

Sovereignty and the Sea: How Indonesia Became an Archipelagic State

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While reading *Sovereignty and the Sea: How Indonesia Became an Archipelagic State*, I could not help but reflect on Butcher and Elson's ability to present a detailed picture of the origins of Indonesia, where they analyze the history of Indonesia's protracted diplomatic struggle to become an archipelagic state until its recognition by the international community at the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1982. Further, they plainly describe those involved and how an archipelagic state was conceived, developed, and declared.

The evolution of Indonesia's "Sea Policies" is discussed chronologically, beginning with the colonial period (Chapter 1) and concluding with the 1982 Montego Bay negotiations (Chapter 17). The discussion is supplemented by a reflection (Chapter 18) and an epilogue (Chapter 19), which explain that Indonesia's diplomatic victory of becoming an archipelagic state was not the end of the story. Instead, it forms a legal basis for advancing towards realizing the ideals articulated in the 13 December 1957 Djuanda Declaration, which signalled Indonesia's intention to become an archipelagic state. This concept resulted from the convergence of brilliant concepts conceived by key Indonesian leaders. Commencing with a conversation between Chairul Saleh (Retired/Veteran Minister) and Mochtar Kusumaatmadja (Territorial Sea Committee/young international law scholar), Chairul urged Mochtar to close the Java Sea as a territorial water. This idea was raised because Indonesia's territorial integrity in the post-colonial era was jeopardized by the presence of Dutch military ships that freely sailed through the Java Sea towards West Irian. Mochtar initially denied Chairul's idea because it violated international law. Chairul then implied that Mochtar was not revolutionary enough and, if this former mindset had prevailed during the colonial period, Indonesia would not have achieved independence. Mochtar responded to Chairul's challenge by proposing a straight baseline drawn from the outer islands, incorporating the waters inside the line into Indonesian territory. The concept automatically eliminated territorial security threats.

Djuanda, as prime minister, was responsible for approving or rejecting Mochtar's proposal and ultimately issued a declaration based on his vast bureaucratic experience. The United States and other superpowers reacted vehemently to this unilateral act. Chairul tried to reassure Mochtar that Indonesia's actions were appropriate because they outraged imperialist and capitalist nations.

Although the background of each figure is not explored in detail, the interactions among Chairul, Mochtar, and Djuanda regarding the archipelagic state concept are fascinating, especially from the perspective of intellectual history and how Indonesia perceived international law in the early stage of its independence. However, this disadvantage will not affect the ability of readers to comprehend the sequence of Indonesia's diplomatic struggle to become an archipelagic state.

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