

**EFFORTS TO ENHANCE INDONESIAN ECONOMIC  
COOPERATION WITH MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES  
POST *THE ARAB SPRING***

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**Abstract**

The Middle East region is a very strategic area for countries in the world, because the Middle East Region is an area that has a lot of potential wealth of natural resources in the form of oil, the Middle East is also an area that is a crossroads and origin of several world civilizations, such as Asian, African, and European cultures. departing from the reasons above, there are many hopes from the Indonesian people to establish cooperation with several countries in the Middle East Region, especially in the economic and political fields. there are many forms of cooperation that can be carried out between Indonesia and Middle Eastern Countries apart from economic and political issues. such as cultural and social issues. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. From the results of the analysis, we can conclude that Cooperation between Indonesia and the countries in the Middle East Region in the economic, political, social and cultural fields has been carried out in many ways, such as with Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt. However, the cooperation that has existed to this day has not been maximized, especially in the economic field. it is hoped that in the future with the end of the Arab Spring in the Middle East, the cooperation between Indonesia and Middle Eastern countries can be further improved and better.

**Keywords:** Cooperation; Economy; Multilateral; Middle East.

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Since the Indonesian nation declared independence on August 17, 1945, Indonesia has adhered to the principle of a free and active foreign policy system in interacting or relations with other countries. Free and active politics for Indonesia is a foreign policy that is carried out without coercion and is active in realizing world peace, this is in accordance with the 1945 Constitution, based on freedom, eternal peace and social justice. In practice, one form of Indonesia's relationship with other countries is the bilateral relationship between Indonesia and countries in the Middle East region (Sunario, 1990: 192).

The Middle East region is a very strategic area for countries in the world, because the Middle East Region is an area that has the potential for wealth of natural resources in the form of oil which is very much, the Middle East is also an area that is a crossroads and the origin of several world civilizations, such as Asian, African and European cultures (Sidik Jatmika, 2014: 10-14). In addition, to the east of the Persian Gulf is the center of the Sumerian Civilization, while in the western region of the Red Sea is the center of the Ancient Egyptian Civilization, and finally the Turkish region in the north which is directly adjacent to Europe.

Relations between Indonesia and Middle Eastern countries are generally known in relation to aspects of religion (Islam), education and the Palestinian issue. Looking back at history, Indonesia's relationship with Arab society,

especially those from Hadramaut (Yemen), has been established since the entry of Islam into Indonesia. Islam began to enter Indonesia from around the 10th century AD (Ricklefs, 1981:3) and in the 13th century AD, Islam had entered Indonesia on a large scale (Steenbrink, 1984:4), even now as far as East Tengah remains the mecca of Muslims. The Middle East is seen as the country where Islam was born. For this reason, the country is the main goal for every generation in studying religion so that there is a transformation of Islamic scholarship, especially in Indonesia.

However, the facts above, it seems, have not been fully understood by the Indonesian people. Perhaps until now some Indonesians have heard the word Middle East, in the minds of many of us we may imagine the Arab nation, a region full of deserts, slavery, a region full of conflict and war, but also an area rich in oil. These descriptions are not wrong because that is the image of the Middle East that is commonly found in various mass media today. The image that seems negative about the Middle East, in a number of ways, makes attention to this region very limited. In fact, as expressed by Middle Eastern scientists/observers and speakers in various International Seminars on the Middle East, the potential for the Middle East region is enormous and actually very profitable for us in Indonesia who have high religious and emotional ties to the region.

There are several factors that hamper opportunities for cooperation between Indonesia and countries in

the Middle East region. For example, the occurrence of "The Arab Spring" a term of the Revolution in the Middle East region. Until now, the Arab Spring still leaves one country that continues to be in turmoil, namely Syria. The opposition group, the Syrian National Council, which has received support from the West, under the pretext of fighting for democratization, has not succeeded in overthrowing the Bashar al-Assad regime. While several other countries have been moving toward a democratic transition. Egypt has carried out presidential elections that ushered in Muhammad Morsi, as the leader of the Pharaoh's country. Libya was taken over by the National Transition Council (Kompas, 27/10/2011). Tunisia had held the general election that brought Ennahda to power. This development is also referred to as an era in which major changes have occurred in the Middle East today (Kompas, 25/10/2011).

It is the political conflicts that continue to characterize these Arab countries that the world's attention is increasingly focused on this region after the passing of the Arab Spring since early 2011 or "uprisings" in Tariq Ramadhan's term to describe the general character of the mass movements that have shook the Arab world (Ramadan, 2012: 8). The symptom in Crane Brinton's language is a feverish social condition. A state that is contrary to the state of health that is 'normal'.

The conflicts that occurred in the Middle Eastern countries above have hampered cooperation between Indonesia and countries in the region. For example, in Syria and

Iraq, the aftermath of the spring season has also put pressure on the trade balance between Indonesia and Jordan. This is because so far Jordan has been a hub or transit country for trade activities with the two countries. Moreover, since 2016, Jordan's borders with Iraq and Syria have been completely closed for trade routes between countries. "The impact of the conflicts in Iraq and Syria has really hit Indonesia's trade balance with Jordan in the last two years," said the Chargé d'Affaires Ad Interim of the Indonesian Embassy in Amman, Jordan, Nico Adam, in a recent conversation in Amman, not only to Jordan. However, the impact of that spring was also felt by Indonesia and other countries in the Middle East region.

Today, spring has passed, there is no reason for Indonesia not to enhance cooperative relations in the economic field with countries in the Middle East Region. If you look at the economic growth of several countries in the Middle East Region at this time it is very good and even far exceeds the economic progress of several countries in the European region. For example, Economic Growth in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. In particular, the relationship between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia has been established for a long time. For example, almost every year thousands of Indonesians perform Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages to Saudi Arabia coupled with the large number of Indonesian workers working in Saudi Arabia.

So far, Indonesia's relations with Middle Eastern countries in general, including Saudi Arabia,

have been going well. The relationship is mainly bound by Islam. The majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim and the majority of the population of countries in the Middle East Region except Lebanon and Israel, are also Muslims. This relationship has been going on for a very long time, even before the 'concept' of Indonesia existed. Until now, the relationship is well maintained.

However, the depth and strength of this relationship has not resulted in productive cooperation that has broad benefits for both parties. Indonesia has hitherto emphasized its 'productive' relationship with the ASEAN and Pacific Rim. China has become the new 'mecca' for Indonesian cooperation. Meanwhile, Middle Eastern countries are also directing their strategic cooperation with European countries and the United States. In other words, Indonesia's relationship with the Middle East is very poor in productivity even though it has been going on for a long time, full of enthusiasm, and full of 'brotherly' pleasantries (Ibnu Burdah, *Media Indonesia*/31/05/2017). That is the reason why it is important for the Middle East Region for Indonesia to increase cooperative relations in the economic sector especially after the turmoil of The Arab Spring. The emotional relationship between Indonesia and the countries of the Middle East Region, as mentioned above, can be the first step in increasing more productive cooperation between the two.

Based on the description of the background of the problem above

and to facilitate the discussion, the authors make several problem formulations as follows: First, why is the Middle East important for Indonesia to carry out a collaboration? Second, what are the tactical steps to create a productive cooperation between Indonesia and the countries in the Middle East region?

## **B. METHODS**

This study used a qualitative research approach, that according to (Creswell 2007) is an approach that gives an opportunity for researchers to be able to carry out detailed descriptions and interpretations in order to gain a holistic understanding. This type of research is a case study, which is understood by (Creswell 2007) as a type of research that can be interpreted as an approach to study, explain, or interpretation a case in its natural context without outside intervention. More specifically, this research is an instrumental case study which is used to examine a particular case so that a perspective can be presented on the issue or improvement of a theory.

To answer the above questions and problems, the authors use a number of theories, including foreign policy theory, diplomacy theory and cooperation theory. These theories are to understand various policies of the Government of Indonesia in an effort to create peace in the Middle East. In the following, an outline of these theories is presented as a guide to make it easier to analyze the data in the discussion.

### **Foreign Policy Theory**

Holsti gave a statement regarding

foreign policy, namely:

*“foreign policy also incorporates ideas that are planned by policy makers in order to solve a problem or uphold some changes in the environment, which can be in the forms of policies, attitudes, or actions of another states or states”.* (KJ. Holsti: 1983: 89).

In the book Strategy Plan for the Implementation of Foreign Politics of the Republic of Indonesia, foreign policy is defined as a policy taken by the government in the framework of its relations with the international world in an effort to achieve national goals. Through foreign policy, the government projects national interests into the international community (M.Sabir: 1986, 103). The national interest of Saudi Arabia is the interest of the nation of Saudi Arabia in realizing the national aspirations and goals of the nation of Saudi Arabia, namely an independent, united, sovereign, just and prosperous Saudi Arabian State based on its Constitution. The National Goals of Saudi Arabia are to protect the entire nation of Saudi Arabia and the Sovereignty of Saudi Arabia, promote public welfare, educate the nation's life, and participate in carrying out world order based on freedom, eternal peace, and social justice.

Foreign policy is needed by a country in its journey, because a country will certainly interact with other countries, so it is necessary to have basic guidelines so as to be able to prevent conflicts that can damage diplomatic relations with other countries. Foreign policy in its process is divided into three scopes,

namely: the influence of foreign policy (the influences of foreign policy), the making of foreign policy (the making of foreign policy), and the implementation of foreign policy (the implementation of foreign policy). The basic concepts in making foreign policy are: 1). Policy makers, 2). Purpose, 3). Principle, 4). Power to implement, 5). The context in which foreign policy is formulated and implemented.

Barston stated that in determining a foreign policy, the government of a country needs to pay attention to changes that occur in the domestic environment and the international environment (Barston, RP: 1989). Internal or domestic factors relate to location, historical background, culture, INGo (Internasional non-governmental organization) interests, domestic stability, economic influence, and leadership. While external factors include the prevailing structure in the international system, local and regional relations, international currency movements, policies of neighboring countries that have strong power or the operation of international institutions, and transnational influences.

In discussing research, foreign policy will focus more on making foreign policy, where this is needed in formulating an MoU or Agreement between the Saudi Arabian government and the sending country through bilateral diplomacy. Based on the national goal of Saudi Arabia, which is to protect the entire nation of Saudi Arabia and the Sovereignty of the State, the government can use this as a basis for entering into agreements with the

Sending Country. In this context, the interest of Saudi Arabia is to protect its people and national interests and be able to respond to any conditions that occur in Saudi Arabia (international conditions) and the nation's internal conditions (national conditions) through a foreign policy that will be formulated.

### **Diplomacy Theory**

What is meant by the theory of diplomacy is as a discipline that expresses relations between countries and is the art of conveying. S. L. Roy, defining diplomacy in a clear and firm term is not an easy thing. However, he underlined that diplomacy can be understood as relations between countries and is the art of conveying the interests of a country through negotiations and peaceful means. However, if these peaceful means fail to achieve the desired goals, then the use of threats or gun boat diplomacy, namely using violence can be used as an alternative means to achieve the country's national goals (Roy, 1984).

Furthermore, S. L. Roy said that, a country's relationship with the outside world is very dependent on the world order and the ever-changing international environment. In this regard, the diplomacy of a country should adapt to these changes, in line with the national interests of a country which are also constantly developing (Roy, 1984:4).

Diplomacy is also often described as a foreign policy that continues to develop continuously, formulated as a method for dealing with complex international problems, due to continuous competition between countries to achieve their respective national goals. Diplomacy

can also be interpreted as an effort to achieve maximum group goals with the smallest possible sacrifice and avoid the use of violent means, which result in wars between interest groups. The goals of groups or countries to be achieved in diplomacy usually include several things, namely:

*First*, interests and core values. It is usually defined as a primary goal, for which most countries are willing to sacrifice anything to achieve it. Core interests and values are often associated with efforts to maintain oneself as a political unit. This goal is short term and urgent, because other goals will not be achieved without fulfilling this goal first. As for what is included in this goal is the effort to uphold national sovereignty and independence and maintain certain economic, social and political systems, which apply in society. Also efforts to obtain the security guarantees from neighboring countries. In addition, efforts to maintain ethnic, religious and language unity are also classified as core objectives.

*Second*, diplomacy must determine how far these different interests can be adjusted to one another. A country that desires to carry out a foreign policy that is full of peace and prudence may not compare its national interests with the interests of other countries. Is there a chance to be adjusted between them? Errors or inaccuracies between them in comparing foreign policy goals will have fatal consequences for peace and efforts to achieve national goals.

*Third*, diplomacy must apply



the right method to achieve the country's national interests. It is necessary to consider when to use persuasion, compromise or threats, in order to achieve state goals. Wrong choice of method, will result in serious disruption to peace. Of course a situation like this is dangerous for the attainment of the national goal itself.

In order to fulfill the three functions of diplomacy to achieve the national goals as mentioned above, it is necessary to have sufficient data/information available. These data are used to: (1) create harmony in national goals with real power or the potential to achieve them, (2) assess the goals of other countries and the strengths they have, (3) determine whether national interests conflict or not with the interests of other countries, and (4) application of appropriate methods to achieve national goals.

### **C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Indonesia's closeness to Middle Eastern countries has been established for a long time. Many factors make up the closeness that exists between Indonesia and regional countries in the Middle East. Indonesia is active in fighting for the rights of Muslims in the Middle East region. One of Indonesia's involvement in the Middle East region is the conflict between Israel and Palestine. In the conflict, of course, Indonesia is included as a country that supports independence for Palestine. The pro attitude shown by Indonesia towards the support of Palestinian

independence has been carried out for a long time, even since the beginning of independence. This can be seen from the actions of Indonesia's first president, Soekarno, who stated that as long as the independence of the Palestinian people had not been handed over to the Palestinian people, then as long as the Indonesian nation had stood up to challenge Israeli occupation. Based on Soekarno's statement, until now Indonesia still supports the Palestinian people.

Apart from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there has been much more support and assistance from Indonesia in the conflicts that occurred in the Middle East region. Such is the conflict in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and other regions. The assistance that Indonesia provides to these areas includes various aspects, both support in inviting countries in the world to pay attention and assistance, the economic assistance to humanitarian assistance. All of these things show that Indonesia has carried out its foreign policy that is free and active, by demonstrating Indonesia's active role in helping to defuse tensions that have occurred in the Middle East region.

#### ***Multilateral Relations between Indonesia and Countries in the Middle East Region***

So far, the State of Indonesia has established many multilateral relations with several countries in the

Middle East region, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran. The cooperation carried out by Indonesia and Middle Eastern countries is not only limited to the economy but all fields of politics, culture and manpower. The following is an explanation of several forms of cooperation carried out by Indonesia and Middle Eastern countries.

#### ***Indonesia and Arab Saudi***

The history of relations between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia has been going on for a long time. Saudi Arabia was one of the first countries to recognize Indonesia's independence. Officially the relationship between the two countries has been established since 1947. At that time King Abdul Aziz Al-Saud presented the Government of Indonesia with a Letter of Recognition of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on November 21, 1947. In 1950, Indonesia opened the accredited Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI) for Pakistanis, Arabs and Iranians in Cairo, Egypt. This officially opened diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. Then in 1955, Saudi Arabia opened an Embassy (Embassy) in Jakarta, Indonesia. And in 1964 the Indonesian Embassy was established in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, which was specially accredited for bilateral relations between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the office of the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia for Saudi

Arabia was only established in 2003 in Dubai, Saudi Arabia.

As countries that are included in the G-20, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia have a lot of potential that benefits both parties to cooperate with each other. Currently Saudi Arabia has a vision in 2030 by diversifying investment sources, including releasing 5 percent of Aramco shares. Indonesia is one of the destinations for Saudi Arabia because of its stable economic growth and also its political situation.

Indonesia and Saudi Arabia have also established cooperation in various fields. Such as in the field of marine and fisheries development; food safety and fish quarantine; promotion and marketing of fishery products; management and conservation of coastal marine resources; applied knowledge and research and modern technical training; exchange of information and experience in addition to modern technical training.

Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia is currently the second exporter of canned tuna to Saudi Arabia after Thailand. So far, the raw material for Thai canned tuna comes from Indonesia, but since 2015 the export volume of Indonesian tuna raw material has dropped dramatically due to the Indonesian government eradicating illegal



fishing. In 2016, Indonesia's exports to Saudi Arabia reached US\$66,849,893 or a value of Rp.869 billion with exported commodities including skipjack, tuna, mackerel and other fish products. As for imports, in the form of mackerel worth US \$ 645,083 or the equivalent of Rp. 8 billion. From these activities, a surplus of US \$ 66,204,810 or equivalent to IDR 860 billion was achieved.

In addition, Saudi Arabia also signed the Cilacap refinery Development Masterplan Program (RDMP) project between Pertamina and the Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Aramco) worth US\$ 6 billion. The program is an addition to the capacity and complexity of the oil refinery in Cilacap. This program was signed by Saudi Arabia during the visit of Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud in March 2017. This refinery project is a program with the highest investment value in Indonesia. With the signing of this project by both parties, it is hoped that the cooperation between the two countries will encourage basic engineering design and immediately realize the formation of a joint venture (Nababan: 2017).

In addition, Indonesia also has a high export value to Saudi Arabia in the field of spices such as cinnamon, cloves and cardamom. The Ministry of Trade (Kemendag) noted that Indonesia's spice exports

to Saudi Arabia grew by 51.17%. This growth occurred due to the large number of pilgrims arriving for Hajj and Umrah to Saudi Arabia every year, making it their duty to fulfill the needs of these pilgrims (Kemendag: 2017). Relations between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia also cover the education and cultural sectors. Especially in the field of education, Saudi Arabia has provided educational facilities for Indonesian youth who wish to continue their studies in Saudi Arabia by providing scholarships. Scholarships provided by Saudi Arabia reach 250 students each year which are realized through the Imam Mohammed bin Saud Islamic University.

In the field of culture, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia held exchanges for music groups, regional music, and theater groups. Apart from that, an exhibition of cartoon paintings and an exchange of children's theatrical performances were also held in special cultural programs held both in Indonesia and in Saudi Arabia. Collaboration in this field is expected to be able to introduce more and also emotionally make people have insight about Saudi Arabia (Kemendikbud: 2017).

Indonesia is often given the opportunity by the Saudi Arabian government to show the distinctive culture of the country. Earlier this year at the Jeddah International Travel and Tourism Exhibition (JTTX7) tourism exhibition which

took place in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The exhibition was attended by more than 160 participants from 20 countries and was attended by more than 25,000 visitors from all over the world.

Indonesia for the second time became an honorary participant (guest of honor) at this event with the presence of the Indonesian Consul General in Jeddah, Mohamad Hery Saripudin. On this occasion, the Indonesian side presented the Glipang dance from Madura, East Java, whose dancers came from Indonesia.

#### ***Indonesia and Iran***

Indonesia and Iran are the two countries with the largest Muslim majority population in the world. Although in their understanding there are differences, namely the majority of Indonesian people as adherents of the Sunni sect while Iran adheres to the Shia sect. This difference in understanding certainly has its own influence on relations between the two countries. However, the collaboration that has been established is always endeavored to continue to progress and develop by both parties.

Diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Iran have started since 1950. Indonesia established an embassy in Tehran, and Iran also established an embassy in Jakarta. Previously, Indonesia and Iran also had relations long before Indonesia's independence. This can be seen from

traces of evidence of Iranian influence and legacy when it was still the Persian empire in Indonesia.

The beginning of the relationship between Indonesia and Iran came from trade. This trade relationship has existed since 7M, when Indonesia was still in the kingdom era. At that time the kingdom that established trade with the Persian kingdom was the Srivijaya kingdom in Palembang, South Sumatra. Archaeological evidence indicating the presence of Persian traders in the archipelago includes the discovery of glass and glass artifacts in the form of vases, bottles and vases.

The long history of bilateral relations between Indonesia and Iran was once celebrated by Indonesia in Tehran, Iran. In 2013, Indonesia adopted the theme "Commemoration of 1,000 Years of Indonesia-Iran Relations". The event was also filled with art performances, exhibitions and seminars. The exhibition was attended by the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia, Mohammad Nuh, and the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of Iran, Ali Janati.

Until now, the relationship that has been established by the two has intensified. This can be seen from the state visits conducted by both parties. In the era of President SBY in 2006 Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his entourage will make a State Visit to Indonesia on. Then in 2008 the

President of the Republic of Indonesia at that time Sulsilo Bambang Yudhoyono returned the visit. Then in 2015, as many as 10 visits by Ministerial level officials were carried out by the two countries, mainly visits by the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, Minister of Research and Technology of Indonesia, Minister of Research and Technology of Iran, Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Indonesia and Deputy Governor of Bank Indonesia.

During the Jokowi era, Indonesia visited Iran in 2016 when President Jokowi was accompanied by Coordinating Minister for the Economy Darmin Nasution, Minister of State Secretary Pratikno, Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi and Head of BKPM Thomas Lembong. The visit was a follow-up to a visit by Iranian president Hassan Rouhani in April 2015 (Kemenlu: 2015).

The close relationship between Indonesia and Iran also certainly has an influence on increasing cooperation between the two countries. Various sectors of cooperation have been forged by both parties. Starting from the economic sector, culture, education, to defense. The visits made by each country's leaders show that relations

between Indonesia and Iran are getting better every year.

The cooperation in the economic sector that has been carried out has had a positive effect on relations between the two countries. In this cooperation Iran needs Indonesian agricultural and plantation products such as palm oil, paper and paper products, textile raw materials, tires, rubber, cocoa powder, coffee beans, cardboard and wood products. Meanwhile, Iran exports semi-finished steel, aluminum, LPG, ethylene, propylene, carpets and gilim, handicraft lamps, and nuts to Indonesia.

One of the products with large quantities imported from Iran is LPG. Sudirman Said, who at that time was the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) of Indonesia, made a working visit in order to realize cooperation in the oil and gas sector in 2015 in Tehran, Iran. In this meeting agreed on seven cooperation in the oil and gas sector which includes, among others: upstream oil and gas cooperation in Iran, trade in oil and gas products, gas projects, oil processing, petrochemicals, oil and gas supporting industries, to increasing the capacity of human resources in the oil and gas sector (Maulana: 2015).

### ***Indonesia and Mesir***

Indonesia and Egypt have a

long history of bilateral relations starting from the early days of Indonesia's independence until now. Egypt was the first country to recognize the independence of the Republic of Indonesia in 1946. Less than a year later, on June 10, 1947 to be precise, the two countries officially opened diplomatic relations through the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cordiality, which was then followed by the opening Indonesian representative in Cairo in 1949. The acknowledgment given by Egypt is a form of support for Indonesia because of the closeness that has existed for a long time. Since the 19th century many students have come to Egypt to study, especially Islamic religious knowledge at Al-Azhar University (KBRI Kairo: 2017). Before Indonesia's independence period, students there had taken action about Indonesia's desire and efforts to achieve its independence through oral, written and seminars. The desire of the students to be free from colonialism was welcomed by the King of Egypt at that time, King Faruq. He also gave his full support for Indonesian independence day, because Indonesian people society is predominantly Muslim.

The efforts of these students and students are starting to bear fruit. On March 23, 1946 the Egyptian government considered that Indonesian citizens in Egypt had no further relations with the Dutch, and

in all matters relating to them, the Egyptian government would only assist and be in contact with Indonesia. Even some politicians in Egypt and other Arab politicians formed the Indonesian Defense Committee. The committee is chaired by Saleh Harb Pasya, former Egyptian minister of defence.

Indonesia and Egypt continue to maintain good bilateral relations. This can be seen from the state visits of each head of state or minister which is carried out to strengthen the closeness that has been established. Every Indonesian President has made a visit to this pyramid country, except for B.J Habiebie. As a form of response, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak visited Indonesia in 1983. In 2015, the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi paid a working visit to Indonesia. This working visit was carried out with the aim of increasing cooperation in trade and investment. Besides that, it will also discuss about the Islamic world today.

The long history of good relations between Indonesia and Egypt is not only intertwined in the political field. The two countries also carry out export-import activities to meet their respective domestic needs. In 2016 the total trade value between Indonesia and Egypt reached USD 1.232 billion. This amount can be said to be stable because in previous years between 2013 and 2015 the average trade value was USD 1.3 billion. It is hoped that in the future the cooperation between Indonesia

and Egypt can be even better.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Cooperation between Indonesia and the countries in the Middle East Region in the economic, political, social and cultural fields has been carried out in many ways, such as with Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt. However, the cooperation that has existed to this day has not been maximized, especially in the economic field. As we know, for example, the country of Saudi Arabia has extraordinary oil natural resource potential coupled with the potential for Umrah and Hajj tourism for the Indonesian Muslim community. while for the Egyptian state the cooperation built by Indonesia and Egypt is still considered not optimal as well as with the Iranian state. the hope for the future is that the extraordinary potential of natural resources owned by the Middle East country can be maximized by the Indonesian state to establish cooperation, especially in the economic field.

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