitical escalation. This communication is then structured into three interrelated strategic narratives: humanitarian framing, sovereignty and non-intervention, and multilateral diplomacy. Humanitarian framing includes civilian protection, humanitarian assistance, support for Palestine and advocacy for a ceasefire, which demonstrates Indonesia's consistent prioritization of humanitarian values over military rhetoric. The sovereignty and non-intervention facet, at the same time, reflects Indonesia's commitment to its long-standing foreign policy principles of respect for the sovereignty of state. The third dimension, multilateral diplomacy, stresses Indonesia's reliance on regional and international institutions such as ASEAN, the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to advocate collective diplomatic solutions, not unilateral action. These three dimensions show how Indonesia's policy communication weaves humanitarian norms, international law and multilateral cooperation into a coherent strategic narrative.

Furthermore, the model suggests that these communication strategies, together, influence public opinion and the legitimacy of international policy, leading to two significant policy outcomes: enhanced domestic public trust and improved international credibility. In the domestic sphere, the communication of a humanitarian nature increases the public trust in that it aligns the government policy with the firm societal support for Palestine and peaceful conflict resolution. Globally, the deployment of humanitarian diplomacy and multilateral engagement bolsters Indonesia's soft power by framing the country as a principled middle power committed to peace, international law and humanitarian responsibility. Therefore, Indonesia's diplomatic communication is presented separate from the institutional discourse of ASEAN which commonly upholds neutrality and regional stability through consensus. Indonesia's foreign policy narrative is unique in that it is based on a combination of normative humanitarian values and multilateral diplomacy that generates both domestic legitimacy and international recognition.

Table 1. Number of Victims and Estimated Losses from the Iran-Israel Conflict

Country	Fatalities	Injured Victims	Estimated Direct and Indirect Losses
Israel	29 Person	>3.400 Person	11.5 – 17.8 billion US dollars
Iran	935 Person	>5.300 Person	24 – 35 billion US dollars

Table 1 shows the asymmetric consequences of the Iran–Israel conflict, implies that Iran suffered from much higher fatalities, injured victims, and projected direct and indirect economic losses than Israel. While these quantitative differences mainly reflect the uneven material toll of the conflict, the findings also provide an essential contextual basis for understanding how governments outside the war zone interpret and communicate geopolitical crises. In developing countries, these losses are typically perceived as symptoms of increasing geopolitical uncertainty, which necessitates strategic policy communication to maintain public confidence and domestic stability, rather than being seen as purely humanitarian or economic indicators.

The results are more important as they show that the magnitude of the conflict's impact influences the diplomatic narratives adopted by Indonesia and ASEAN. In general, ASEAN conveys the crisis through regional stability, dialog, and neutrality, consistent with its institutional commitment to non-interference and consensus. Meanwhile, Indonesia chooses humanitarian diplomacy, advocacy for ceasefires, multilateral engagement through international bodies such as the UN and the OIC, and a more proactive

communication approach. These different communication styles suggest that geopolitical crises are both external security challenges and opportunities for creating distinct government policy communication strategies in developing countries (Florida & Mahmoudian, 2024).

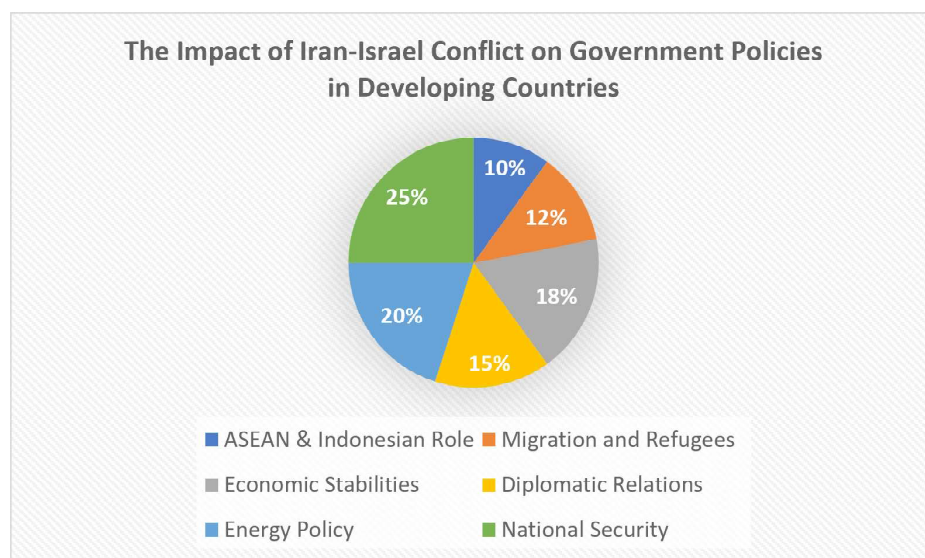


Figure 3. Percentage of the Iran-Israel Conflict Impact on Government Policies in Developing Countries

Figure 3 provides a summary of the key policy communication issues that from the NVivo analysis of online media and official government documents on the Iran–Israel conflict. As shown in the visualization, the conflict is mostly framed in terms of national security (25%), energy policy (20%), economic stability (18%), diplomatic relations (15%) and other complementary policy concerns. The predominance of security-related narratives signals not a direct military threat to Indonesia, but rather the government’s communication strategy focused on regional stability, conflict prevention, and reducing uncertainty arising from geopolitical tensions. This trend indicates that developing countries, especially Indonesia, develop policy communication not only to explain external events but also to comfort domestic audiences and to strengthen confidence in the government’s ability to handle international crises.

More importantly, the theme distribution demonstrates that Indonesia’s policy communication extends beyond traditional security narratives by integrating economic resilience, energy security, and diplomatic engagement under one umbrella of a cohesive strategic discourse. Indonesia’s emphasis is on humanitarian diplomacy, multilateral

cooperation and principle-based foreign policy. ASEAN generally takes a neutral, consensus-based approach to messaging in response to the crisis. The findings suggest that policy communication is a strategic governance tool used by governments to transform complex geopolitical developments into narratives that enhance public legitimacy, diminish uncertainty, and uphold credibility at home and abroad.

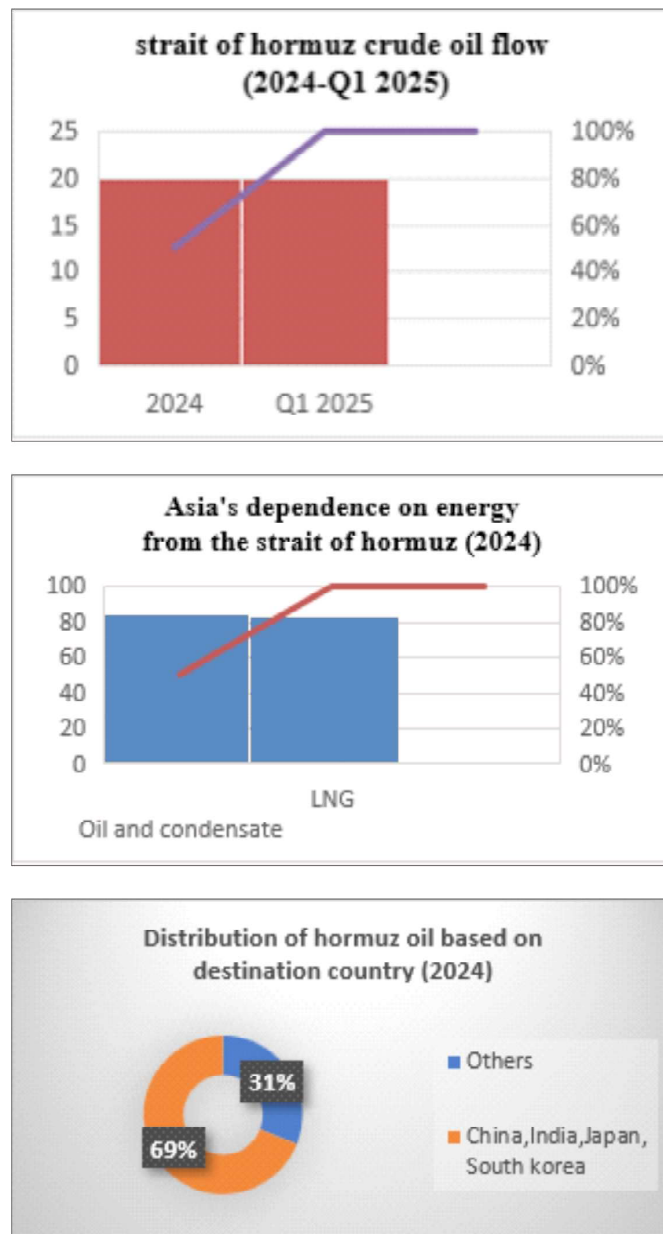


Figure 4. Strait of Hormuz Strategic Data Infographic

The NVivo analysis indicates that the Indonesian government institutions and national media the Iran–Israel conflict not simply as a geopolitical confrontation, but as a strategic policy communication issue closely associated with national resilience and regional stability. The analyzed documents consistently presented three interrelated communication patterns: (1) the framing of energy security through the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz; (2) humanitarian diplomacy that emphasizes support for Palestine and ceasefire initiatives; and (3) multilateral diplomacy through ASEAN, the UN, and the OIC. These findings suggest that Indonesia’s policy communication goes beyond crisis management to encompass economic security, humanitarian values and diplomatic engagement in a coherent strategic narrative.

Figure 4 frames the Strait of Hormuz as a strategic communication issue that influences the discourse of Indonesia's foreign policy. The government's communication is placing supply-chain resilience, energy diversification and geopolitical uncertainty in a wider narrative of national preparedness, rather than just framing energy vulnerability as an economic issue. This demonstrates that Indonesia employs policy communication not only to explain external risks but also to build-up public confidence, justify strategic energy policies, and strengthen its diplomatic position amid increasing regional tensions (Ambreen Aman et al., 2025).



Figure 5. WordCloud: The Iran-Israel Conflict on Government Policies in Developing Countries

Source: Modified with Nvivo 12 Plus

As presented in Figure 5, in addition to mentions of the main actors and “Israel”, the vocabulary around the Iran–Israel conflict is dominated by terms related to diplomacy, Palestine, humanitarian issues and multilateral engagement. This pattern suggests that the discourse of Indonesian government institutions not only includes military confrontation but also conflict de-escalation and humanitarian diplomacy. Indonesia’s foreign policy is always couched in terms of humanitarian responsibility, support for Palestine, advocacy for ceasefire, and peaceful conflict resolution rather than as a regional security issue. The results suggest that humanitarian framing is the dominant strategy for communicating the diplomatic position of Indonesia internally and externally.

Moreover, the WordCloud clearly represents the gap between Indonesia’s communication strategy and the general institutional discourse of ASEAN. Indonesia uses humanitarian and diplomatic narratives as soft power instruments to gain international legitimacy and to counter strong domestic public support for Palestine, whereas ASEAN’s communication is mainly characterized by neutrality, regional stability, and consensus-building (Taufani et al., 2022). The difference suggests that policy communication is driven not only by domestic political contexts and institutional constraints but also by geopolitical considerations. To put it simply, the visualization singles out the Iran–Israel conflict as a trigger for strategic diplomatic communication. Indonesia seeks a proactive humanitarian narrative, while ASEAN’s messaging is cautious and stability-oriented to maintain regional unity.

CONCLUSION

This study found that Iran–Israel conflict is framed in media coverage and policy documents as a narrative of geopolitical uncertainty, with an emphasis on the risks of escalation, strategic uncertainty and vulnerability in global energy stability. The conflict is not represented as a mere dispute about Iran’s nuclear program. It is a geopolitical conflict including both state and non-state actors, which could disrupt strategic energy trade routes such as the Strait of Hormuz. The cautious diplomatic language in policy pronouncements in this context reflects a pattern of policy communication among developing countries in which uncertainty in the international system is addressed in a defensive and stability-oriented manner. Findings also indicate that the characteristics of policy communication in developing countries, such as Indonesia and ASEAN member states, are shaped by their economic dependence on global market stability and their weak geopolitical bargaining power. These circumstances breed a propensity for diplomatic

narratives to become homogenized, focusing on preserving political neutrality, commercial security, and regional stability.

Technical data on energy price volatility, inflation risks and supply chain vulnerabilities are turned into policy narratives that act as mechanisms for risk mitigation and political legitimacy in government communication. However, Indonesia has a more proactive communication pattern than the collective ASEAN approach, especially in consistently supporting Palestine and humanitarian diplomacy. Domestic political dynamics also influence Indonesia's foreign policy communication, especially the strong public support for the Palestinian issue that influences this posture. This investigation, therefore, concludes that narratives of uncertainty in political communication are products of power dynamics, economic dependence and political legitimation strategies that developing countries face in response to the global geopolitical crises. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen ASEAN's regional crisis communication mechanisms and accelerate national energy diversification strategies to improve policy resilience against persistent geopolitical instability.

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