



Journal of Social and Political Sciences

Sutiono, P. (2026), Geopolitical Pragmatism and Resilience: The Indonesia-Slovakia Emerging Strategic Partnership. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 9(2), 41-49.

ISSN 2615-3718

DOI: 10.31014/aior.1991.09.02.717

The online version of this article can be found at:
<https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/>

Published by:
The Asian Institute of Research

The *Journal of Social and Political Sciences* is an Open Access publication. It may be read, copied, and distributed free of charge according to the conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license.

The Asian Institute of Research *Social and Political Sciences* is a peer-reviewed International Journal. The journal covers scholarly articles in the fields of Social and Political Sciences, which include, but are not limited to, Anthropology, Government Studies, Political Sciences, Sociology, International Relations, Public Administration, History, Philosophy, Arts, Education, Linguistics, and Cultural Studies. As the journal is Open Access, it ensures high visibility and the increase of citations for all research articles published. The *Journal of Social and Political Sciences* aims to facilitate scholarly work on recent theoretical and practical aspects of Social and Political Sciences.



ASIAN INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH
Connecting Scholars Worldwide

Geopolitical Pragmatism and Resilience: The Indonesia-Slovakia Emerging Strategic Partnership

Pribadi Sutiono¹ 

¹ Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta

Correspondence: Pribadi Sutiono, pribadi.sutiono@upnvj.ac.id
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8341-5488>

Abstract

As the global geopolitical architecture fractures, small and middle powers increasingly adopt pragmatic foreign policies to enhance their state resilience. This article examines the structural shifts in Slovakia's foreign policy, transitioning from strict Euro-Atlantic institutional compliance to a multidirectional, national-pragmatic approach beyond Europe, and its implications for cross-regional bilateral governance. Utilizing the Indonesia-Slovakia relationship as a primary case study, this research analyzes how Slovakia's pivot toward a "four corners of the compass" diplomacy intersects with Indonesia's free and active foreign policy within the Visegrad Group (V4). Grounded in neoclassical realism, this study suggests that while geopolitical pragmatism has manifested in diplomatic milestones, including high-level engagements and defense agreements, the resilience of the partnership is tested by institutional bottlenecks and systemic European Union normative barriers. This article aims to provide contemporary global politics literature with empirical insights into how small and middle powers operationalize pragmatic diplomacy to navigate systemic polarization and bureaucratic friction.

Keywords: Geopolitical Pragmatism, State Resilience, Neoclassical Realism, Middle Power Diplomacy, Visegrad Group, Indonesia-Slovakia Relations

1. Introduction

As the contemporary global geopolitical architecture undergoes profound fragmentation, the international system is transitioning from a unipolar structure to a multiplex world order, characterized by intensified great power competition and the burgeoning agency of the Global South (Acharya, 2018; Allison, 2020). In Europe, particularly across Central and Eastern Europe, the convergence of compounding systemic shocks, specifically the conflict in Ukraine, the resultant regional energy crisis, persistent inflationary pressures, and the rift of the US-Europe alliance, has fundamentally disrupted conventional paradigms regarding Euro-Atlantic institutional security and economic integration (Rose, 2025).

Consequently, states within the region are increasingly compelled to recalibrate their foreign policies to navigate this systemic volatility. In this regard, Slovakia represents a salient empirical case of such recalibration, precipitated by domestic political transformation and a populist resurgence. The republic has transitioned from an

inward-looking, strictly institutional compliance model to a highly pragmatic, multidirectional foreign policy (Chryssogelos, 2017). This "four corners of the compass" strategy underscores the existential necessity of engaging with non-traditional markets in Asia and the Global South to institutionalize domestic economic stability and buffer against regional shocks.

Concurrently, Indonesia has increasingly solidified its posture as a proactive and resilient global power. Governed by the constitutional mandate of a "free and active" (*bebas aktif*) foreign policy, Indonesia meticulously operationalizes economic diplomacy and strategic hedging to diversify its diplomatic portfolio beyond the orbit of traditional hegemony, specifically the United States, China, and major European Union (EU) states, notably Germany and France (Anwar, 2020; Juned & Sutiono, 2024; Rüländ, 2018). Within this shifting geopolitical architecture, the Central European and Visegrad Group (V4) sub-regional formations have emerged as a salient strategic frontier for Indonesia's multifaceted diplomatic and economic expansion into the broader European single market.

This shifting geopolitical landscape and the bilateral trajectory between Indonesia and Slovakia are characterized by unprecedented strategic momentum throughout 2022–2026. Such engagements have fundamentally transcended routine institutional maintenance, highlighted by substantive high-level political milestones, most notably the official visit of Indonesia's 13th Vice President to Bratislava in November 2023 (personal observation)¹. This intensified political volition has subsequently been operationalized into robust outcomes across both the economic and security dimensions. In the macroeconomic sphere, Slovak Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into Indonesia witnessed a dramatic 277% surge in 2024, reaching USD 11.1 million across 191 discrete projects, with a sustained upward trajectory observed in 2025 (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, n.d.). Concurrently, the institutionalization of traditional and non-traditional security alignments was manifested through the formalization of a Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA) in 2023, ratified by the Slovak government in August 2024, and the inauguration of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cyber Cooperation in March 2023 (KBRI Bratislava, personal observations).

The intensification of bilateral alignment is fundamentally catalyzed by a mutual strategic exigency emanating from their respective domestic political recalibrations. For the Republic of Indonesia, Slovakia is not merely a bilateral partner but a pivotal strategic gateway into the Visegrad Group (V4) subregional architecture and the broader European economic core. Conversely, within Slovakia's pragmatic framework, Indonesia functions as a vital democratic anchor and salient economic powerhouse in the dynamically evolving Indo-Pacific. Consequently, this research prioritizes an analysis of the convergence between these strategic trajectories, interrogating the fundamental nexus of how Slovakia's structural transition toward geopolitical pragmatism intersects with Indonesia's proactive middle-power diplomacy and how this interplay impacts the resilience and operationalization of their cross-regional bilateral governance.

Methodologically, this research operationalizes a qualitative, single-case study design to facilitate a granular and contextual interrogation of the Indonesia-Slovakia diplomatic corridor (Yin, 2018). The primary empirical dataset was synthesized from sustained diplomatic observations and institutional immersion at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bratislava from 2022 to 2026. These observations are further substantiated through rigorous formal document analysis (Bowen, 2009), specifically leveraging the End-of-Assignment Memorandum (2022–2026), a critical instrument detailing bilateral trajectories, systemic institutional bottlenecks, and evolving consular dynamics. To preempt institutional bias and facilitate robust empirical validation, primary diplomatic evidence was systematically triangulated with secondary analytical literature, including peer-reviewed academic discourse, macroeconomic databases and third-party geopolitical intelligence reports.

Theoretically, this inquiry is anchored in the architectural framework of Neoclassical Realism (Cerioli, 2025; Lobell et al., 2009). This paradigm asserts that systemic conditions manifested through global economic volatility or supranational supply chain disruptions are mediated by intervening domestic political variables to catalyze specific foreign policy standings. Both sovereign actors operationalize geopolitical pragmatism as a calibrated

¹ The observation on the Embassy of Republic of Indonesia in Bratislava

instrument to enhance state resilience (Joseph, 2013). Notwithstanding the robustness of this framework, this study acknowledges inherent analytical limitations; specifically, the research is temporally and spatially delimited to the Indonesia-Slovakia bilateral trajectory from 2022 to 2026. Furthermore, reliance on primary diplomatic observations necessitates meticulous cross-verification with exogenous macroeconomic variables to preserve strict analytical objectivity and mitigate subjective biases.

2. Theoretical Framework

To facilitate a systematic interrogation of the structural recalibration characterizing Slovakia's contemporary foreign policy and its subsequent intersection with Indonesia's strategic diplomatic footprint across Central Europe, this study operationalizes a synthesized theoretical framework. This framework is anchored fundamentally within the paradigm of neoclassical realism and is further augmented by scholarly discourse pertaining to middle-to small-power hedging and the multidimensional engineering of state resilience.

While neorealism asserts that sovereign entities respond uniformly to the systemic pressures of an anarchic international architecture based upon relative material capabilities (Waltz, 2010), such structural determinism fails to account for Slovakia's idiosyncratic behavioral recalibrations, which would be limited to choosing the side of the EU, the US, Russia, or China. In this regard, neoclassical realism (NCR) facilitates a more granular analytical bridge by arguing that systemic conditions are meticulously translated into specific foreign policy outputs through domestic intervening variables, including elite perceptions, state-society relations, and domestic political institutions (Cerioli, 2025; Lobell et al., 2009).

In the contemporary geopolitical architecture, the systemic pressures confronting European sovereign actors have attained a state of acute intensity, precipitated by the protracted conflict in Eastern Europe, pervasive energy insecurity, and the fundamental reconfiguration of global supply chain networks (Rose, 2025). Notwithstanding the normative expectations for institutional alignment within the Euro-Atlantic bloc, the Slovak Republic's strategic response has been mediated through the prism of highly polarized domestic political variables. The resurgence of national populism, coupled with the existential prioritization of immediate domestic economic survival, has fundamentally recalibrated foreign policy executives' strategic calculations (Chryssogelos, 2017; Marušiak, 2019). The previous researchers of Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell (2016) state that when state leadership encounters heightened domestic political vulnerability, foreign policy outputs will disproportionately favor short-term domestic stability over sustained structural alignment, as the government would be greatly influenced by the demands of internal parties. Consequently, Slovakia's operationalization of a "four corners of the compass" doctrine represents a prototypical neoclassical realism outcome of a national-pragmatic strategy engineered to navigate systemic vulnerability by leveraging domestic political mandates to facilitate multidirectional economic engagement rather than according to the demand of the system.

The strategic convergence of Slovakia's national-pragmatic posture with Indonesia's foreign policy recalibration necessitates a rigorous interrogation of contemporary middle- and small-power dynamics. As a burgeoning middle power, the Republic of Indonesia meticulously operationalizes its constitutional mandate of a "free and active" (*bebas aktif*) foreign policy, which fundamentally repudiates rigid alignment with any singular hegemon or institutional bloc (Anwar, 2020; Rüländ, 2018). Within an increasingly fragmented and multipolar global architecture, middle powers are increasingly compelled to utilize strategic hedging, a calibrated behavioral mechanism characterized by the maintenance of multifaceted, often divergent, strategic partnerships to mitigate systemic risks and optimize economic extraction (Kuik, 2021). The author's personal communication with Juraj Marušiak from the Slovak Academy of Science suggested that for small powers, a strategic pragmatic relationship with middle powers is often perceived to be more negotiable and beneficial in the short term than a strict alignment with great and super powers.

For the Republic of Indonesia, one of the strategic endeavors to penetrate the European single market necessitates meticulous navigation of formidable supranational normative barriers instituted by the European Union (EU), most notably the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). To circumvent these pervasive institutional

bottlenecks, contemporary middle-power theory emphasizes the strategic utility of "niche diplomacy" and the institutionalization of subregional coalition building (Cooper, 1997; Emmers, 2014). By proactively targeting the Visegrad Group (V4) sub-regional architecture in general and pragmatically recalibrating the Slovak Republic specifically, Indonesia employs a calibrated sub-regional hedging strategy. Within this geopolitical nexus, Slovakia functions as a pliable, economically driven gateway into the broader European ecosystem, aligning with Indonesia's imperative to diversify its geo-economic dependency.

Ultimately, the strategic convergence of the Slovak Republic's multi-directional reorientation and Indonesia's calibrated strategic hedging is fundamentally catalyzed by a mutual exigency to augment state resilience (Bourbeau, 2015; Joseph, 2013). In this regard, geopolitical pragmatism is operationalized as the primary instrument for engineering such resilience. By decoupling foreign policy from rigid ideological constraints and prioritizing transactional, mutually beneficial outcomes, specifically manifested through increased foreign direct investment, the transfer of agricultural technologies, and robust cyber defense cooperation, both sovereign entities effectively insulate their domestic architectures from possible external coercion. As articulated by Korosteleva and Flockhart (2020), state resilience in the international system is inextricably linked to the strategic diversification of external networks. Consequently, the Indonesia-Slovakia strategic corridor, characterized by burgeoning trade volumes, formalized defense alignments, and high-level political dialogue, represents not merely a routine bilateral expansion but a sophisticated organizational ecosystem engineered to fortify the socioeconomic and political resilience of both states amid an epoch of profound global volatility.

3. Research Methods

Methodologically, this inquiry operationalizes a qualitative, single-case study design to facilitate a granular, contextual interrogation of the Indonesia-Slovakia diplomatic corridor (2018). As Yin (2018) articulated, the case study paradigm is uniquely calibrated to address the "how" and "why" of contemporary phenomena within their naturalistic environments, particularly where the demarcation between the phenomenon and its broader context remains porous. By maintaining an exclusive analytical focus on the bilateral trajectory between 2022 and 2026, this research design enables sophisticated longitudinal tracing of the mechanisms through which systemic shifts toward geopolitical pragmatism are operationalized at the micro level. This approach permits an intensive examination of diplomatic processes, intricate economic negotiations, and institutional responses to supranational normative pressures, such as European Union regulations, which might otherwise be obscured by more reductive quantitative methodologies.

Methodologically, the empirical foundation of this inquiry is anchored in the systematic synthesis of primary and secondary datasets, operationalizing a robust dual-methodological framework of direct diplomatic observation and rigorous formal document analysis to encapsulate the nuances of high-level diplomatic engagement. The primary empirical corpus was derived from sustained participant observation and institutional immersion at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bratislava from 2022–2026. This privileged observational access facilitated the longitudinal tracing of elite-level decision-making processes and substantive bilateral negotiations in naturalistic environments. Salient observational nodes encompassed the institutional facilitation of high-level political milestones, most notably the official visit of Indonesia's 13th Vice President in November 2023, the strategic negotiation of security architectures, including the 2023 Defence Cooperation Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding on Cyber Cooperation, and the operationalization of economic diplomacy through 22 discrete business matching forums and international trade exhibitions.

To supplement the observational data, this study conducted a rigorous document analysis (Bowen, 2009). The primary instrument analyzed was the Comprehensive End-of-Assignment Memorandum (Memorandum Akhir Tugas) 2022–2026 of the Indonesian Ambassador to Slovakia, Mr. J. E. Sidharta. This official institutional document provides highly classified evaluations of bilateral outcomes, detailing statistical surges in foreign direct investment, mapping the demographic shifts of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) from under 100 in 2022 to 1,650 by 2026, and identifying specific institutional bottlenecks (such as the stagnation of the Joint Economic

Commission). The document was systematically coded to extract empirical milestones that reflected the theoretical concepts of pragmatism and resilience.

To facilitate sophisticated contextualization of the primary findings within the fractured European geopolitical landscape, this study systematically synthesized exogenous datasets. This secondary empirical corpus prioritizes the interrogation of macroeconomic databases tracking the trajectory of Slovak foreign direct investment (FDI) outflows alongside stringent European Union regulatory frameworks, specifically those pertaining to the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). Furthermore, to mitigate analytical bias and ensure empirical robustness, primary data were triangulated with intellectual outputs from preeminent Central European think tanks, including the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA) and the Central European Institute for Asian Studies (CEIAS).

The synthesized empirical dataset was subjected to a rigorous qualitative thematic analysis. Raw institutional corpora and primary observational nodes were categorized into three salient analytical themes: (1) Strategic Security Alignments, (2) Economic Diplomacy and Regulatory Friction, and (3) Consular Dynamics and Human Security. Given that the data were derived from direct diplomatic immersion, mitigating institutional bias and positionality was paramount. To facilitate robust empirical validation and preserve strict analytical objectivity, this study operationalized the methodological triangulation (Denzin, 2012). Empirical claims synthesized from internal diplomatic memorandums, specifically those evaluating the efficacy of economic diplomacy, were systematically cross-verified against exogenous independent variables, including third-party macroeconomic statistics on Slovak FDI in Indonesia and formal bilateral trade reports. Concurrently, internal qualitative assessments of Slovakia's strategic pivot were triangulated with peer-reviewed academic discourse and independent geopolitical intelligence, ensuring that the research conclusions accurately reflected structural systemic realities rather than localized institutional narratives.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Historical Evolution of Bilateral Relations

The architectural foundation of the bilateral trajectory between Indonesia and Slovakia was fundamentally catalyzed by the profound geopolitical reconfiguration characterizing the immediate post-Cold War era. Subsequent to the peaceful dissolution of the Czechoslovak federation on January 1, 1993, the Indonesian state apparatus meticulously operationalized its diplomatic volition, extending official recognition and institutionalizing formal diplomatic ties with the newly sovereign Slovak Republic. This strategic commitment was tangibly manifested in 1995 through the official inauguration of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bratislava, a milestone that effectively inaugurated a dedicated paradigm of bilateral governance and cross-regional engagement.

Throughout the subsequent period, the bilateral trajectory proceeded with relative consistency but remained fundamentally devoid of a robust architecture for comprehensive economic integration. A transformative structural milestone was reached in 2011 with the formalization of the Agreement on Economic Cooperation, an instrument meticulously engineered to catalyze cross-regional trade and investments. To operationalize this framework, the sovereign entities inaugurated the maiden session of the Joint Economic Commission (Sidang Komisi Ekonomi Bersama/SKEB) in 2013, which was conceptualized as the preeminent institutional mechanism for bilateral economic evaluation and strategic alignment between the two countries.

Throughout 2022–2024, the bilateral trajectory between the two sovereign entities underwent rapid acceleration, entering a phase of unprecedented high-level diplomatic intensification catalyzed by mutual geopolitical pragmatism. In a calibrated response to contemporary non-traditional security imperatives, the states institutionalized a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cyber Cooperation in March 2023. This strategic momentum attained its political zenith in November 2023, manifested through the most significant bilateral engagement of the period: the official visit of Indonesia's 13th Vice President, K.H. Ma'ruf Amin, to

Bratislava. Concurrently, the institutionalization of the security architecture was advanced through the circular execution of a Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA) in 2023, a framework subsequently solidified when the Slovak government formally concluded its internal ratification in August 2024 (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, n.d.).

Building on this solidified political and security architecture, the bilateral trajectory by 2025 underwent substantive recalibration toward economic and scientific implementation. This contemporary phase is increasingly characterized by the operationalization of concrete cross-regional initiatives, most notably manifested through joint academic-industrial research endeavors targeting the cultivation of tropical wheat to augment agrarian resilience, alongside the strategic localization of advanced Slovak organic fertilizer technologies within the Indonesian agricultural sector and the promotion of strategic partnership discussions between academic institutions (personal observation).

The procedures for selecting participants included (a) the sampling method, if a systematic sampling plan was used; (b) the percentage of the sample approached that participated; and (c) the number of participants who selected themselves into the sample. Describe the settings and locations in which the data were collected, any agreements and payments made to participants, agreements with the institutional review board, ethical standards met, and safety monitoring procedures.

4.2 The Indonesia-Slovakia Strategic Corridor

The zenith of this bilateral engagement was manifested through the official visit of Indonesia's 13th Vice President, K.H. Ma'ruf Amin, in November 2023. Such high-level diplomatic exchanges transcend routine institutional maintenance, signaling a shared commitment to augmenting the bilateral status within the international order. This political volition was further institutionalized in the defence and security sectors. Specifically, the two states formalized a Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) in 2023, which the Slovak government ratified in August 2024. Moreover, addressing the exigencies of non-traditional security threats, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cyber Cooperation was inaugurated in March 2023, reflecting the mutual prioritization of resilient digital ecosystems (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, n.d.).

From a macroeconomic perspective, the Slovak Republic's intensely liberalized and export-driven economic profile, where the aggregate value of external trade surpasses 85% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), functions as a significant, albeit contestable, frontier for Indonesian commodity penetration. Capitalizing on Slovakia's geostrategic centrality in Central Europe, Indonesian diplomatic maneuvers have increasingly operationalized Bratislava as a vital entry point into the broader Visegrad Group (V4) subregional architecture of Central Europe. The institutionalization of this partnership has been further augmented by robust Track II diplomatic engagements, notably through high-level Policy Planning Dialogues and strategic synergies established between Indonesia's Foreign Policy Strategy Agency (BSKLN) and esteemed Slovak academic institutions, including the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA) and the Central European Institute for Asian Studies (CEIAS) (Indonesian Ambassador to Slovakia, 2026).

Within the macroeconomic sphere, the operationalization of targeted business matching and robust participation in trade exhibitions yielded substantive commercial outcomes. Between 2022 and 2026, diplomatic facilitation successfully institutionalized 22 bankable business instruments, including Non-Disclosure Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, and Heads of Agreements. This political and economic volition catalyzed an exponential surge in Slovak Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which reached USD 11.1 million across 191 projects in 2024, representing a 277% increase from the preceding year and subsequently transcending the USD 11.7 million threshold in 2025 (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, n.d.; Indonesian Ambassador to Slovakia, 2026), personal observation).

4.3 Pragmatism, Middle-Power Hedging, and the Limits of Institutional Resilience

The empirical evidence delineating the 2022–2026 bilateral trajectory between Indonesia and the Slovak Republic manifests a salient structural paradox: an unprecedented, rapid acceleration of high-level strategic and economic milestones occurring in tandem with persistent institutional stagnation. Operationalized through the synthesized theoretical prisms of neoclassical realism, middle-power hedging, and state resilience, these findings elucidate the granular mechanics of contemporary geopolitical pragmatism and the inherent boundaries of cross-regional bilateral governance.

The unprecedented intensification of bilateral milestones throughout the 2023–2024 interval represents not a mere organic evolution of routine diplomacy but rather the substantive materialization of Slovakia's domestic political recalibration. Anchored in the paradigm of neoclassical realism, the systemic imperatives currently destabilizing the European architecture precipitated by the conflict in Ukraine and compounding energy-inflation crises are meticulously filtered through the Republic's pragmatic and national-populist domestic environment (Lobell et al., 2009). This internal mediation has necessitated a strategic departure from strict Euro-Atlantic ideational alignment toward a multi-directional "four corners of the compass" foreign policy.

This theoretical premise elucidates the rapid institutionalization of security frameworks with a non-traditional, geographically distant partner such as the Republic of Indonesia. The inauguration of the Cyber Cooperation MoU (2023) and the Defence Cooperation Agreement (signed in 2023; ratified in 2024) constitute calibrated defensive hedging maneuvers. By proactively diversifying its strategic and economic portfolio, Slovakia has operationalized geopolitical pragmatism as the primary instrument of state resilience (Joseph, 2013). Furthermore, the dramatic 277% surge in Slovak foreign direct investment (FDI) into Indonesia in 2024, reaching a threshold of USD 11.1 million, demonstrates a calculated effort to insulate its intensely open, export-dependent domestic architecture from Eurocentric economic shocks by embedding capital within the dynamically evolving Indo-Pacific landscape (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, n.d.; Indonesian Ambassador to Slovakia, 2026).

From the perspective of the Indonesian state apparatus, the synthesized empirical outcomes substantiate the efficacious operationalization of proactive middle-power hedging (Kuik, 2021). As an emerging middle power endeavoring to penetrate the highly regulated architecture of the European single market, Indonesia faces significant structural asymmetries. To circumvent the rigid, frequently ideologically contingent foreign policy postures characteristic of traditional Western European capitals, Indonesia has meticulously operationalized a calibrated sub-regional hedging strategy, specifically targeting the Visegrad Group (V4) sub-regional formation and a pragmatically receptive Slovak Republic (Indonesian Ambassador to Slovakia, 2026).

The official visit of Indonesia's 13th Vice President to Bratislava in November 2023 constitutes a prototypical execution of "niche diplomacy" (Cooper, 1997). By injecting substantial high-level political capital into this specific middle-power alignment, Indonesia has effectively catalyzed localized economic extraction and strategic depth. This political volition directly facilitated the institutionalization of 22 formal business instruments—encompassing Non-Disclosure Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, and Heads of Agreements throughout the period of observation. Through the cultivation of this pragmatic corridor, Indonesia has successfully operationalized the Slovak Republic as a pivotal strategic gateway, leveraging bilateral alignments to anchor its broader geo-economic imperatives in Central Europe.

Notwithstanding the efficacious operationalization of pragmatic diplomacy, the empirical evidence elucidates a salient structural paradox: the rapid acceleration of strategic milestones occurs in tandem with persistent institutional stagnation that threatens the long-term sustainability of the bilateral ecosystem. As articulated by Bourbeau (2015), engineering state resilience necessitates robust organizational governance to absorb systemic shocks; however, this relationship currently manifests severe institutional friction. The most palpable manifestation of this discrepancy is the protracted dormancy of the Joint Economic Commission (Sidang Komisi Ekonomi Bersama/SKEB), which has remained functionally paralyzed since its inaugural session in 2013. This bureaucratic stagnation underscores a profound misalignment between high-level political volition and mid-level institutional execution, leaving the 22 recently formalized business instruments without a dedicated mechanism for evaluation or propulsion and rendering the economic momentum structurally fragile.

Furthermore, this bilateral pragmatism is fundamentally circumscribed by supranational normative friction. While sovereign actors may successfully negotiate at the state-to-state level, the broader penetration of Indonesian commodities into Central Europe remains bottlenecked by the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). This dynamic illustrates the inherent boundaries of sub-regional hedging; as suggested by Ruland (2018), middle powers cannot entirely circumvent the pervasive structural and normative barriers instituted by the Union's supranational apparatus through purely bilateral maneuvers.

Finally, the profound demographic transformation manifested within the consular datasets, specifically, the exponential influx of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) from a cohort of under 100 in 2022 to a salient population of 1,650 by 2026, introduces an acute non-traditional security challenge (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, n.d.). This demographic shock, precipitated by Slovakia's structural labor deficits, has significantly outpaced existing bilateral labor protections and consular capacities. This underscores that state resilience must transcend elite-level diplomatic treaties and capital investments. To ensure a truly durable bilateral architecture, both administrations must urgently adapt their legal and bureaucratic frameworks to address the human security dimensions of transnational labor migration.

5. Conclusions

The recalibration of Slovak foreign policy toward a paradigm of geopolitical pragmatism represents a salient opportunity for the institutional consolidation of the Indonesia-Visegrad strategic corridor. Analyzed within a neoclassical realist framework, the operationalization of Bratislava's "four corners" diplomacy serves as a rational domestic response to systemic economic and security imperatives, aimed at augmenting state resilience through the diversification of strategic partnerships. The empirical milestones achieved in defense alignment, cyber cooperation, and the exponential surge in bilateral investment underscore the substantive potential of cross-regional middle power collaboration.

Nevertheless, for this strategic window to catalyze durable bilateral resilience, both administrations must proactively mitigate the stagnation of formal institutional mechanisms while navigating the normative friction generated by supranational barriers, such as the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). Future academic inquiry into global politics should further investigate the optimization of bureaucratic ecosystems to ensure that they remain commensurate with rapid shifts in pragmatic foreign policy, thereby effectively translating high-level political volition into sustainable economic and security cooperation.

Author Contributions:

PS: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing.

Funding:

The author declares that no funding was received for this research or its publication.

Conflicts of Interest:

The authors declare no competing financial or commercial interests related to this work.

Informed Consent Statement/Ethics approval:

This study did not require ethical approval because it did not involve human participants, animal subjects, or sensitive data.

Data Availability Statement:

All data supporting this study are contained within the article and supplementary materials. Additional inquiries can be addressed to the corresponding author.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies:

The author confirms that no generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used for writing or preparing this manuscript.

References

- Acharya, A. (2018). *The end of American world order*. Polity.
- Allison, G. (2020, February 10). The New Spheres of Influence: Sharing the Globe with Other Great Powers. *Foreign Affairs*. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-02-10/new-spheres-influence>
- Anwar, D. F. (2020). Indonesia and the ASEAN outlook on the Indo-Pacific. *International Affairs*, 96(1), 111–129. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz223>
- Bourbeau, P. (2015). Resilience and International Politics: Premises, Debates, Agenda. *International Studies Review*, n/a-n/a. <https://doi.org/10.1111/misr.12226>
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Cerioni, L. (2025). Neoclassical Realism, Global International Relations, and the unheard echoes of Realist practices from the South. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 27(1), 369–386. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13691481241230858>
- Chrysosgelos, A. (2017). Populism in Foreign Policy. In A. Chrysosgelos, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.467>
- Cooper, A. F. (Ed.). (1997). *Niche diplomacy: Middle powers after the Cold War*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Denzin, N. K. (2012). Triangulation 2.0. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 6(2), 80–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689812437186>
- Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bratislava, Slovak Republic. (n.d.). *Bilateral Relations between Indonesia and Slovakia*. Kedutaan Besar Republik Indonesia di Bratislava. Retrieved <https://kemlu.go.id/bratislava/kebijakan/hubungan-bilateral-indonesia-dan-slowakia>
- Emmers, R. (2014). Indonesia's role in ASEAN: A case of incomplete and sectorial leadership. *The Pacific Review*, 27(4), 543–562. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2014.924230>
- Indonesian Ambassador to Slovakia. (2026). *End-of-Assignment Memorandum (Memorandum Akhir Tugas) 2022–2026 (Internal document)*. Kedutaan Besar Republik Indonesia Bratislava
- Joseph, J. (2013). Resilience as embedded neoliberalism: A governmentality approach. *Resilience*, 1(1), 38–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21693293.2013.765741>
- Juned, M., & Sutiono, P. (2024). Discussion of Indonesia-EU comprehensive economic partnership agreement: European interest in Indo-Pacific and Bebas Aktif foreign policy. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2417805. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2417805>
- Korosteleva, E. A., & Flockhart, T. (2020). Resilience in EU and international institutions: Redefining local ownership in a new global governance agenda. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 41(2), 153–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2020.1723973>
- Kuik, C.-C. (2021). Getting hedging right: A small-state perspective. *China International Strategy Review*, 3(2), 300–315. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42533-021-00089-5>
- Lobell, S. E., Ripsman, N. M., & Taliaferro, J. W. (Eds.). (2009). *Neoclassical realism, the state, and foreign policy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Marušiak, J. (2019). Change of Political Landscape in Central Europe since 2010. *DISKURS*, 237. <https://doi.org/10.22182/dispol>
- Ripsman, N. M., Taliaferro, J. W., & Lobell, S. E. (2016). *Neoclassical realist theory of international politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Rose, R. (2025). *European Security: From Ukraine to Washington* (1st ed.). Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350471313>
- Rüland, J. (2018). *The Indonesian Way: ASEAN, Europeanization, and Foreign Policy Debates in a New Democracy* (1st ed.). Stanford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvqsf28b>
- Waltz, K. N. (2010). *Theory of international politics* (Reiss). Waveland Press.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (Sixth edition). SAGE.