

Muted Principles: Prabowo Subianto's Cautious Stance on the US-Israel war on Iran

News:

Prabowo Subianto said he sees no “rationality” in the US-Israel war on Iran, calling it an asymmetrical conflict where Iran may only aim to survive. He noted Iran distrusts negotiations with the United States after feeling “tricked” twice. Prabowo warned that airstrikes alone are unlikely to achieve regime change without indiscriminate bombing. Indonesia has paused plans to send peacekeeping troops to Gaza under the Board of Peace. He reiterated support for diplomacy, a two-state solution for Palestine, and Indonesia’s non-aligned, defensive foreign policy stance. ([channelnewsasia.com](https://www.channelnewsasia.com))

Comment:

Prabowo Subianto’s response to the US-Israel war on Iran reflects a concerning lack of firmness in addressing what many view as a clear violation of sovereignty. Despite reports of over a thousand civilian casualties and thousands more injured, his remarks stopped short of issuing a direct condemnation of the United States and Israel.

This cautious stance contrasts with firmer reactions from regional actors such as Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, which have more explicitly denounced the attacks. Indonesia’s position, therefore, raises questions about consistency in upholding international norms and moral responsibility.

Prabowo’s approach can be partially understood in light of his government’s broader geopolitical posture. In recent years, Indonesia appears to have taken a more accommodative line toward Israel and a more cautious approach toward the United States, particularly following economic pressures linked to tariff policies under Donald Trump. However, such pragmatism risks being perceived as compromising core principles.

Indonesia’s constitutional foundation, as articulated in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution, explicitly rejects colonialism and affirms support for the independence of all nations. A muted response to actions widely perceived as aggressive and disproportionate may be interpreted as a deviation from these foundational values.

Beyond material considerations, Indonesia—as the world’s largest Muslim-majority country—carries both moral and symbolic responsibility. It is expected not only to pursue national interests but also to uphold justice and principled diplomacy. A stronger, more independent stance would better reflect this dual role.

Indonesia’s relative restraint is also consistent with its broader pattern since the Gaza war, where responses have largely been limited to diplomatic statements without significant strategic impact. This mirrors a wider trend across many Muslim-majority countries.

Ultimately, the persistence of assertive policies by the United States and Israel in the region may not solely stem from their strength, but also from the fragmented and often passive responses of other states. Without greater unity and resolve, efforts to challenge such actions are likely to remain limited.

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