

CHAPTER IV
BEYOND THE ESTBALISHMENT OF INFORMATION RESOURCE
CENTER (IRC) IN INDONESIA

In this chapter the writer will describe about the flow of negative perceptions coming from Indonesian citizens toward The United States. The United States existence in Indonesia become famous after it started its comprehensive partnership with Indonesia. Indonesian citizens, known as moslem majority country, have contradictive thought with Western thought, especially The United States. That triggers Indonesian citizens to have negative perception toward The United States, and further, it will affect another United States mission toward Indonesia. This chapter will also describe how The United States respond toward negative perceptions coming from Indonesian citizens by the establishment of Information Resource Center or IRC, which serves as The United States cultural diplomacy to shape or build positive perceptions among Indonesian citizens toward The United States.

A. The Belief system in Indonesia

Indonesia is a democratic country which ideology is based on *Pancasila* and the tagline *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* which means Unity in Diversity. Since, Indonesia is moslem majority country, the thought of Islam stongly influential in Indonesia. And become foundation of life. It guides the citizens to socialize each other.

In their daily life, their actions are mostly related to the values of Islam in which the principle of respect is important in building the relationship among humans, regardless of their identity. Universalism is more appropriate in shaping and building prosperity in a nation rather than unilateralism. First, in reaching the purpose, cooperation is needed in order to give benefits to one and other, the most effective way in having, but then cooperation as inclusive though could not be done in all terms, cooperation must be designed in form of good things, not in a bad thing. Second, peaceful also could be reached by respecting other privacy, without attempting to intervene others. It means that people have to keep any relationship which having good purposes and as the opposite, to stop any relationship having conduct bad purposes. Third, stand for independence, means in having relationship, the actor have to stand through its independence dignity without taking or even rub others independence. There is also a social term which commonly known that is, it is better to give rather than getting something, reflecting that in having relationship, people have to understand that giving is a good thing, especially giving beyond nothing, cause if people give something in order to get something, it is just alibi that consider to contradicted with values conduct in Indonesian citizens belief. Fourth, stand for justice while interact with others, it is not only in term of quantitative dimension, but also in qualitative dimension, cause justice not only depend on political power or law mechanism but also, justice determined by the true universalism tradition. Fifth, equality among people, without any classes or

discrimination, when every single person have the same right (Surwandono & Ahmadi, 2011). Sixth, being responsible for every single thing that people did and also participating in reaching worldwide peaceful, cause if the relationship started by respecting others dignity and prestige of human, at the end it will decreasing the trigger of conflict.

Therefore those Indonesian idealism is contradicts with American thought especially the ideas of liberalism and also realism which are identical with The United States's identity. Liberalism is stubborn and does not learn from the mistakes of the past or history. Despite its relativism, it is very aggressive and an anti for tolerance or can be called as extremely intolerant, alternating savage attacks with silent contempt (Kuehnelt-Leddihn, 1997). The other thoughts are the use of power in order to reach certain purposes, cooperation is used in order to completing the mission no matter whether it is good or bad. Self freedom without certain limitation which means that everyone can do anything as well as it is not violating the others. Moreover, in realism, it shapes social gap or level, in which people are separated based on living level. It absolutely exploits one each other.

Those contradictive thought between Indonesian citizens and the existence of The United States in Indonesia trigger them to speak up by having negative perceptions. (Regarding to Holsti,1983) the theory of perception by Ole R. Holsti, this is how information comes up, which is continued by the appearance of perceptions that emerged based on the belief system.

B. Indonesian citizens negative perceptions toward The United States

Represented by The United States embassy and consulate general, The United States accentuates its existence in Indonesia. Its bilateral relationship with Indonesia is improving year by year converging various aspects, such as civil society, instruction, security, atmosphere, oceanic, vitality, and exchange issues, among others. It made The United States frequently heard by Indonesian citizens, time by time they also heard what The United States did outside and inside Indonesia. Such as war against Islamic countries, monopoly on Indonesian natural resources in Papua and others area. Those cases trigger Indonesian citizens to have negative perceptions toward The United States.

Those negative perceptions escalate into actions when The United States keeps working on it. Public protests directly in front of Embassy and Consulate General, refusing of The United States presidential visit to Indonesia. The protest also spread thorough online of offline media which shows public disagreement with The United States. This is what the theory explain based on aforementioned discussion it is seen how the information changed into perceptions in term of an action.

These are several statements mentioned by Indonesian citizens toward The United States. Azyumardi Azra as rector of a university in Indonesia stated that “The United States government always lectures people in developing countries like Indonesia to be democratic, to uphold democratic ideals, to uphold human rights and tolerance. But at the same time they do different things which are contradictory to

democracy. In terms of image and in terms of perception among the Indonesian people, the American government has lost its credibility to talk about democracy.” Richard Lugar as The Senate Foreign Relations Committee stated that by virtue of its size and location, a stable, united, and prosperous Indonesia is critical to Asia and the world. An unstable Indonesia would adversely affect U.S. security, strategic, regional, and economic interests and objectives in Southeast Asia. However, since Sept. 11, 2001, The United States efforts to fight the war on terror have led to an increase in anti-Americanism among Muslims. As a result, there is an unfavorable public perception of the United States in Indonesia, and these negative perceptions can cause serious problems. Anti-American sentiment has allowed Islamic extremists and their supporters to justify terrorist actions. Even though President Bush has repeatedly assured the Muslim world that the war on terror is not a war on Islam, Indonesian Muslims still feel threatened. These negative perceptions have created tensions within The United States and Indonesia relations (Kay, 2005).

C. Information Resource Center process in build positive perception among Indonesian citizens

The United States under Barrack Obama administration was tend to use soft power rather than hard power or military use in performing its diplomacy. Regarding the negative perceptions about The United States shout out by Indonesian citizens, there are several response from The United States to react over it. By establishing Information Resource Center or IRC in Indonesia, located in two areas, Jakarta and

Surabaya with the main target that is influencing Indonesian citizens thought to have positive perceptions about The United States.

The United States has achieved several accomplishment in persuading Indonesian citizens to have positive perceptions toward The United States itself, even it is not on all Indonesian citizens thought. Taking for example, as one of Information Resource Center working area which is providing information about The United States by giving a real living experience in The United States, this is what comes up from East Java Vice Governor, Syaifullah Yusuf who commonly called as Gus Ipul, he stated that "The democratic process in The United States can be inspiring other countries".

"This model of democracy in the land of Uncle Sam could be a model and inspiration for many countries. Indonesia and the United States alike believe democracy is the best path for the welfare of the people. Democracy is the way to solve the problem and differences. To that end, the election process is underway in the US this time, a part of the democratic process for the people and should be respected. Democracy in the United States as a model and inspiration for many countries. Which no matter how hard the competition, the final outcome will be determined in the ballot or voting. I strongly welcome the democratic process. This system was set up two years ago to ensure that each state has a voice in the election. The system also provides an opportunity for small states to have a voice or power".

The writer also provides the data that reflects how Indonesian citizens perceive The United States. The data describe favorable and unfavorable percentage of countries toward The United States, and Indonesia is one of them.

Table 4.1

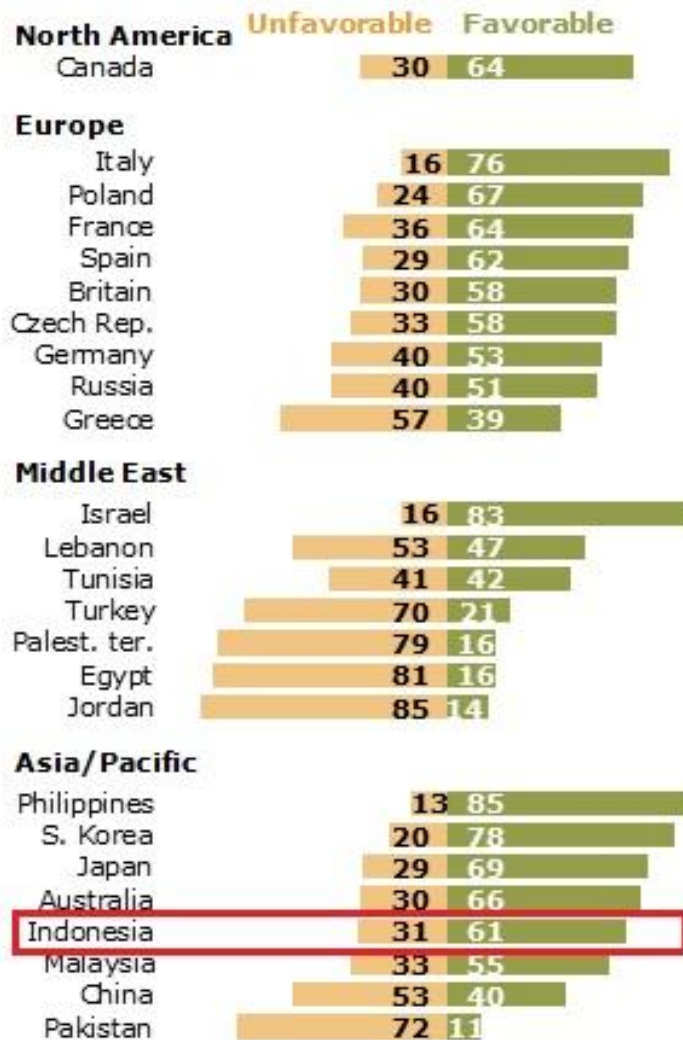
The United States Favorability (Wike, Stokes, & Poushter, 2015)

U.S. Favorability															
	1999/ 2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Canada	-	72	63	-	59	-	55	-	68	-	-	-	64	-	68
France	62	62	42	37	43	39	39	42	75	73	75	69	64	75	73
Germany	78	60	45	38	42	37	30	31	64	63	62	52	53	51	50
Italy	76	70	60	-	-	-	53	-	-	-	-	74	76	78	83
Poland	86	79	-	-	62	-	61	68	67	74	70	69	67	73	74
Spain	50	-	38	-	41	23	34	33	58	61	64	58	62	60	65
UK	83	75	70	58	55	56	51	53	69	65	61	60	58	66	65
Russia	37	61	37	46	52	43	41	46	44	57	56	52	51	23	15
Ukraine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	68	69
Turkey	52	30	15	30	23	12	9	12	14	17	10	15	21	19	29
Jordan	-	25	1	5	21	15	20	19	25	21	13	12	14	12	14
Lebanon	-	36	27	-	42	-	47	51	55	52	49	48	47	41	39
Palest. ter.	-	-	0	-	-	-	13	-	15	-	18	-	16	30	26
Israel	-	-	78	-	-	-	78	-	71	-	72	-	83	84	81
Australia	-	-	59	-	-	-	-	46	-	-	-	-	66	-	63
China	-	-	-	-	42	47	34	41	47	58	44	43	40	50	44
India	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56	55	70
Indonesia	-	-	-	-	38	30	29	37	63	59	54	-	61	59	62
Japan	77	72	-	-	-	63	61	60	59	66	65	72	69	66	68
Malaysia	-	-	-	-	-	-	27	-	-	-	-	-	55	51	54
Pakistan	23	10	-	21	23	27	15	19	16	17	12	12	11	14	22
Philippines	-	90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	85	92	92
South Korea	58	52	46	-	-	-	58	70	78	79	-	-	78	82	84
Vietnam	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	76	78

Table 4.2

Worlds Favorability Statistic Towards The United States (Center, 2013)

U.S. Gets Largely Favorable Reviews



The United States overall image around the world contain negative perceptions, largely positive by 2015. Across the nations surveyed (excluding the

U.S.), a median of 69% hold a favorable opinion of the U.S., while just 24% expresses an unfavorable view. However, there is significant variation among regions and countries. While in Indonesia, counted based on Barack Obama administration, the starting point was jumping significantly from 37 percent to 63 (Wike, Stokes, & Poushter, 2015). That is also reflecting the changing of The United States foreign policy into using soft power. Moreover, during Barack Obama administration, it dynamically changes but with close number, and overall it can be considered higher than the previous administration. This fact shows that Information Resource Center establishment in Indonesia is effective to build positive perception among Indonesian citizens.

It is proved by certain points that made a country becoming acceptable to the citizens in another country such as being known well. The United States showed through its efforts by providing an access for Indonesian citizens to know more about The United States. It is run through programs such as information access, cultural exhibition, English teaching, civic engagement and also living experience in The United States and also those all programs conduct in a form of cultural diplomacy which called as Information Resource Center.

Beside of that, the Indonesian citizen positive perceptions in form of favorability towards The United States also supported and triggered by current The United States President at that time, Barack Obama. He is known as the only one president who spent his childhood living time in Indonesia.

“I first came to this country when my mother married an Indonesian named Lolo Soetoro. And as a young boy I was -- as a young boy I was coming to a different world. But the people of Indonesia quickly made me feel at home.” (Lee, 2010)

It is also triggering the improvement of Indonesian citizen positive perception because some of the citizens already know who he is. Moreover, he is also known as The president who tend to use soft approach in reaching the purposes rather than hard power like military pressure. Barrack Obama chosen as The United States president in 2008 and Indonesian citizen swept away in euphoria as it is. Positive perceptions improved and he is also accept a Nobel Peace prize in 2009, a group of locals commissioned a statue of the child Obama, and erected it in a Jakarta park (Nelson, 2010).

The United States president’s next visit in November 2011 was not as well received. But even as the afterglow of Obama’s election began to fade, he remained quite popular in Indonesia and in the Southeast Asia as a whole. Some Indonesians were disillusioned with Obama’s policies in the Middle East, and this was reflected in slight decrease in his popularity. But it rebounded after his reelection, as memories of the Arab Spring faded and the conflict in Syria had dragged on. Even also when Indonesian parliamentary election held in 2014, there are several candidates clearly believed that they would attract voter attention by putting images or photos with Obama in their campaign posters. Such as what Damin Sada (candidate of election) from West Java post (Nelson, 2010).

Picture 4.1

Barrack Obama on Campaign in Indonesian election (Nelson, 2010)

