

Australia's Policy in Rebuilding Relations With Indonesia After East-Timor

Independence (1998-2006)

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Abstract

The relations between Australia-Indonesia has been overshadowed by several misunderstandings in which distrust and confusion creating the turbulence in its bilateral relations. One of the peak problems occurred when Australia change their position towards East Timor. Indonesia seen the support of Australia to East Timor as the act of betrayal which at first a very supportive friend. In consequences, several agreement and joint cooperation in governmental level had postponed making Australia's Interest in Indonesia is in danger. It made repairing the relations become paramount important and should be done as soon as possible. To that extent, through the framework of bottom-up CBMs reengage with Indonesia could be more effective. In which the efforts of government can work along with the role of society. Those efforts aim to build confidence and gaining trust in making the countries bilateral relations better. Thus, this paper would examine the implementation on bottom-up CBMs which can be seen through the humanitarian aid in health, diasater relief, education and cultural exchange given to Indonesia.

Key Words: Bottom-up Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), Conflict Resolutions, Track Two diplomacy, humanitarian aid.

Introduction

Australia-Indonesia relations are ambiguously unstable many problems occurred making a strain in their relations be more complicated. It started from Australia's support towards East-Timor referendum in 1999, creating an inevitable gap with Indonesia. Starting in 1975 and after the resigned of Suharto in May 1998, Australia continuously argued that East-Timor should remain an integral part of the Indonesian Republic (Chalk, 2001). Australia also actively conducts mediations to seek for better solutions in keeping East Timor with Indonesia. Additionally, Australia becomes the only nation that give de facto recognitions to East Timor considered as a part of Indonesia.

However, the peak problems happened in the late 1998 when the role of Indonesian army (TNI) as the one maintaining order and security changing into massacre to some of Timorese people which Australia seen as a breach of human rights (Leaver, 2001). It made Australia gradually changed its position that started in the late 1998. It can be shown from the support of Australia to release Timorese leader Xanana Gusmao from jail and also the sending of peacekeeping troops to East Timor (Leaver, 2001). To that extent, it made the shifting position of Australia resulting mistrust and misunderstanding from Indonesia. Those conditions brought Australia and Indonesia relations are getting worse. The accumulation of event that made Indonesia conclude to declare referendum for East Timor is undeniably based on the Australia's implicitly advice.

As Indonesia also lost trust and confidence with Australia there has to be another alternative that can change people opinion and also brings up the mutual trust. Thus, track two diplomacy might become a starting point because there will be further initiations that can be presumably implemented by Australia. Acting as the last way in rebuilding the relations with Indonesia after their support for making East-Timor independent. Thus, it forced Australia to seek solutions that involve society, less governmental intervention and can re-establish trust and confidence to Indonesia.

Theoretical Framework

1. National Interest Concept in Realism Theory

In the case of Australia-Indonesia relations, Australia interest in Indonesia is in danger. As Australia decided to change its tune in the late 1998, the problems made Australia almost lost its interest in Indonesia. Playing as middle power country, Australia believes that engaging super power and neighbouring country is inevitably crucial (McDougall, 2009). Being the closets neighbouring country in Southeast Asia, Indonesia is a middle point for Australia to maintain security and stability in the region. It is because of the region is very vulnerable to conflicts, showing from the diversity of people and the place for most of developing countries makes Australia should pay attention to its situation.

Furthermore, Indonesia's key role in ASEAN becomes a strategic point for Australia's to extend the links with its members. That will make Australia have broader scope for cooperation in the region. As a result, engaging Indonesia can be

a great way to improve and strengthen regional relations with developing countries. The lack of trust, confidence and understanding that occurred might worsen if Australia did not have a tendency to repair the problems. Thus, it will delay Australia's influence in broader scope as Indonesia plays a paramount role for Australia's power.

2. The Decision-Making Process by William D. Coplin

Before those sceptical perspectives occurred during the time of Malcom Fraser, Bob Hawke, and Paul Keating, focusing on the engagement of Asia become paramount important. It aims to reducing bad opinion towards Asian people by seeking many initiatives. The efforts almost disappeared when John Howard elected as a Prime Minister of Australia in 1996. It can be shown from the vision and mission of Howard that did not involve the idea of "Asia Engagement" (Kelton & Leaver, 1999). Which is resulting the turbulence in its bilateral relations with Indonesia. Decision maing process argued by Coplin has three distinct factors which is domestic politics, economy and military, and International context (Coplin, 1971). Thus, those factors become the basic consideration to find an appropriate strategy in repairing the relations with Indonesia.

Since Australia is uphold the idea of middle power country which means that engaging superpower and its neighbouring country is very important. The turbulence in Indonesia after the case of East Timor made Australia should repair the relations based on the framework of "Good neighbourhood" policy (Kelton & Leaver, 1999). Furthermore, the other factors that should be considered for decision makers are military and economy sectors. In terms of military, Australia believed

that their national interest was in danger. It can be shown from the termination of the AMS agreement after the Australia's involvement in East Timor cases. Indonesia decided to postpone the of joint military exercises between ADF and POLRI. Another thing is economic factor that was also important for decision making. Australia believed to help Indonesia in tackling its economic conditions after the Asia financial crises around 1997 and 1998. It is because the collapse of Indonesia might affect Australia's condition. It makes securing the Australia's national interest in Indonesia should be done as soon as possible.

As distrust and misperception has occurred from Indonesian side towards the Australia's involvement in East Timor case. It forced the Australian decision makers to concern on how to repair its relations with Indonesia. Because of The failure in doing so might threaten their national interest and made Australia have limited power and minimal capacity to involve in Southeast Asia. As a result, the efforts of Australia in repairing the relations became the compulsory agenda after the independence of East Timor. The Australian decision makers through the considerations of military, economy and also its domestic politics believed that repairing the relations can be achieved by using more cooperative method apart from force and coercion. Another thing is that as Indonesia internal conditions is vulnerable the government to government diplomacy is also difficult to conduct. Towards those factors, Australia's efforts in re-engaging Indonesia can be achieved through the form of people to people basis under the idea of bottom-up Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) (Parliament, 2004).

3. Bottom-up Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) Concept

Since the problems of trust and confidence have raised, the combination of CBMs strategy and track two diplomacy became a new initiation to repair countries relationship. Thus, it is resulting the new term of bottom-up CBMs in which the role of government can be work together with the act of society. To that extent, the use bottom-up CBMs can be the most appropriate alternatives to repair Australia-Indonesia relations. In this case government effort, can be running concurrently with the role of society in achieving better relations between countries. As shown that the supports of Australia towards East-Timor independence creating a misunderstanding with Indonesia and putting the countries relations are in danger. Bottom-up CBMs engaging the state relations can be done not only through governmental level but also society making the effort of Australia will be more effective. As a result, it will increase the confidence and result the trust that almost difficult to achieve can be fulfilled. Since formal diplomacy cannot be implemented, the use of bottom-up CBMs became a unique way that might achieve a better condition in building trust and confidence.

4. Soft Power Concept

The intention of Australia in using soft power rather than hard power to Indonesia becomes one of the best way, to re-engage the relations. It is because of soft power is regarded as more co-optive behaviour because of the less commanded behaviour (Nye, 2004). As Indonesia's domestic conditions at that time is very vulnerable, the implementation of hard power such as military, coercion or threat might only create bigger problem and worsen the conditions.

Thus, it made Australia realize using soft power through the form of bottom-up CBMs will be more effective. Since it will be easier to influence the behaviour of other countries during the time of conflicts. Another thing is by implementing soft power concept, it will have less political intervention and likely to be done in more flexible ways (Nye, 2004). To this stance, it can be one of the initiations that can be implemented to repair the relations between countries. As a result, the form of bottom-up CBMs from Australia to Indonesia can be shown from the delivery of foreign aid in several sectors such as health, humanitarian assistance, education and cultural exchange which mostly conducted through NGOs with the basis of people-to-people initiative.

Overview of The Australian Aid to Indonesia

The discontinuance of cooperation in several sectors make Australia take a further step to reengage with Indonesia. The best approach that Australia can give through bottom-up CBMs concept is in terms of humanitarian aid. As stated before that the conditions of Indonesia during 1997-1999 considered to be the dark years for development. Asia Financial crises that hits the country as well as the chaos in its domestic conditions brought Indonesia in the edge of collapse.

Economic assistance become the first program for Australia to Indonesia as the effort to repairing the relations. through the initiations of Australian overseas aid, in which would help Indonesia to restore the overall conditions, helping the continuations of development and promoting the full implementation of democracy (DFAT, 1999). it is because of the instability of Indonesia will be impacted on its

development that can stumbled Australia interest in Indonesia. In response to the Asia Financial crisis, Australia will extend the aid assistance through Southeast Asia and Pacific in 1999-2000 around \$890 million (DFAT, 1999). To Indonesia itself the Australian government decided to extend the fund around \$6 million which made the total fund around \$121 million and the aid continue to increase showing from the table the of Australian Aid overview between 1999-2007 (DFAT, Annual Reports).

The use of Australian Humanitarian aid to Indonesia Through bottom-up CBMs

Since the gap in Australia-Indonesia relations become huge, it puts Australia's interest in danger. The decision in delivering humanitarian aid became the tools of soft power for Australia during the effort to reengage with Indonesia. It is because of alleviating trust, understanding and confidence cannot be done with coercive or hard power. As a result, soft power become one of the way in engaging state to state relations. In addition, Australia also uphold the importance of public diplomacy because of the actions of society also become the key of soft power practice aim to foster the relations with Indonesia. It made the effort from Australia in 1999-2000 giving the aid to reform Indonesian domestic conditions was extended and more focus into three sectors as mentioned above.

In the health aspects, since 2001 Australia has committed to allocated fund in terms of health sector especially in eastern Indonesia. The health initiations include Women's health and family welfare project, preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and STD prevention and care, and improve maternal and neonatal health

and planning services (DFAT, 2000). The fund from government has been distribute by the contacts with people-to-people basis through NGOs. The NGOs can be considered as a bridge and extended hand from government to society. the NGOs plays a role as the one who can directly involve and engage in people to people basis. It can be shown from several Australian NGOs like Caritas Australia and Burnet Institute that have got the allocation of Australian aid for health especially in Eastern Indonesia (DFAT). Those NGOs become the example of delivering aid for health to the hand of Indonesian people. The decision of Australia through the framework of bottom-up CBMs became very important as Indonesia still have difficulties in that sector engaging them through the health become the first steps to gain Indonesia attention.

Secondly, the efforts in reconnecting with Indonesia become more effective starting after the Tsunami Aceh in 2004 through Australia's humanitarian assistance. The tsunami has destroyed a large number of coastal areas in Aceh and numerous islands in the province of North Sumatra. It buried part of the cities of Meulaboh and Banda Aceh which estimated 167,000 people killed in the disaster and more than 500,000 were left homeless (Kitzbichler, 2011). Those events become another opportunity for Australia as Indonesia was urging help from all over the world. As its closet neighbouring country, Australia become one of the biggest donor in giving aid for the post-tsunami situation. It became the other efforts from Australia in regain trust and understanding with Indonesia as their relations has been overshadowed by Australian changing position to support East Timor independence.

It made Australian government extended the fund around \$34.4 million for the reconstructions and helping the people in Aceh in the aspect such as medical team, Medicine, first aid and also the fund for reconstruction in Aceh (DFAT, 2004). Without the help from many NGOs the Australian aid cannot be giving effectively to the society It made during this time Australian government were given around 3.9 million to NGOs (DFAT, 2004). The aid delivered to the five largest NGOs purposing that those NGOs can plays an important role during this time in maximizing the role of people-to-people links. Those NGOs that paramount in that time are Australia Red Cross, CARE Australia, Caritas Australia, Oxfam Australia and World Vision Australia which received some 95% of the total of Australian aid (DFAT, 2004).

Apart from that, on the Society basis the people to people links established between Indonesia and South Australia. Adelaide residents, both Australian and Indonesian, established the Network for Tsunami Aceh Inc (NTAI) to support victims (Sulistiyanto, 2010). NTAI has since been strongly supported by Indonesian students in Australia. NTAI established a learning centre to provide education and cultural activities needed for local children in the disaster area (Inc, n.d.). This initiative was established in cooperation with the Acehnese, particularly postgraduates who received their education through scholarships in Australia. Thus, it become a point for Australia engaging through Indonesian people might change perspective and built better understanding on its bilateral relations. The establishment of NTAI Network that connect people-to-people links Australia-Indonesia through organisation and direct program.

Another thing is, the same efforts has been given during the Bantul Earthquake in Yogyakarta in 2007. prompted Australian citizens from Yogyakarta to collect funds for necessities and construction materials for those immediately affected. The Australian universities consortium (ACICIS) student network played a ‘crucial role in voluntary and humanitarian activities in Yogyakarta’ (Sulistiyanto, 2010). Locals and NGOs in Yogyakarta made the distribution of funds raised by Adelaide residents for families in Pundong village, Bantul district possible by sending aid directly through an Australian expatriate (Sulistiyanto, 2010) . This is indicative of the importance of people-to-people bottom-up initiatives, and the impact Australian educated Indonesians and Australians with Indonesian connections can have in fostering a culture of trust.

It makes education, in the form of cultural exchanges and language education, remains a key CBM with both past success and future potential. Through the initiations of Dewan Jembatan (bridging council) several efforts have initiated aims to repair the relations to Indonesia. Such as the teaching of Indonesian language in Australia and the establishment of Australia-Indonesia Institutions (AII) which can be as a bridge for two countries in deepening their understanding.

➤ The teaching of Indonesian Language in Australia

The reengagement of Australia throughout education and cultural exchange became very important. As the turbulence after supporting East-Timor Independence one of the way in reconnecting with Indonesia is through its culture and implemented in educational system. It can be start from the teaching of Indonesian language education in Australia that already began in 1955

(Government, 2010). It is based on the reasons that the closer link in societies would be easily to establish if Australian can be learning the language which increase the value and pride of Indonesia. It also will make Australia have more positive attitude towards Indonesia which can reduce the tension in its bilateral relations.

The introduction on Indonesian language become one of the promotion of culture through educations. As it is the implementation of soft power that using culture such as language in seeking common interest. Furthermore, the implementation in some of primary, secondary school and university through government decision would bring the Australians students has common interest with Indonesia. In which making Australians known deeper about Indonesia through its language. Through the ACICIS program this language education has create several exchange programs for Australian to studying and interact directly with Indonesian by using Bahasa that has been taught in their schools in Australia. the teaching of this language also encourages the government to extend the programs by inviting an Indonesian teacher and the collaboration of teaching between Australians teach which make it possible in nurturing trust in a very grassroots level.

➤ The Initiations of Australia-Indonesia Institute (AII)

The improvement and effort from Australian government in rebuilding its relations with Indonesia can be shown through the establishment of Australia-Indonesia Initiatives (AII). AII aims to promote greater trust and understanding with Indonesia by enlarging the role of diplomacy in societies (DFAT, n.d.). This include the promotion of Indonesian traditional culture. It is also as a place to know deepest

Australia and Indonesia by providing the expert coming from both countries. on AII initiations which is in the terms of Media, Art and Culture and also student exchange on the religion basis. It aims to underlining the importance on people-to-people links between Australia-Indonesia.

Media sectors plays an important role in shaping people opinion, in which the exaggerating news might create misunderstanding towards others. The case of East Timor Indonesians has many suspicious assumption towards Australia that their effort wanted to makes Indonesia disintegrate which spread through several Indonesian news. The prominence people in this media is Gunawan Mohamad and David Malouf whom an influencer journalist which conducted a collaboration which can be a bridge to prevent misunderstanding both from Australia and Indonesia side (Mackie, 2006) . In addition, there are several programs held by AII in terms to repair the relations with Indonesia. such as in 2000 the collaborative training between Professor Nurcholish Madjid, Professor Virginia Hooker and Mr Yudi Latif (DFAT, 2000) .

Another thing is, in 2004 AII also initiated the program known as Journalist Fellowship Program (JFP) (DFAT, 2004). It provides four fellowships per year to allow Australian and Indonesian journalists to travel to the other country in order to research and write stories. In addition to increasing the range of reporting on each country in the other, it is envisaged that these visits will expand journalistic linkages and contacts and improve the familiarity and knowledge of current issues in each country.

In terms of culture, understanding culture can be a gate to alleviate confidence for Indonesia. as Indonesia, famous with its diversity promoting it to increase understanding among Australians would be very crucial. it can be shown in the 1999 the art exhibitions hosted at the Queensland Art Gallery invited several Indonesian artists such as Dadang Christianto, S. Teddy D, Nia Fliam, Agus Ismoyo, Mella Jaarsma, Moelyono and Tisna Sanjaya and included curators Dr. Dwi Marianto and Jim Supangkat. the project aims to introduce Australian audiences to a sophisticated and creative Indonesian traditional culture and society (DFAT, 2000).

On 2003 the project known as Bali Eye on Indonesia, this publication will be showing the work of the work of Indonesian photographers, graphic designers and artists, and highlights the work of the Foundation in providing treatment to people suffering from blindness and visual impairment. Funds raised from the sale of the book will contribute to the Memorial Community Eye Centre, established as part of the medical assistance package provided to the people of Bali by the Australian Government following the tragic bombings of 12 October 2002 (DFAT, 2004).

➤ Students and Teacher Exchange

Students mobility become one of the paramount aspect on the implementation of bottom-up CBMs. Under AII there were many improvement on students exchange since 1999. It can be shown in 1999 through the program of The Australia Indonesia Youth Exchange Program (AIYEP) (DFAT, 2000). The Australian Studies program included support of the Australian Studies Centre at the

University of Indonesia, an Australian Lecture Series and linkages through the Australian Alumni Association of Indonesia (IKAMA) (DFAT, 2000).

Secondly, support for the Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian Studies (ACICIS). The implementation on Indonesian language in Australia makes ACICIS play an important role as a practice of Indonesian language by several programs. It can be seen between 1995 and 1999 the ACICIS project assisted 350 Australian students to undertake a range of tertiary-level one and two semester programs of Indonesian language and cultural studies in Indonesia in collaboration with Indonesian universities (DFAT, 2000).

AII also established the program known as Professional Development Teacher Exchange. It is encouraging for Australian primary school teachers to study Indonesian language and culture. The purpose of this program is to provide professional development training for teachers from both countries, to improve their language skills, to expose them to stimulating ideas and genuine experiences of life in each other's country as well as to encourage long-term personal and institutional contacts (DFAT, 2001). In 2003 AII initiated the Australia-Indonesia Muslim Exchange Program. The aim of these visits is to develop greater understanding within Australia of the moderate nature of mainstream Islam in Indonesia and better understanding within Indonesia of Australia's tolerant, multicultural society (DFAT, 2004).

The Outcome of Australia's Bottom-up CBMs Strategy to Indonesia

As Indonesia experienced several insecurities in the country, the efforts on regaining trust and understanding can be a way to increase the new perspective of Australia. The efforts in promoting its culture, student exchange and also humanitarian assistance brought Australia-Indonesia relations to a new phase. It can be seen that Indonesia decided to fully open up the cooperation which has been very limited during the time of Australia's changing position on East Timor case.

The efforts of Australian government through the implementations of bottom-up CBMs can be seen from several actions that made Indonesia decided to re-open the cooperation. It started when Indonesia under the era of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) shows the significance in governmental relations resulting a positive sign. Those achievements were supported due to Indonesia already recovered from the Asian financial crises and the fully implementation on democracy lead to the peaceful conditions all over the country.

Since 2002, the efforts of Australia already show the positive results from Indonesia, however those activities still placed in very limited scoop. It can be shown after the first Bali bombing, there were a join cooperation between ADF and POLRI which aims to dismantle the identity of the bomber (DFAT, 2003). As the treaty of AMS has been terminated due to Australia's involvement in East Timor case, this event was not spontaneously making Indonesia agree to continue the agreement. However, it became an evidence that Indonesia gradually start to re-trust Australia in giving assistance in the matters of counter terrorism.

Three years later, Indonesia shows more positive attitude towards Australia in another aspect. As Australia initiated the ASEAN-East Asia Summit (AEAS) 2005 Indonesia become one of the country that attend those events (DFAT, 2005). However, this event was not fully attend by Indonesia because of their relations was fully repaired. As Indonesia become the member of ASEAN, every decision made under that regional cooperation should obliged by its member state including Indonesia. Unfortunately, there were not any cooperation concluded directly between Australia and Indonesia during this meeting. But it can be said that Australia's efforts in rebuilding the relations through bottom-up CBMs might results a better intention from Indonesian side.

After the cooperation in Bali bombing and the meetings on AEAS, Indonesia started to have positive actions with Australia. It can be shown from the issue of Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership with Australia to further strengthen their economic and security cooperation, build on people-to-people links and collaborate in the region considered as a partial improvement in governmental level (Richardson, 2005). The important sign on the fully repairmen of Australia relations with Indonesia showing from the continuations of AMS agreement that have been stuck for several years. In 2006 Indonesia finally agree to examine further the AMS treaty which extended to offer more sophisticated program. The AMS was renegotiated and resulting the new security cooperation known as Lombok Treaty which become one of the initiations indicate that Indonesia already open up the relations after Australia involvement in East Timor in governmental level.

It made the role of bottom-up CBMs plays an important role in helping Australia's effort re-engage with Indonesia. The effort of Australian aid through Indonesia bring a new phase in their bilateral relations. Towards that efforts, Australia can secure the three most important Australia's interest which is security, establishing a conducive situation and secure their bridge to Southeast Asia in spreading the hegemony (Chalk, 2001).

Conclusion

It is a common knowledge that there were many issues in Australia-Indonesia relations. Starting from 1975 when Australia involved in the East Timor case especially after the Balibo tragedy. However, at this stage Australia still declared to be on the side of Indonesia by acknowledge East Timor as an integral part of Indonesia. The contestation happened in late 1998 when the Santa Cruz Massacre Australia start to consider its position. Furthermore, at the same time Indonesia was hit by Asia financial crises, the chaos in its domestic conditions and governmental transitions made the East Timor problems seem neglected. This chance used by Australia to interfere through the suggestion of East Timor liberation. The dispatch of John Howard letter which urging the act of self-determination and the referendum decision for East Timor resulting misconception from Indonesia.

The Australia's changing positions resulting distrust and misunderstanding from Indonesia side. It became a problem since Indonesia started to postpone several cooperation that might threaten Australia's interest in Indonesia. To that extent, it need a further cooperation on how Australia would repair the relations

with Indonesia. Through the decision-making process, the government decided to use soft power by the implementation of bottom-up CBMs. In which bottom-up CBMs underlining the role of society and less governmental intervention as a way to reengage relations with Indonesia. The approach aims to build trust, confidence and also reduce the tension. As The bottom-up CBMs has implemented through the foreign aid and the role of people-to-people basis that implemented in several sectors resulting a positive improvement in Australia-Indonesia relations. Thus, it made the bottom-up CBMs approaches might still be an effective strategy for Australia to secure their interest in Indonesia and preventing any problem escalations during the time of peace.

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