

Mediating Indonesia: The Slow Emergence of a Young Nation

Commentary

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This commentary argues that the story of Indonesia's rise since the turn of the millennium has remained largely untold. Little is known about the country and its people to an outside world far more awed with the rapid rise of China and India. This is a problem of the way Indonesia is being mediated, both at home and globally. But change is coming. Democracy, and the freedoms that come with it, has unleashed the creativity and energy of the young nation to begin to assert itself in the world, aided by the steady economic growth since the beginning of the millennium. The mediating of Indonesia will develop accordingly, with more Indonesians now directly engaging in the national conversation, and with it, the sense of nationhood is growing stronger.

Keywords: Indonesia, media, mediating, language

Indonesia is a nation on the rise, but one whose story has not been given a fair hearing on the world stage, partly, but not solely, because it is eclipsed by the rise of the two Asian giants, China and India. Indonesia is slowly making it onto the global stage, and not necessarily for the wrong reasons, as in the past. In addition to the usual tragedies and dramas from natural and manmade disasters, Indonesia has been featured in the international media since the turn of the millennium because it is on the rise, both politically and economically. But stories and news about Indonesia are incomplete at best and certainly not adequate given the size of the country as the fourth most populous nation in the world.

This commentary seeks to understand the reason for the current state of affairs in the way the nation has been represented in the media, locally as well as globally, and where it is heading now that the nation aspires to claim its place in the world. In short, I seek to answer the chief question of who gets to tell the Indonesian story, and how.

My use of the terms *media* and *mediate* in this commentary is meant to focus our attention less on the media in Indonesia, and more on the process of mediating—that is, of relating, linking, intervening, and conveying, the story of Indonesia. In addition, my commentary describes not so much the message

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and the impact media stories have on the nation and abroad, but more the process that goes into making the news, and hence the mediated message. I begin by looking at the largely untold story of Indonesia's impressive rise since it embraced democracy just before the turn of the millennium and how this story is being portrayed in the media. The article analyzes the internal and external factors for this current state of affairs. The second part of the article examines the Indonesian media landscape: Who are the key players, and how do they operate in mediating the message? This section focuses on the sprawling local media, including the rise of the social media that is helping to fill the gaps in the flow of information, as well as the presence of the foreign media that play a key role portraying Indonesia's rise on the global stage. What are the forces affecting the way they report on Indonesia? Finally, the article describes the challenges ahead for Indonesia to fulfill its aspirations to become a major global player.

Democracy and freedom have unleashed the energy and creative forces of Indonesians that affect the way they express themselves, and together with the way they embrace Internet technology, these forces have changed the way Indonesians are mediating themselves. But the pace with which Indonesians master languages (Indonesian as well as major foreign languages, including English) and develop effective communication skills that meet international standards will determine how soon and how effective this mediation will be.

The Rise of Indonesia: An Untold Story

Indonesia, an archipelagic country of more than 17,000 islands and more than 250 million people, is rising. It is gaining more recognition in the international media and literature, though still not to the extent that reflects its size, and now its ambition to be a global player.

Many writings recognize Indonesia as the world's fourth most populous nation and the country with the largest Muslim population. And increasingly, many of these writings contain descriptions such as the third largest democracy in the world, the largest Muslim-majority democracy, the largest nation and largest economy in Southeast Asia. And there are accolades such as an emerging democracy or an emerging market economy. Today, an Indonesian leader sits at the G-20 annual summit of the largest economies in the world. At the current rate of economic growth, many predict that Indonesia, now ranking 16th in gross domestic product, will be among the 10 largest economies in the world by 2025, and in the top five by 2040.

Indonesia's story is not unique. In the context of the rise of the entire Asian continent, Indonesia's is but one of the narratives making up the whole of the "Asian Century" story. And it is not among the most important narratives. That claim belongs to China, whose rapid rise in the last two decades has turned it into an economic, political, and military power that challenges the United States's supremacy. There is also the story of India, which is emerging both economically and politically. These two Asian giants not only draw most of the world attention and direct foreign investment, but their stories have inevitably eclipsed those of smaller Asian countries. Indonesia has the misfortune of being a distant third largest country in Asia. Its story, as impressive as it may seem, is neglected or, worse, remains largely untold.

Indonesia held general elections in 2014 that could be described as free and fair by world standards. This was its fourth democratic election since it embraced liberal democracy in 1998 after more than three decades of President Suharto's authoritarian rule. The inauguration of Joko Widodo as the seventh president in October 2014 marked the most peaceful and orderly leadership succession the nation has seen in its 69 years of independence. All previous changes had been either bloody or messy or both.

Widodo was the first elected president since 1999 who had no connection with the corrupt Suharto regime. The small-time furniture businessman was an outsider who came to challenge the political system dominated by dynasties that characterize many Asian political landscapes. And Widodo succeeded. That's a sign that democracy works. Indonesia's story stands out all the more when compared with two other big countries that have failed in their experience with democracy. Thailand, among the first in Southeast Asia to go democratic in the 1990s, has reverted to a junta rule. Egypt, one of the early risers in the 2011 Arab Spring, saw the military wresting back power from a democratically elected government.

Indonesia has come a long way since *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman (2000) pronounced the country a "messy state" following a visit in 2000. The nation then was struggling with political instability on all fronts, from armed insurgencies in Aceh and Papua, communal conflicts between Muslims and Christians in Maluku and in the Central Sulawesi district of Poso, and a violent ethnic cleansing campaign by Dayak tribe in Borneo targeting migrants from Madura Island.

Many of these problems have been resolved through negotiations that observed basic democratic principles. A case in point is the peace agreement between the government and the Aceh Free Movement that had been fighting for an independent state. The devastating tsunami of December 2004 pushed the two sides to agree to peace to allow for the rebuilding of the territory. Today, Indonesia still faces low-level insurgency in Papua at the east end of the archipelago. There are persistent allegations of human rights violations, remnants of past practices, including the jailing of people for expressing their opinions. But Papua is an anomaly, an exception to the rule in a country where democratic governance has become the norm.

Indonesia's successful experience with democracy defied skeptics who subscribe to Samuel Huntington's (1996) "clash of civilizations" theorem that Islam is incompatible with liberal democracy. Beside the periodic elections, many freedoms and basic human rights have been enshrined in the national constitution. Indonesia has not been spared from the effect of radical Islam, though. It has had its own homegrown terrorist organizations exploiting Islamic symbols with deadly effects, and some of these work in collaboration with their ideological counterparts overseas, including Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

However, the way Indonesia has dealt with terrorism following the devastating suicide bombs on the holiday island of Bali in October 2002 is an example that even established democracies like the United States should heed. Rather than resorting to draconian measures, such as making arrests without trial or suppressing freedoms, Indonesia has defused the terrorist threats through the strict implementation of democratic rule of law, observing due process and the legal rights of terrorist suspects arrested. Police

and intelligence capabilities in dealing with terrorist threats have been strengthened, allowing them to foil many terrorist plots. The military, which since 2002 had been relieved of its job in national security to focus on defense, has not been brought in to fight Indonesia's war on terror.

Indonesia is living proof that democracy and Islam not only are compatible, but reinforce one another. The tolerant brand of Islam that has evolved across most of Southeast Asia has been a major factor. Civil societies in Indonesia, including the two largest Muslim mass organizations Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, have been the driving force for more freedom and democracy. They are also the main moderating forces of Islam in the country.

Democratization has also been accompanied by economic growth, defying the conventional belief readily embraced by dictators in Third World countries in the 1980s that you could have one or the other, but not both. Indonesia under Suharto pursued economic development vigorously with growth rates at times reaching 7–8% a year, but this came at the cost of suppressing freedoms and basic rights. Democracy was considered by the regime a luxury that developing countries could not afford; and supporters of this theory have argued that democracy is something that is only possible once a country reaches a certain level of prosperity, and where the size of its middle class passes a critical mass. But in the absence of democratic checks and balances, corruption and abuse of power became so rampant that they brought Indonesia to the brink of an economic collapse when the financial crisis struck Asia in the late 1990s. The authoritarian model of development has failed Indonesia.

Post-Suharto Indonesia took a different approach to development by ensuring freedom and basic rights first and introducing democratic governance that includes curbing corruption. By the time President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono came to power in 2004, Indonesia enjoyed relative political stability that allowed the nation to pursue economic development, with some measure of success. One proof of its economic resilience came when Indonesia was one of only a few countries that were little affected by the global financial crisis of 2008–2009.

Indonesia today still faces immense economic challenges. Although the official poverty rate has been slashed to 11.25%, that still translates to more than 28 million people living below the poverty line. Officials say the economy needs to grow annually by at least 4% to create enough jobs for the three to four million people who join the labor force every year—a task equivalent to creating jobs for the size of neighboring city-state Singapore each year. Numbers such as these can be mind-boggling, but Indonesia deals with these challenges by strengthening democratic institutions.

Indonesia has also been active in international diplomacy, although many observers have argued that the country is “still punching below its weight.” The preamble to the 1945 Constitution states that Indonesia should play an active role in the promotion of global peace and prosperity, but the extent to which it can live up to this mandate is economically and militarily limited. Indonesia has pursued its foreign policy in the past mostly through the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which it helped found in 1967. Considered one of the most successful regional organizations, ASEAN formally launched into an economic community at the end of 2015, a move its leaders considered necessary for members to avoid being drowned by the rise the two Asian giants China and India.

President Widodo, since coming to office in October 2014, has been pushing Indonesia to become a maritime power. This may seem like an obvious move given the archipelago's vast territorial waters, but no earlier president has tried. In addition to straddling the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Indonesia is responsible for overseeing four international sea-lanes of communication that pass through its territory. Due to neglect, Indonesia's narrow straits and unprotected waters were infested with pirates and illegal foreign fishing boats. Indonesia is now aiming to strengthen its capability to exercise sovereignty over its territorial waters. There are no territorial ambitions.

Has the successful transformation of Indonesia into a democracy made it less interesting to scholars and journalists? One study by Andrew MacIntyre and Douglas Ramage (2008) describes Indonesia as a "normal" country. Could this "normal" state of affairs be one reason why the Indonesian story is not being told in the global media?

Glimpses of Indonesia's rise have appeared in the international media and literature, but they are inadequate both in numbers and in substance. Because they are largely mediated by non-Indonesians, they fail to give the complete picture.

Stories and news of Indonesia's democratic transition and economic progress feature from time to time in the international media. But going by the headlines since the turn of the millennium, Indonesia is still largely portrayed as a disaster-prone country, from big tsunamis, earthquakes, landslides, and volcanic eruptions to terrorist attacks and plane crashes as well as corruption and human rights violations. In between these tragedies, we sporadically find stories and news about Indonesia as an emerging democracy and emerging market economy.

While stories by non-Indonesians are relevant in mediating Indonesia on the world stage, they are presented mostly with their perspectives and biases. The near absence of Indonesians' involvement means these stories often fail to capture the biases and the aspirations of the people.

There are very few Indonesian media—led and managed by Indonesians—that cater to the global audience. Few Indonesians work for the international media. A quick search on amazon.com of all books on Indonesia published in English in 2014 shows that almost all of them have been written by non-Indonesians. The few books by Indonesian authors would likely be English translations of their work.

When it comes to mediating its own message, Indonesia is trailing most other countries in Asia, certainly behind China and India but also Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia. These countries are already doing their own mediation, whether through print and broadcast media or through films.

The problem facing Indonesia is not so much that its story has been eclipsed by China and India. The larger challenge is for Indonesia to be able to tell its own story, to mediate its own message, as it rises on the global stage. For Indonesia to catch up, it needs to address two main problems: mastery of foreign languages (English in particular) and improving people's skills in telling their story, whether in the traditional or the new media.

Who Is Mediating the Message? The Media Landscape

The media landscape in Indonesia has been undergoing a massive transformation since the turn of the millennium. Two major factors are driving this change. First, with freedom of expression and freedom of the press now guaranteed in democratic Indonesia, the number of media outlets, both print and broadcast, has grown dramatically. Second, the Internet revolution, particularly with the arrival of the social media, has led to an explosion in the number of players. Mediating the message is no longer the monopoly of a few elites calling themselves journalists.

Freedom and the Internet have also led to the unleashing of energy and creativity that affects the way news and information are being produced and disseminated. Besides the mass media proper, other forms of media for creative expressions are experiencing rapid growth. The movie industry, once dormant and even doomed to oblivion, has made a strong comeback. Indonesian-made movies now regularly compete against Hollywood and Bollywood titles at local movie theaters. TV production houses are churning out melodramas to occupy peak viewing hours once dominated by Latin, Korean, Chinese, and Indian productions. The book publishing business is experiencing a renaissance with the discovery of young talents writing novels as well as nonfiction titles.

There is one big problem with this otherwise rosy picture. Almost all this energy is devoted to mediating the message for the home audience. Most of the content is written or presented in the Indonesian language; little is presented or written in, or translated into, English or other foreign languages. Before the Internet revolution and before the press industry was given its freedom, many people in the country were beyond the reach of media. As recently as the 1990s, newspapers only reached urban dwellers. Television news was the monopoly of the state. Book publishing and the movie industry suffered from weak demand and a shortage of creativity.

The media in Indonesia are essentially in the business of catching up. They are still trying to reach the largely untapped and hitherto inaccessible home market. With a population of 250 million people, it is a huge market. Commercial interests dictate that they forget the foreign market for now, because it is a tough market to crack. But there is one large, readily and easily accessible market right here at home.

The Indonesian Press Council, a state-funded agency independent of the government tasked with overseeing the media industry, estimates there are more than 1,100 publishing titles, including dailies, weeklies, monthlies, and tabloids; over 200 television stations; and thousands of radio stations if we include community radio. Their precise numbers are harder to pin down. Unlike under Suharto, one does not need to secure a publishing license to launch a newspaper or magazine (the broadcasters are easier to track since they have to lease the frequency and pay fees to the government).

The ICT revolution is rendering these players in the media landscape increasingly less relevant today. Many traditional media outlets have built a presence in the digital world, where they find that they are no longer the only players in the business of disseminating information. They are being joined by start-ups, bloggers, citizen journalists, and ordinary people using the social media to reach out to the

larger audience. Indonesia today ranks fourth in the number of Facebook users and fifth in the number of Twitter users. Jakarta in 2013 was dubbed the world's capital for Twitter.

Indonesians are embracing social media in a way that has changed how news and stories are being produced, disseminated, and used or absorbed. Since we are still early in the social media revolution, it would be premature to draw any conclusion about the way the Indonesian story is being mediated. All one can say at this stage is that the number of players who are mediating the message has grown exponentially.

The social and political environment in which the media operate could not be more conducive. Indonesia today can boast of having the freest press regime in Southeast Asia and one of the freest in East Asia, comparable to Japan and South Korea. One of the first things President B. J. Habibie did when he assumed office in May 1998 was to end all forms of government controls over the media. Indonesia has never looked back since.

Subsequently, the constitution was amended to guarantee many freedoms, including the most important of all: freedom of expression. Parliament followed with a new press law in 1999, a new broadcasting law in 2002, and a cyber law in 2008. A bonus for journalists came in the form of a law on public access to information, the Indonesian version of the U.S. Freedom of Information Act, in 2008. There are still limitations to press freedom, however, such as laws dealing with pornography, defamation (categorized as a crime), and blasphemy. And the freedoms accorded to journalists are not extended to ordinary people; several people have gone to jail for posting materials on the Internet.

Intimidation of journalists and other media actors still happens from time to time, not from the government, but from radical groups and powerful politicians and businesspeople. Although the press law offers mediation and legal recourse to address complaints, some people prefer to use force and intimidation against the media. Government censorship may be a thing of the past, but the press today must contend with new types of bullies.

Media workers, now empowered with legislation that supports rather than hinders their work, are enhancing their professionalism. Various journalist organizations operating in different platforms—print, broadcasting, and digital—have developed a common professional code of ethics. Today, self-regulation, rather than government regulation, prevails. The Press Council, which represents the journalism profession, the media publishers, and the public, mediates disputes filed by members of the public against media outlets. Journalist organizations actively promote more ethical journalism and punish those who breach the professional codes of ethics.

The biggest threat to press freedom today comes from an unlikely quarter: the owners of the media, especially now with the growing concentration of ownership as media becomes a big business. The 2014 election was a watershed as media outlets owned by powerful businesspeople or politicians openly and blatantly campaigned on their behalf. Previously, their editors had been able to keep owners at bay and ran their organizations independently and professionally. That ended in 2014.

If there is one thing that the nation's oligarchs have learned about democracy, it is that control of the big media outlets could help them win elections. Fortunately, the big media outlets were divided over which party to support during the 2014 elections. The big media outlets virtually canceled each other out to neutralize any influence their reporting had over voters. In the end, the partisan media became the biggest losers, as their credibility in the eyes of the public suffered; some did not even win the elections for their bosses. Although the elections are over, these media outlets continue to be identified as representing their owners' political interests.

The biggest neutralizing factor of the increasingly partisan media landscape has been the rise of the Internet. While the big media outlets have all moved and invested heavily in their digital versions, they learn soon enough that they are not the only players in the business of disseminating news and information. They have to compete against online news start-ups, bloggers, and citizen journalists. The growth of social media multiplied the number of players many times over as Indonesians actively post their news and views or share them among their expanding circles of friends. Many of them may not necessarily practice journalism, and they are not subject to the rules and ethics governing the profession, but they compete for the time and attention of the same audience. It is wrong to underestimate their role. They are making a big difference in the way Indonesians produce, disseminate, receive, and absorb news and stories.

Despite the explosion in the number of players in the traditional and new media, only a few are known to have the global audience in mind. Two daily newspapers publish in English: *The Jakarta Post* and *Jakarta Globe*. Both have online versions that allow them to reach a much wider global audience. A number of TV stations run limited English programs. Some Indonesians blog in English, and others post messages in their social media in English.

But their number is still too small to mediate the Indonesian message to the world. For now, news and stories on Indonesia and its rise on the global stage are told mostly by the small band of foreign journalists residing in Jakarta who are reporting from Indonesia and by foreign scholars who dedicate their study to Indonesia. Although they are doing as good a job as can be expected, their number is declining. Major American and European media outlets are cutting back on international news reporting for financial reasons, creating an even bigger vacuum. In the early years of Indonesia's democratic transition, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and CNN all had correspondents in Jakarta to report on the changes. They have since pulled out or been reassigned to China and India for the bigger stories. And fewer foreign scholars are taking an interest in Indonesia as area studies lose their appeal globally.

The near absence of Indonesians mediating their own message is clearly felt in the number of books on Indonesia by Indonesians that are published in English. Many Indonesian Muslim scholars, including former presidents Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid (both have since passed away) as well as Azyumardi Azra and Din Sjamsuddin, have impressed audiences in conference appearances whenever they talked about Islam in Indonesia in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. They showed a different picture of Islam, more moderate and tolerant than commonly found in the religion's birthplace in the Middle East. But when asked for books or articles they published, most likely they would have come up with a short list, in English.

When the Arab Spring started in 2011, many in the Arab world and the West turned to Indonesia for lessons learned of how the largest Muslim-majority country in the world made the transition to democracy. They were disappointed at the short list of literature. The same thing happened after the tsunami hit Fukushima in Japan in 2011. Many scrambled for books on lessons learned and on how Indonesia had rebuilt Aceh after the earthquake and tsunami in 2004. They, too, were disappointed.

It is clear that Indonesians need to start mediating their own message. The political and social environments are already conducive in creating the necessary landscape for a vibrant media. What is still lacking is Indonesia's ability or desire to tell its own story. Mastery of languages and communication skills, including storytelling, could be the answer.

The Challenges of Mediating the Message in Indonesia

Mediating the message in Indonesia more effectively involves overcoming two basic hurdles. First is mastery of language. And second is mastering effective communication skills or journalism—particularly in telling stories, not only to the home audience but, more important, to the global audience.

Language is a barrier not only in reaching out to the global community but also at home. Indonesia is home to more than 700 languages. While Indonesians have agreed on a common unifying language, most people, especially in rural areas, still speak their respective local tongues. This complicates the work of the media, particularly in print and television sectors. How do you reach out to the people when they effectively speak different languages?

The nation's founding fathers made an important decision in 1928, 17 years before they won independence from Dutch colonial rulers. They decided on Melayu, which for centuries was the lingua franca for people plying the inter-island trade in much of the archipelago, as the national language. They called it the Indonesian language in what later came to be known as Youth Pledge Day (One Nation: Indonesia, One Country: Indonesia, One Language: Indonesia). The language issue was a major concession that the dominant Javanese ethnic group made. They could have insisted on their language. After independence, Indonesian became the language spoken in government, in schools, and in the national media, although most people continue to speak their own local languages.

Historians agree that the political decision on one unifying language was crucial for a nation with diverse ethnic and linguistic groups. While it helped to forge a common national identity, it is an evolutionary process that takes time. More Indonesians today speak the national language than when Indonesia became an independent nation in 1945 since people grow up with it, speak it at school and at work. But many revert to their local language as soon as they return home. Almost every Indonesian today is bilingual, and the national language for many is not their first.

Compared with China and India, which have histories going back millennia, Indonesia is a young nation with its known recorded history dating back only a few hundred years to the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of the eighth century. Even the name Indonesia was a political invention of the early 20th century that became a rallying point as people in the various islands in the archipelago ruled by the Dutch

East Indies fought for independence. Language became an important unifying factor, but it has also made effective communication that much more difficult. For most Indonesians, it means having to learn a completely new language.

Any newspaper publisher will claim that poor reading habits among Indonesians is one of the major factors explaining why they aren't selling more copies. Indonesia's largest selling daily, *Kompas*, sells between 400,000 and 500,000 copies a day nationwide—a small circulation for a newspaper in a country with more than 250 million people. TV networks are in a much better position, but the media liberalization after 1998 saw the rise of many new local TV stations serving their own communities, and some using their own languages.

Reaching out to the audience is only half of the story. The other half is mediating and crafting the message itself, particularly in writing skills. Language talent, whether Indonesian or foreign, is in short supply. Major newspapers have difficulties recruiting young college graduates with the most basic writing skills. They go to considerable lengths in training them to write. This is changing with the freedom that encourages creativity and energy and with the Internet, which has raised the number of players mediating the message. Indonesians are increasingly telling their own stories in ways never seen before and reaching out to more audiences at home.

The next target is the global audience, and this requires mastery of English and other major foreign languages. Ironically, the staunchly anticommunist Suharto regime banned the use of Chinese language for more than 30 years, so many ethnic Chinese Indonesians grew up never learning or speaking the language of their ancestors. Now, with the rise of China as a global economic power, young Indonesians are scrambling to learn the language.

In addition to mastering languages, Indonesia needs to address its shortcoming in communicating messages more effectively, in telling stories. In the media profession, this means more training for journalists to meet international standards.

Journalism is evolving with the changing social and political environments, but not as rapidly as it should. The explosion in print publications and broadcasters after Indonesia liberalized the media sector has not been accompanied by a corresponding growth of journalism schools. Most media institutions run their own training facilities, often at the risk of having their most skilled and trained journalists being poached by competitors.

The shortage of skilled and experienced journalists has meant putting junior journalists with little experience in charge, with all the consequences for bad journalism. The increasingly competitive media environment, now more competitive than ever with the Internet, adds pressure on the profession.

The Press Council, which deals with public complaints, sees more than 500 cases each year; many are legitimate grievances from people being poorly treated or portrayed by the media. The Council does not have executive power and only recommends errant media to redress the complaints, such as issuing a public apology and giving victims their right of reply in the media as required under the press

law. There are also journalist associations that work to ensure members' compliance with the profession's code of ethics. And one or two media outlets have created their own ombudsman to deal with unprofessional journalism practices by their staffers.

The media sector needs to do more to improve the standard of journalism in Indonesia to be able to mediate its message more effectively—first at home, and later to the global community, which is even more critical and demanding when it comes to standards.

Conclusion

Indonesia's rise on the global stage has been eclipsed by the more spectacular rises of China and India. This is not simply because Indonesia is a distant third compared with the two Asian giants. The larger problem Indonesia faces is its inability to tell its own story to the world. The story of Indonesia is mediated almost entirely by non-Indonesian journalists and scholars.

Moving forward, as Indonesia rises and begins to assert itself globally commensurate with its size as the world's fourth most populous nation and its own aspirations to be a major global player, the media in Indonesia need to formulate an effective strategy. Understandably, they have been preoccupied in getting their message to the home audience, but soon they need to start addressing the international crowd as well.

Some media players are rising to the challenge, capitalizing on Internet technology to widen their reach. But the number of media outlets, journalists, and authors or scholars who can help mediate the Indonesian story is still too small.

The social and political environments that have evolved under an increasingly democratic Indonesia are already conducive for the development of a more vibrant media sector now filled with many more players, including many nonjournalists. Media organizations are struggling with the intrusion of big corporate owners into the newsrooms' operations. At the micro level, the individuals and their routines, there needs to be more effort to improve their language mastery and journalism skills.

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