

Ibas Yudhoyono at UPNVJ: "Build Bridges, Not Walls" in Global Diplomacy

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UPNVJ Public Relations - Veteran National Development University Jakarta (UPNVJ) once again welcomed a national figure to a meaningful academic celebration. Dr. Edhie Baskoro Yudhoyono, B.Com., M.Sc., or Ibas, as he is familiarly known, as the Deputy Chairman of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (MPR RI), was present as the Keynote Speaker at INTRAFEST 2025, which is part of a series of celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the UPNVJ International Relations Study Program.

The event, themed "Leveraging Cultural Values through Global Community Networks to Strengthen International Ties and Promote Positive Engagement among Nations," served as a forum for reflection and inspiration for the academic community in strengthening the role of culture as a bridge for global diplomacy.

In his keynote speech, entitled "From Culture to the World: Building Bridges of Friendship Between Nations," Ibas emphasized the importance of cultural *diplomacy* as an effective form of *soft power* in strengthening international relations. He invited students to understand the history of Indonesian diplomacy, which is rooted in the principle of *freedom and activity*, a noble value that affirms the nation's courage to side with world peace. "President SBY often said *a million friends and zero enemies*. We want a million friends and no enemies. Our diplomacy must be the solution," he stressed.

Furthermore, Ibas highlighted the transformation of diplomacy in the digital era, which demands that the younger generation adapt to global change. He argued that today's diplomacy takes place not only in meeting rooms or conference rooms, but also in digital spaces that bring together ideas, cultures, and collaboration between nations.

"Things like seminars, forums, *group discussions*, conferences, meeting rooms, and study spaces are ways we share ideas, and we translate those ideas into policies and programs that will ultimately be useful for us. This era also marks the birth of modern diplomacy in Indonesia, one that is biological, open, and oriented toward cooperation," he said.

As a representation of the spirit of National Defense and global *citizenship*, Ibas also appreciated UPNVJ's role in shaping the character of patriotic yet globally minded students. He emphasized that education is Indonesia's strongest *soft power* to penetrate international boundaries. "There is no other power greater than the power of education and collaboration. From campuses like UPNVJ, future diplomats are born who build intellectual bridges between Indonesia and the world," Ibas said, greeted by enthusiastic applause from the audience.

In addition to highlighting the diplomatic aspect, Ibas also emphasized the importance of preserving local culture as a national strength. He cited various Indonesian cultural heritages, such as batik, angklung, wayang, and the Ponorogo reog, which have been recognized by UNESCO as symbols of national uniqueness and identity.

"Culture is Indonesia's face in the eyes of the world. From batik to reog, everything is our universal language for conveying messages of peace and togetherness," he said. Closing the session, Ibas advised the International Relations students to continue being ambassadors of the nation, carrying Indonesia's noble values on the global stage.

"Great diplomacy isn't about who speaks the loudest, but who listens the most sincerely. Let's build bridges, not walls," he said passionately.

Ibas' presence at *INTRAFEST 2025* marked a significant milestone, solidifying UPNVJ's position as a National Defense campus actively involved in developing students' global character. Through its theme and message, the event not only celebrated the 25th anniversary of the International Relations Study Program but also reaffirmed its commitment to making culture a pivot for diplomacy and world peace.

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