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No. 14 – 11 November 2022

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## **G20 Leaders' Summit 2022: Making the World a Better and Safer Place**

By  
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The 17<sup>th</sup> G20 Heads of State and Government Summit to be held on 15 to 16 November, 2022, at Nusa Dua on the idyllic island of Bali, with the theme, 'Recover Together, Recover Stronger' seems to offer some optimism and hope for a very troubled world. This summit, under the Presidency of Indonesia, also referred to as the G20 Leaders' Summit 2022, is to be held at a time when the world is going through a gradual recovery of COVID-19 pandemic that wrought economic and social havoc to countries around the globe (including international trade, health and education), and which, at the same time, is also experiencing many other events such as the Russian-Ukrainian war and its fallout that has added pressures to global energy and food supplies, the rising geopolitical, economic and military tensions in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as the developments over Taiwan as a result of the visit by the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2022. This has been further aggravated by the UK Trade Minister Greg Hands's visit to Taiwan earlier this week.

The Group of Twenty or commonly referred to as G20, was formed in 1999 to serve as a forum to discuss global issues, principally related to the economy, such as financial stability, trade policies and sustainability. The group, which meets annually, is made up of 19 member nations and a regional economic bloc of the European Union, with the G20 Leaders' Summit as the culmination to the year's meetings, and which is usually attended by heads of states and governments. The G20 Leaders' Summit 2022 will focus on three pillars, namely Global Health Architecture, Sustainable Energy Transition and Digital Transformation.

It must be mentioned that Indonesia has been assiduously preparing for the G20 Leaders' Summit 2022 since its presidency was announced at the G20 Leaders' Summit 2020 held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from 21 to 22 November, 2020, and the handover procession of the G20 Leaders' Summit 2021 held in Rome, Italy from 30 to 31 October, 2021. As a run up to the G20 Leaders' Summit 2022, more than a 100 meetings have been held at major cities throughout Indonesia, including those at the Ministerial and Central Banks Governors, deputy and working

levels. Indonesia also succeeded in gathering the Foreign Ministers of all the 20 largest economies in Bali on 7 to 8 July 2022.

As a way of ensuring the success of the Leaders' Summit and securing the attendance of leaders of states and governments, Indonesia's President Joko Widodo has been and continues to play a pivotal leadership role. It therefore comes as no surprise when he personally announced in May, that Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin will both be attending the summit. As for the former, it should be noted that Xi Jinping, only recently secured an unprecedented third term as President of the Republic of China. As for the latter, Indonesia has faced tremendous pressure from Western nations to withdraw its invitation to Vladimir Putin over his country's invasion of Ukraine, which he has termed 'as a special military operation', and which he mistakenly calculated, will be a swift and decisive one.

It must be stated that like other world leaders such as French President Emmanuel Macron and Türkiye President Recep Erdoğan, Joko Widodo has also sought to champion the role as a mediator of the war between Russia and Ukraine. He travelled not long ago to meet Vladimir Putin and President of Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky in their respective capitals, Moscow and Kyiv, to find solutions to end the war between them, as well as seek ways to alleviate the challenges of global energy and food supplies aggravated by the war. Volodymyr Zelensky has been invited by Joko Widodo as a guest to the Leaders' Summit.

It indeed came as welcome news when Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi announced on 13th October that all leaders of G20 nations were likely to attend the G20 Leaders' Summit 2022. That optimism has perhaps been affected somewhat with developments over the last couple of days with new announcements being made that Vladimir Putin would not attend in person but would join in virtually. He will be represented by his Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Similarly, Volodymyr Zelensky is also expected to join in virtually.

However, expected at the G20 Leaders' Summit 2022 is United States President Joe Biden. Another will be the recently elected Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, despite reservations expressed by his predecessor Scott Morrison over sitting on the same table as Vladimir Putin because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. So is the expected presence of all other leaders of the G20.

Unfortunately, the G20 Leaders' Summit 2022 will be losing an opportunity for Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin to meet in person since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the imposition of sanctions on Russia by the United States, other G20 members such as Australia, Japan and South Korea, as well as the European Union countries, largely at the behest of the United States. China has refrained from condemning the Russian invasion and has not imposed any sanctions to punish Russia.

The G20 Leaders' Summit 2022 will be significant in terms of Joe Biden meeting face-to-face with Xi Jinping amid the rising geopolitical and military tensions between their nations in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as the recent political developments and military exercises by China around Taiwan. It is said that a meeting between the two leaders is being planned on the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit 2022, which is expected to include Taiwan and trade issues.

Similarly, the presence and meeting face-to-face with Xi Jinping of the leaders of the QUAD nations of India, Japan and Australia, other than that of the United States, which has been set

up as a response to the growing economic and military build-up in the Indo-Pacific region, will also be an interesting one. So will be the presence of the newly appointed Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Rishi Sunak who assumed his responsibilities on 25th October 2022 and whose country is also a member of AUKUS, other than the United States and Australia, and which the pact also has on its radar, the recent developments in the Indo-Pacific region. The newly minted leader will also come face-to-face for the first time with Xi Jinping, as well as with many other leaders of the world.

It is also possible that there could be other bilateral or multilateral meetings between other state and government leaders on the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit 2022, potentially contributing to a greater understanding amongst them, in addition to finding common ground to address the many political, economic, geopolitical and military tensions that are being experienced between nations, and for that matter, regionally or globally.

Come 15 to 16 November, and if all goes according to plan, Indonesia, under the stewardship of Joko Widodo, could certainly pride itself as not only having successfully hosted the G20 Leaders' Summit 2022 and lived up to its expectations, with the presence of almost all heads of states and governments of the G20 nations in these challenging times, but more than that, has been able to provide a platform and opportunity to go beyond the stated agenda of the summit and making the world a better and safer place. If it successfully does that, and all indications are that it surely will, Indonesia would have set a high bar for India, which assumes the Presidency of G20 from December 2022, and thereby becomes the host country for the 18th G20 Heads of State and Government next year.

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