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Indonesia's Accession to The OECD: Strategic Motivation and Foreign Policy Challenges in the Era of Prabowo Subianto

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the strategic motivations and foreign policy challenges of Indonesia's accession process to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) during President Prabowo Subianto's administration. OECD membership is viewed as a crucial step to accelerate the transformation of the national economy towards developed country status by 2045 through the implementation of transparent, inclusive, and sustainable global economic governance standards. Using a qualitative approach based on an integrative literature review, this research applies theories of foreign policy analysis and rational decisionmaking to understand the political, economic, and strategic considerations shaping Indonesia's decision. The findings indicate that the "Prabowonomics" economic model — emphasizing economic independence, equitable distribution of wealth, industrial strengthening, and sustainable development — demonstrates strong alignment with OECD norms and objectives. Consequently, OECD membership is expected to be a key lever for increasing foreign direct investment, facilitating technology transfer, supporting structural reform efforts, and enhancing Indonesia's global competitiveness. Despite these potential benefits, the accession process presents significant challenges, including the need to comply with stringent OECD regulatory standards, potential loss of preferential trade facilities such as the United States Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), and complex diplomatic maneuvering as Indonesia navigates its simultaneous involvement in both BRICS and OECD frameworks. This study emphasizes the importance of domestic policy adjustments, institutional readiness, and strengthened stakeholder coordination for Indonesia to fully maximize the benefits of OECD membership, ultimately supporting the broader national agenda and realizing the long-term vision of Indonesia Emas 2045.

Keywords: OECD Accession; Prabowonomics; Indonesia Foreign Policy

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INTRODUCTION

The OECD is an international organization that aims to strengthen economic cooperation among member countries to promote inclusive and sustainable growth (Canton, 2021). As stated at https://www.oecd.org, the OECD serves as a platform for information exchange, policy analysis, and collaboration to address global economic, social, and environmental challenges (Economic, 2021). The organization produces policy recommendations that help member countries improve the quality of life, reduce social inequality, and support innovation (Boarini, Causa, Fleurbaey, Grimalda, & Woolard, 2018). In addition, the OECD develops international standards in tax compliance, environmental protection, women's empowerment, and transparent and accountable public governance (Sebele-Mpofu, 2020). The OECD also helps countries navigate technological change and geopolitical dynamics with the goal of achieving equitable economic growth and sustainable prosperity (Wu & Hussain, 2025).

The OECD's vision is to enhance the trust of countries in global economic cooperation. As stated in (OECD, 2021), the OECD is committed to strengthening its role as an international forum that fosters evidence-based policy dialogue to address the world's increasingly complex social, economic, and environmental challenges. Through a collaborative approach, the

organization aims to support member countries and partners in adopting equitable, inclusive, and sustainable policy standards (Danladi, Prasad, Modibbo, Ahmadi, & Ghasemi, 2023). The OECD also aims to increase transparency, accountability, and innovation in public governance and the global economy to address the dynamics of technological and geopolitical change (Pal, Mahalik, Zhao, Liu, & Soliman, 2024). Focusing on sustainable development and improving the well-being of all citizens, the OECD promotes an integrative strategy that combines economic, social, and environmental aspects as key pillars to ensure sustainable and more equitable progress across all member countries and globally.

The OECD is an economic cooperation organization that focuses not on a single region but rather engages various regions worldwide by strengthening economic cooperation among its members through increased trade and investment (Vlastou-Dimopoulou, 2019). In this context, Bayne and Woolcock (2020) explain that current economic diplomacy combines theories of international relations and international political economy (IPE) to explore the complexities of economic negotiation processes (Olsen, 2020). These processes are characterized by the dynamic interaction of various actors with varying preferences in negotiations taking place at the multilateral, regional, and bilateral levels (Panke, Lang, & Wiedemann, 2017). Economic diplomacy forums are an important means for conducting negotiations, with forums such as multilateralism, regionalism, and bilateralism serving to increase the influence and effectiveness of diplomacy and highlighting the diversity of existing economic diplomacy pathways (Islam & Hossen, 2025).

The OECD serves not only as a traditional forum for economic cooperation but also actively promotes sustainable development among its member countries (Zeigermann, 2018). The practice of economic diplomacy encompasses a variety of tools and strategies implemented by governments, such as trade and investment promotion, negotiation of bilateral, regional, and multilateral trade agreements, and the application of economic instruments to achieve foreign policy objectives (Sano & Rassias, 2024). Given the rapid changes in the global environment and the increasingly important role of non-state actors, economic diplomacy now demands a more inclusive and flexible approach to better respond to global dynamics (Bratosin-Vasilache, 2024).

Indonesia has begun seriously pursuing its desire to join the OECD by submitting an Initial Memorandum to the OECD Secretariat. At the 2025 OECD Ministerial Council Meeting, Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartarto, officially submitted the Initial Memorandum to the OECD Secretary-General, Mathias Cormann, as a first step towards full OECD membership. The Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs (OECD, 2025) submitted an Initial Memorandum document containing a self-assessment of Indonesia's regulations, policies, and practices' compliance with OECD standards and a request to join the Anti-Bribery Convention, the primary standard for combating corruption by public officials. The accession process will involve technical dialogue involving 25 expert committees on various policy issues (Krick, 2015). This step supports Indonesia's ambition to become a developed country by 2045 and strengthens its strategic position in Southeast Asia (Sarjito, 2023). Having previously been an OECD Main Partner since 2007 and opened accession discussions in February 2024, Indonesia is the first country in the region to officially become an OECD accession candidate (Shandy et al., 2025).

Indonesia's full commitment to joining the OECD is evident through Indonesia's Accession to the OECD and the CPTPP, which will strengthen Indonesia's position in the global economy (Pinonto'an, 2025). This agreement reflects a strategic collaborative effort to enhance economic connectivity and create inclusive trade and investment growth in the Indo-Pacific region (Prakash, 2023).

This study is here to fill this gap by analyzing the strategic motivations and challenges of Indonesia's foreign policy in the OECD accession process in the era of Prabowo Subianto's administration (Sulaiman, 2024). The urgency of this research lies in Indonesia's strategic momentum which is at a crucial stage in its integration with the global economy, where the decisions taken today will have a long-term impact on Indonesia's position on the world economic and political map. The novelty of this research lies in an analytical approach that combines the theoretical framework of Waltz's level of analysis (2001) and Allison's (1999) rational actor model to examine the complex interaction between domestic factors especially the economic paradigm of Prabowonomics and strategic considerations at the global level in shaping Indonesia's accession policy.

Based on this background, the purpose of this study is to analyze the strategic motivations and challenges of Indonesia's foreign policy in the OECD accession process under the Prabowo Subianto administration, focusing on the alignment of the domestic agenda "Prabowonomics" with OECD standards and norms, as well as identifying potential impacts on Indonesia's economic and political position in the global arena. The benefits of this research are expected to make an academic contribution in enriching Indonesia's foreign policy studies, especially in the context of the interaction between the domestic economic agenda and international strategies. In practical terms, the findings of this study can be considered for policymakers in formulating effective accession strategies, mitigating risks, and maximizing the benefits of OECD membership for national interests.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach with a literature review to examine the factors influencing a country's foreign policy. This method was chosen because it provides a deeper understanding of the conceptual, historical, and theoretical dynamics related to foreign policy decision-making. Through the literature review, the researcher identified relevant theories, models, and empirical studies as a basis for analyzing the behavior of state actors in international relations.

Within the theoretical framework, this research integrates two main approaches: Kenneth N. Waltz's (2001) levels of analysis theory, which divides foreign policy analysis into three levels: the individual, the state, and the international system; and Graham T. Allison's (1999) decision-making process model, specifically the Rational Actor Model, which views the state as a single, rational actor evaluating and choosing the best policies for the national interest. Data were collected through document analysis and secondary literature such as academic books, reputable journals, research institute reports, and relevant foreign policy documents. Using content analysis techniques, the data were analyzed to identify patterns and themes that illustrate the relationships between theoretical variables. Data validity is strengthened through triangulation by comparing various sources and expert views, resulting in an in-depth and

comprehensive conceptual analysis of individual, domestic, and global system factors that influence foreign policy in the context of calculation and strategic rationality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prabowonomics Analysis

The Prabowonomics economic model was introduced as a strategic policy by President Prabowo's administration, aiming to encourage inclusive and sustainable economic growth. According to the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), (2024, May 14), this approach focuses on national economic transformation by strengthening the domestic production base and ensuring equitable distribution of prosperity across all levels of society. Furthermore, this model emphasizes the importance of economic independence by maximizing the utilization of national resources to reduce dependence on imports. Prabowonomics adopts an economic development strategy that integrates synergies between the agricultural, industrial, and service sectors, with a particular emphasis on strengthening the role of MSMEs as the foundation of the community economy.

In its implementation, Prabowonomics emphasizes the principles of social justice and equitable development, ensuring that growth is not solely concentrated in urban areas and the upper middle class but also reaches underdeveloped regions and improves the welfare of low-income groups. Inclusive socio-economic programs are expected to strengthen the purchasing power of the wider community while creating new jobs, supporting the vision of reducing social disparities and increasing economic stability. Sustainability is a key component of Prabowonomics, with responsible and environmentally friendly natural resource management an integral part of long-term development strategies. This concept incorporates environmental and social considerations into economic development policies, so that growth is measured not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of sustainable quality to preserve ecosystems and ensure the well-being of future generations.

From an academic perspective, Prabowonomics is an economic paradigm that integrates economic development, research and innovation, equitable distribution of prosperity, and natural resource conservation. This model offers a holistic and multidimensional approach to addressing Indonesia's contemporary economic challenges, involving various sectors and stakeholders within a policy framework focused on strengthening a resilient domestic economy while contributing significantly to the well-being of all levels of society.

Prabowonomics is Prabowo Subianto's national economic development model. Prabowo has stated a highly ambitious Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth target of 8%. Indonesia's 2025-2045 National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN), ratified in August 2024, anticipates an average growth rate of between 6% and 7%. This GDP growth rate could propel Indonesia to high-income status before 2045, requiring strong and sustainable growth acceleration. To achieve 8% economic growth, Thawley, C., Crystallin, M., & Verico, K. (2024) stated that the Prabowo government must focus on four key aspects to significantly boost economic growth: increased investment, increased productivity, strengthened global competitiveness, and maintained strong institutions. These four aspects are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, as investment, particularly foreign direct investment (FDI), can improve human resource quality through the transfer of technology and managerial expertise, which in turn increases productivity and competitiveness, attracting more investment. However, this will

only occur if supported by transparent institutions, regulations, and systems, and effective law enforcement. Building trust and ensuring this institutional environment are key to attracting FDI.

Prabowonomics, the foundation of Prabowo's motivation for joining the OECD, is reflected in several strategic aspects of the economic model that align with the organization's principles and objectives. The Prabowonomics model emphasizes national economic independence, inclusive and equitable growth, strengthened global competitiveness, and sustainable development, which requires international collaboration and the adoption of high global standards and practices. The 8% economic growth target in Prabowonomics demands increased investment, productivity, competitiveness, and solid institutions. Membership in the OECD opens access to a network of developed countries with a vision of sustainable economic development, which is key to attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), a crucial factor in improving human resource quality and competitiveness, as per the Prabowonomics model.

The OECD is recognized as a platform that facilitates international cooperation in the economic, social, and environmental spheres, in line with Prabowonomics' holistic approach, which integrates economic development, education, and training expertise and innovation, equitable prosperity, and natural resource conservation. Joining the OECD can help Indonesia adopt best-in-class policies and strengthen its capacity for resource management and sustainable development. Prabowo's motivation for joining the OECD can be understood as a strategy to gain support for increasing investment and strengthening global competitiveness through OECD standards and networks, access to best practices, and international cooperation mechanisms for inclusive and sustainable development, in line with the objectives of Prabowonomics, while simultaneously strengthening MSME development and social equity as the foundation for inclusive economic growth.

As a model for Indonesia's domestic economic transformation focused on self-reliance and inclusiveness, Prabowonomics adopts a modern development framework that aligns with the principles and benefits offered by OECD membership. This is a strategic factor driving Prabowo to integrate Indonesia into the organization to strengthen and accelerate the achievement of sustainable national economic growth and equity targets.

Profit and Loss Analysis

Membership in the OECD offers significant advantages because member countries have large domestic markets and high levels of investment and trade among themselves. Joining the OECD allows Indonesia to expand its export market diversity, gain greater access to foreign direct investment, and achieve more cost-effective technology transfer. Furthermore, Indonesia can leverage various funding sources for infrastructure development through integrated OECD mechanisms (RSIS, 2025). Cooperation among OECD members also supports transactions using national currencies, which helps reduce dependence on the US dollar and enhance the stability of each member's national economy (OECD, 2023).

By becoming an OECD member, Indonesia not only has the opportunity to improve the quality of its public policies and its economic reputation on the global stage, but also to strengthen national competitiveness and promote progress on inclusive and sustainable structural reforms (OECD, 2023).

Table 1. Exports-Imports Between the United States and Indonesia

Ye	ar	Total trade	United State exports	United State imports
		(US\$ 100 milion)	(US\$ 100 milion)	(US\$ 100 milion)
202	20	16.599,3	5.633,8	10.965,5
202	21	18.114	6.801,5	11.312,5
202	22	15.962,6	6.276,3	9.686,3
202	23	17.061,7	6.156,5	10.905,2
202	24	21.306,4	6.752,7	14.553,7

Source: Central Statistics Agency (2025)

The data in this table illustrates significant dynamics in total trade between Indonesia and the United States from 2020 to 2024. Following the 2020 pandemic, trade increased in 2021, then experienced a minor decline in 2022, before rebounding in 2023 and reaching a sharp spike in 2024, reaching US\$21.3 billion.



Figure 1. Graph of Exports and Imports Between Indonesia and Australia Source: Central Statistics Agency (2025)

The graph above shows that Indonesia's exports to Australia continued to increase from 2020 to 2024, although there was a slight fluctuation in 2022. However, throughout this period, Indonesia's imports from Australia consistently exceeded its exports. This has resulted in Indonesia consistently running a trade deficit with Australia over the past five years.

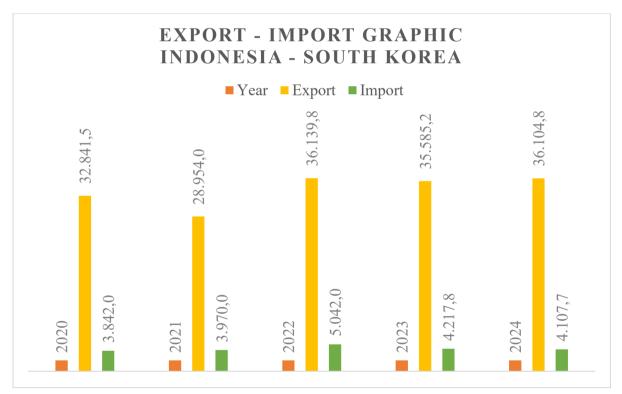


Figure 2. Graph of Exports-Imports Between Indonesia and South Korea Source: Central Statistics Agency (2025)

The graph above shows that Indonesia's exports to South Korea showed a stable trend with an increase from 2021 to 2024, despite a decline in early 2021. Meanwhile, Indonesia's imports from South Korea also increased, but their value consistently remained much lower

than export volume. Overall, Indonesia recorded a trade surplus with South Korea from 2020 to 2024.

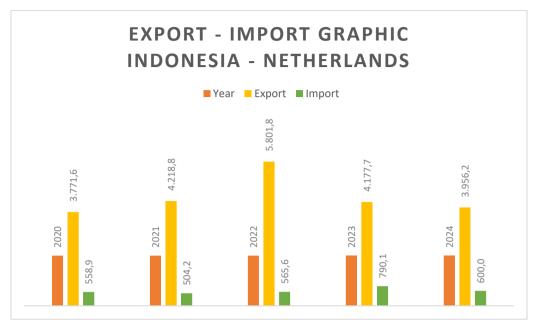


Figure 3. Export-Import Graph Between Indonesia and the Netherlands

Source: Central Statistics Agency (2025)

The graph shows that the trade relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands over the past five years shows that the value of Indonesian exports has consistently been significantly higher than the value of imports. Indonesian exports to the Netherlands experienced a sharp increase in 2022, then declined again in 2023 and 2024, while imports from the Netherlands remained relatively stable, although they increased in 2023. With this pattern, Indonesia has consistently recorded a trade surplus with the Netherlands. Going forward, it is crucial for Indonesia to maintain its export performance to ensure that trade relations with the Netherlands remain balanced and beneficial.

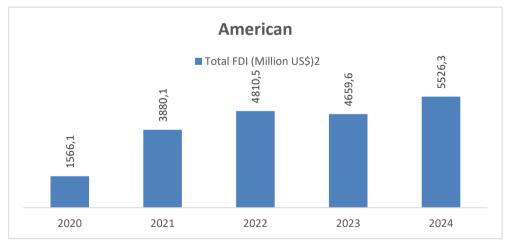


Figure 4. Graph of American FDI to Indonesia

Source: Central Statistics Agency (2025)

The graph illustrates a significant increase in direct investment from the United States to Indonesia between 2020 and 2024. Starting from a relatively low level of US\$1,566.1 million in 2020, US investment experienced a sharp surge in 2021 and rose again in 2022 to US\$4,810.5 million. Despite a slight decline in 2023, investment remained high, then rose again in 2024 to US\$5,526.3 million. This trend indicates that US investment interest in Indonesia is strengthening, in line with economic stability and an increasingly favorable investment climate.

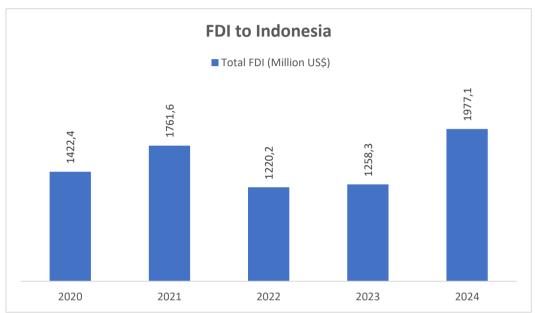


Figure 5. Graph of Dutch FDI to Indonesia

Source: Central Statistics Agency (2025)

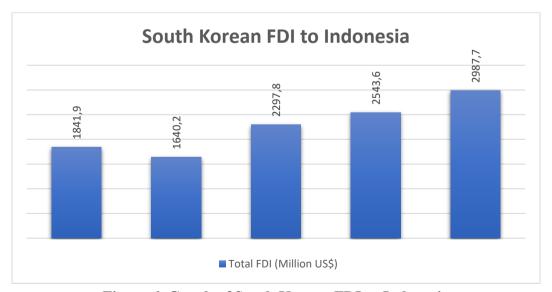


Figure 6. Graph of South Korean FDI to Indonesia

Source: Central Statistics Agency (2025)

The graphical data shows that direct investment from South Korea to Indonesia experienced a positive growth trend throughout 2020 and 2024. After reaching US\$1,841.9 million in 2020 and experiencing a slight decline to US\$1,640.2 million in 2021, investment from South Korea again surged significantly in 2022, reaching US\$2,297.8 million. This increase continued in 2023 and 2024, each recorded at US\$2,543.6 million and peaking at US\$2,987.7 million. This pattern indicates a continued increase in South Korean investment interest in Indonesia.



Figure 8. Graph of Australian FDI to Indonesia

Source: Central Statistics Agency (2025)

The graph indicates significant fluctuations in Australian direct investment in Indonesia from 2020 to 2024. Starting from US\$390.1 million in 2020, Australian foreign direct investment (FDI) experienced a drastic decline to US\$236.3 million in 2021. However, in 2022, there was a sharp increase to US\$673.6 million, then the investment value was relatively stable with a slight increase in 2023 to US\$674.5 million. In 2024, Australian investment showed a sharp increase, reaching a peak of US\$1,050.3 million. This trend indicates the growing strength of Australian investment interest in Indonesia.

The OECD focuses on addressing various social challenges faced by its member countries, such as poverty, social inequality, and equal access to health and education services. The organization initiates various programs that support the development of quality infrastructure, human resource development, and technological advancement, while strengthening social systems in member and partner countries (OECD, 2024). The OECD also promotes inclusive international cooperation by facilitating the exchange of knowledge and best practices among developing countries to accelerate development and reduce dependence on developed countries (OECD, 2024).

In addition, the OECD actively addresses strategic global issues, such as sustainable natural resource management, poverty alleviation, food and energy security, and fairer and more inclusive international governance. Through this collaboration, the OECD strives to create a more equal world, where the interests of developing countries receive proportionate attention in global governance (OECD, 2024).

Challenges of Indonesia's OECD Accession

Indonesia has strong reasons to join the OECD, primarily due to the significant opportunities it offers for economic diversification. OECD members comprise developed and developing countries in the Europe and Asia Pacific regions. Indonesia's membership in the OECD opens access to broader economic cooperation, new markets, and diplomatic and informal partnerships across the region. In the third quarter of 2025, the Indonesian economy grew 5.04%, despite facing challenges in early 2025, such as a planned 19% increase in US import tariffs and the weakening of the rupiah to IDR 16,736 per USD in November 2025. Inflation is recorded as being under control but remains vulnerable to global market volatility. Indonesia's economic structure is dominated by the manufacturing and wholesale retail trade sectors, with a dependence on exports of commodities such as coal and palm oil, which increases vulnerability to external shocks. Therefore, OECD membership is expected to strengthen market and economic sector diversification. This strategy also aims to balance Indonesia's relations with major global powers such as the US and China, while strengthening Indonesia's regional and global role as an economic power that prioritizes multilateral cooperation, inclusivity, and sustainable development. Market diversification through participation in the OECD also includes strengthening technological cooperation and investment, as well as enhancing Indonesia's geopolitical and diplomatic position in the world.

However, Indonesia faces obstacles in deepening cooperation with OECD member countries, which are developed countries with strict standards and regulations, as stated by VOA Indonesia (2024). Adjustments to these standards limit the level of cooperation intensity that can be achieved. Furthermore, there is a risk of losing trade facilities such as the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) from the United States if Indonesia becomes a full member of the OECD, which could negatively impact exports. These limitations reflect the differing interests between developing countries like Indonesia and developed OECD member countries regarding economic and trade policies. In general, the main challenge in this cooperation stems from differences in economic standards and high regulations, especially from developed countries like the United States and several European countries, which pose obstacles to expanding trade and investment.

Indonesia's joining the OECD (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development) poses a dilemma regarding its membership in BRICS. On the one hand, BRICS supports efforts to reduce dependence on the United States dollar, while OECD countries generally still rely on US dollar transactions. OECD member countries that rely most heavily on the US dollar in international trade, as (Putra, W.A., & Wijayanti, D., 2023), are those with strong economic and financial ties to the United States, such as Japan and key European countries. Globally, the US dollar remains the primary currency in international trade and financial transactions, used in approximately half of world trade and serving as the primary reserve currency. This makes most OECD countries, especially large economies, significantly dependent on the US dollar for cross-border transactions, supported by its high liquidity and its status as a safe haven currency during times of global economic crisis. Therefore, Indonesia's membership in the OECD could pose a dilemma as it could encourage more intensive use of the US dollar, which contradicts the spirit of BRICS membership, which aims to reduce dependence on the dollar in economic transactions.

CONCLUSION

Prabowonomics envisions inclusive and sustainable national economic development through self-reliance, equitable prosperity, MSME empowerment, and responsible natural resource management. Indonesia's aspiration to join the OECD aligns with this vision by aiming to accelerate growth, attract foreign direct investment, and adopt international best practices to enhance competitiveness and policy reforms. OECD membership can offer benefits such as market diversification, technology transfer, and greater global economic influence, but also introduces challenges including compliance with stringent standards, regulatory burdens, and potential loss of trade privileges like the U.S. GSP. Trade and investment trends reflect positive engagement with multiple partners, though deficits and volatility with countries like Australia highlight the need for sectoral diversification and strategic optimization. Future research could explore how Indonesia can effectively balance the integration with OECD frameworks while safeguarding national interests, particularly examining strategies to manage tensions between OECD and BRICS economic agendas and the implications of continued reliance on the U.S. dollar in this shifting geopolitical-economic landscape.

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