THE INTERNAL CONFLICT TAXONOMY IN INDONESIA THAT LEADS TO PROXY WAR

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Abstract – The conventional threats now have been shifted into unconventional threats which is now considered as one of the biggest threats for Indonesia. Proxy war is an unconventional threat and it is happening now in Indonesia through internal conflicts. The number of internal conflicts, whether vertical and horizontal, have increased significantly since the Reformation era started, and it is believed there is a third party who has a role on that. Many countries prefer proxy war due to its efficiency reasons and it creates a great result of destruction. It is not easy for the government to forecast whether the conflicts are naturally emerged or designed by third parties. Security apparatus, therefore, must design a conflict mapping in every non-military sector. The mapping will lead us in exploring all parties who have a connection to conflicts. It must be realized that internal conflicts are influenced by many factors such as ideology, politics, economics, and social, which later will continue to proxy war threats. Proxy war, therefore, will always be chosen due to its efficiency because they will not use their own resources. The strategic position of Indonesia makes Indonesia to become an object of proxy war.

Keywords: Proxy war, internal conflict, security

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**Background**

Different challenges that currently being faced by Indonesia is no longer taken form as military aggression from a state, but rather an invisible threat. Threats will always emerged from the external actors who have great interest in Indonesia. Unwittingly, Indonesia is currently in the middle and have encounter the proxy war. It has been asserted by the Chief of the Army General Gatot Nurmantyo who said that proxy war in Indonesia might occurred in various ways, as in the combat against drugs, sectarian conflict, and the war against terrorism-radicalism.\(^2\) One of which is the horizontal conflict that still occur and straggle in some regions in Indonesia. The beginning of reform era was marked by the public euphoria in expressing their opinions, but this often caused friction between groups, thus eventually sparked internal conflict in Indonesia.

It lasted in long debate regarding the internal conflicts that supposedly occurred naturally or whether due to the influence of foreign interests, particularly through foreign intelligence. It would be difficult to argue that there was an internal conflict triggered by foreign intelligence without proving any factual, strong and relevant evidences. Therefore, the taxonomy of conflict needs to be conducted to see the extent of existing and developing internal conflicts in Indonesia, in order to identify the actors. Using the taxonomy we could determine whether the conflict could lead to a proxy war which obviously being influenced by foreign entity. This study will describe and analyze the types of conflicts that have been, currently, and will potentially occur, in order to be able to predict whether the incidents are deliberately engineered or taken place by designed. This academic study will focus on three main points; first, the development and indication of proxy war in Indonesia; second, the threat of conflict as the ongoing proxy war to deal with; and third, strategic solutions to resolve internal conflicts in civil society groups.

**Understanding Conflict and its Stages**

In principle, conflict is a relationship in which the target and objective were not matched within a relationship between two or more parties. Furthermore, conflict includes the attitudes and

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\(^2\) Army General Gatot Nurmantyo presentation at a public lecture in the University of Defense, the Hall of Peacekeeping Missions, Sentul, Bogor, on 30 August 2016.
actions that cause physical, mental, social, or environmental damage.\(^3\) The loss caused by such damage not only in form of material losses but it might also cause a significant loss of lives. This situation, is clearly destabilizing national security if not handled quickly by the government, especially by the security forces. The conflict is divided into two that is internal conflict and external conflict. External conflict is caused by external factors (foreign), which mostly occurs because breaching in agreement between the government and the other parties. It can be analyzed from several cases such as conflict in the border region, foreign military aggression, conflicts between countries due to cyber or wiretapping case, which involve state against state actors.

While internal conflicts occur with the use of domestic resources (human and financial), and is also divided into two groups, namely vertical conflict reflected the conflict between the government and civil society and the conflict that occurred between groups of civil society. It is crucial understand the stage of conflict from the emergence to the end, where it can be seen from the following chart: (Picture 1)

![Picture 1. Conflict escalations](http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/de-escalation-stage)


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The model shows that the level of latent conflict marks each province/territory that has a potential conflict with other areas. But the difference is that those conflicts emerge with different backgrounds. At the stage of conflict emergence it explained that conflicts will arise when there is different view and opinion on particular groups or individuals. Then, it will enter stage of conflict escalation indicated by increasing friction that occur between individuals which eventually led to the impasse (stalemate). This is the peak stage where the groups in dispute have decided to go for war instead of seeking for other alternatives. However, the dynamics of the conflict will inevitably decline marked by a decrease in the conflict escalation through negotiations undertaken by the dispute party. The dispute settlement stage becomes the early stage to prepare for peace. Finally, the last stage is the peace building stage to restore the relationship between the parties in dispute. The objective is to avoid the replication of similar conflict between groups or individuals in the future.

Development and Indication of Proxy War in Indonesia

Before explaining the definition of proxy war, the writer would like to share about the development of proxy war in various regions in the world. President of the US, Dwight D. Eisenhower said that proxy war is the lowest form of war or at least an attempt to keep the conflict zone at the desired stage of tension. The proxy war is a war by using a third party as the indirect surrogate in order to produce a series of strategic outcomes. Since 1964, an international politician Karl Deutsch has defined proxy war as a conflict between two countries but the war was staged on the a third country ground, and concocting the war as if it were an internal conflict in the third country. The war is using human resources, natural resources, and the third country territory thus made a proxy war is far cheaper than conventional war. This made various countries seem reluctant to engage in conventional war because it will have to be funded with their resources.

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5 Ibid.
The proxy war has been taking place in Indonesia, but only limited groups are aware of it. According to the Council for Strategic Analyst (DAS), of the National Intelligence Agency in 2014, Indonesia need to understand the conflict as the result of proxy war between the world elite power. Conflict in form of non-physical battle between major powers whose national interest are at stake, thus making them sought for an opportunity to attack their political opponents on the battle fields located in other countries (including Indonesia).\(^7\) Furthermore, according to the army commander General Gatot Nurmantyo, the proxy war occurred in Indonesia because foreign countries are racing to control Indonesia with its rich national resources.\(^8\) The proxy is complex because it were controlled by other countries and the tactics used were different from conventional warfare. In fact, the loss of East Timor is believed to be a form of proxy war because other countries wanted to disintegrate the East Timor from Indonesia. The increasing number of world’s population is not matched by the availability of food and energy and will in turn creating new conflicts. The emergence of such conflicts is indeed inseparable from the interests of inter-group / third party who deliberately create a proxy war. There are three things that can be observe as an indication that a proxy war has already begun in Indonesia, the separatist movement, the chaotic demonstrations, and internal conflicts (between groups).\(^9\)

It can be seen in the Picture 2.

**Picture 2. Three Indicators of Proxy War in Indonesia**

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\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^10\) Ibid.
a. Separatism movement
There are seven recorded separatist movements in Indonesia since the independence era to the present. The seventh separatist movement are (1) The Indonesian Communist Party Separatism Rebellion, Madiun-1948 and G-30S, 1965; (2) The RMS rebellion (Republic of South Moluccas) -1950; (3) PRRI (Rebellion of Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia; (4) Permesta (the Universal People's Struggle) - 1957; (5) DI/TII Kartosoewiryo-1949, Daud Beureuh-1953, Ibu Hajar-1950, Amir Fatah-1950, Kahar Muzakar-1953; (6) Free Aceh Movement (GAM), began in 1976 and ended in 2005 with the Helsinki Treaty; and (7) Papuan separatist group that still pose an internal threat. These facts shows that Indonesia cannot be separated from the threat of separatist movements that always threaten to secede from Indonesia. Of course, this is what the external party have always wanted to achieve, especially those who have malignant interest toward Indonesia.

It should be noted, that the threat of the Papuan separatist movement has been unresolved, especially with the support from Melanesian countries for Papua’s independence.

b. The Chaotic Demonstration
Demonstration basically is not a tool for oppressing but rather a mechanism for advancing the legitimate aspirations of civil society and guaranteed by the National Constitution. Until now, the demonstration is the tool that most often used by the group, but with the widespread demonstrations that happened almost every day has resulted in the public being fed up for not seeing any significant result from such actions. Since 2012, the demonstrations in Indonesia has been considered as excessive and tend to be anarchic. In fact, in 2011, Indonesia has been regarded as country with the largest number of demonstrations from 113 countries. This is proven from the number and characters of Indonesian students, including difficult to control because of

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destructive indoctrination lead to violence, including the reform of students’ institutions at the university level. 

c. Internal conflicts / Inter-group conflict cannot be avoided, and since the reform era, number of social conflict in Indonesia continues to increase. Based on the data from the Directorate General of Politics and Public Administration Ministry of Home Affairs, in 2013 there were 93 cases, in 2014 there were 83 cases, and in 2015 it has decreased to 26 cases. The conflict is divided into three main issues; political, economy, social and culture, racial intolerance, land disputes and conflicts. Although there is a downward trend in the number of social conflicts, but there is a possibility of social conflict to be actually grown in 2017 due to the differences of opinion, particularly among the state capital citizens that could have an impact and shifts to a communal society.

Those three indicators are the evidence of social unrest that occurred showed that the country is no longer at threat of conventional war. The characteristics of threat has shifted towards non-conventional where the actors are no longer other countries, but its own citizens. The foreign countries influence might also be one of the contributing factors since the proxy wars was not staged at the develop country territorial, but instead taking place in developing country area. Social conflicts is a clear example of a proxy war that is still going on in the Middle East region, and there is a possibility to direct those social conflicts to Indonesia.

Development of Conflict since Reform Era until Now
The series of conflicts in Indonesia, especially during the reform era, should be the concern of officials, academics, and other stakeholders. The occurrence of trends has been increased significantly compared to the two previous era shows that the Indonesian security conditions should be given more serious attention. That means, the conflict escalation in


Indonesia continues to increase, it is likely due to the influence of external actors, especially when they see the staggering differences of opinion among Indonesian civil society. According to Mitchell, a conflict clearly occurs when two parties are having mismatch goals and objectives\textsuperscript{17}. Furthermore, according to Fisher, the conflict could be actions, words, attitudes, structures or systems that cause physical, mental, and social damages.\textsuperscript{18} According to Praditya, generally, an internal conflict in Indonesia are caused by three things\textsuperscript{19}:

a. Political and Institutional Factors
Conflicts occur because of weak organizations in government agency or institutions in a country, thus not being able to manage all the existing political issue. A weak organizations can be found in a number of instances of failed state. In addition, conflicts can also be caused by distrust of citizens to the government regarding policies that are not in favor of the people, or against the government system that is considered as broken, corrupt, and anti-criticism.

b. Social – Economy Factors
The huge gap between the rich and the poor also has significant contribution to spark conflict. The public might freshly reminded by the riots in May 1998, in which the poor are looting many stores that mostly owned by Chinese citizens who was then regarded as rich population. If observed over a macro perspective, for example to the provincial level, the gap between the developed and the underdeveloped province also has potential to cause vertical conflict. While for the social factor, the Tolikara conflict in Papua was marked by attacks on Muslims while performing the Eid prayer, followed by the burning of a mosque on Friday 17 July, 2015. As a result, the conflict is almost spread to some other areas because there are some people who want to do retaliation. Fortunately, it did not happen because the apparatus is able to calm the public not to be easily provoked.\textsuperscript{20}

c. Environment and Natural Resources

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{19} Yosua Praditya, op.cit, page. 138-139.
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The massive exploitation of natural resources followed by unfairness in the yield distribution might be resulting in conflict. To this extent, the conflict caused by competition over natural resources in Indonesia is still high. In the system of good governance, natural resources should be enjoyed with regard to the principle of solidarity (equity), efficiency, and sustainability. Conflict will heat up when injustice is felt by the local population against the presence of several foreign companies. Conflict over agricultural land are frequently occur between the local populations, which is based on data obtained by the KPA (Consortium for Agrarian Reform) can be seen in the table below \(^1\)(Table 1).

The third aspect above are the main factor contributing to internal conflict. Indeed, the actors, resources, and other elements are located in Indonesia, not in a foreign country. But again, there is a possibility of foreign entity influences with regard of the internal conflict. It should be highlighted that the concept of a proxy war is the use of resources in the country of destination, so as if the destination country is facing conflict within its territory.\(^2\) It is certainly not required a high cost as in conventional war, and not even requiring any combat forces to create conflict in a country of destination. Proxy war is instilled by creating a horizontal conflicts in some conflicted regions with the assumption that the conflict seems as natural conflict.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Agrarian Conflict</th>
<th>Number of Victims in Agrarian Conflict</th>
<th>Distribution Area of Agrarian Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>369 case</td>
<td>shot</td>
<td>Year 2013 1,281,660 ha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>567 case</td>
<td>persecution</td>
<td>Total: 1,599,908 ha.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Consortium for Agrarian Reform (KPA)

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\(^{1}\) “the Data of Agrarian Conflict in Indonesia throughout 2013,” in http://www.kpa.or.id/, accessed on 31 January 2017.

\(^{2}\) Eckstein, op.cit.
Types of Internal Conflicts that Have Occurred in Indonesia

The conflict escalation should receive increased attention from the government and every relevant stakeholders, especially the academia. The increasing trend of internal conflict in Indonesia should be mapped by type. Therefore, the following is the description of the internal conflicts that have occurred:

- Conflict of Racial Intolerance
  Indonesia is a country with diverse ethnic, cultural, religious, so that racial issues are sensitive and should always be addressed carefully by the government. The history of conflict between Dayak and Madurese in Sampit, Kalimantan which resulted in 500 fatalities and causing 100,000 Madurese being homeless in 2001. In addition to that, the conflict of Moni and Dani tribe in Papua was sparked in 2014 due to land issues. Then not long after that, the conflict of Tolikara in Papua in 2015, which is marked by attacks on Muslims after performing prayer. Finally, the government also cannot close its eyes to the tension prior to elections at the Capital Jakarta due to racial issues that still haunt the citizens. As an impact of the political dynamics in DKI Jakarta gubernatorial election that might spread to other areas that are also held local elections. Therefore, security forces and the election administrator need to anticipate the potential conflict in order to organized a safe, smooth, and peaceful local elections.

- Conflict Between Organizations
  In democratic life, existence and growth of a number of organizations becomes unavoidable. Frictions between organizations in the public domain is an issue that require serious consideration, because the friction arises from the differences of opinion that legitimately happen in a democratic system. The conflict between FPI (Islamic Defenders Front) and GMBI (Indonesian Lower Society Movement) on January 20, 2017, is an example of conflict between organizations that occur in Indonesia. A petition was sent to the provincial government of West Java aspiring the government to establish a more conducive West Java. This action was conducted through a meeting with

23 Praditya, op.cit. page. 144-149.

other 37 civil society organizations.  

- **Local Elections Conflict**  
  Conflict of elections remains a challenge for governments, both now and in the future. The local elections becomes the scene for democratic celebration in the democratic life of Indonesia. Indonesian people requires good political education, and the responsibility of political parties, supporting team, the General Elections Commission (KPU) and the Local Government to prevent conflict of elections to repeat continue. The electoral conflicts often tinted with vandalism and burning of government office buildings in several regions in Indonesia. Financial loss is clearly the responsibility of the state. In addition, the government's attention toward the DKI gubernatorial elections has to be increased because Jakarta is the capital city of Indonesia which is a model for other area, also the local election in Jakarta has a strong against other regions.

- **Land Confiscation and Natural Resources Conflict**  
  This conflict is often marred by disputes between foreign investors and local residents. The local population demanding for work in foreign mining companies becomes a prolonged conflict in several districts of Indonesia. What often happens is demonstration that eventually blaming the local government as deemed unable to provide jobs for its people. Coupled with other reasons that perceived the government as pro foreigners rather than pro citizens, so the conflict not only occur horizontally, but also vertically. The conflicts caused by competition over natural resources could have a negative impact to the country, because it will decrease the level of trust from both national and foreign investors.

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the occurrence of interracial conflict. No wonder that racial conflict in Indonesia growing rapidly after the fall of the New Order era, the conflict will inevitably arise in times of political, economic, and social changes. Moreover, when the condition is coupled with a sense of disappointment, dissatisfaction and anger of the people against the leadership. This condition eventually leads to mobilization, ranging from political action, demonstrations, and other violent means. The conflict in Ambon, Poso, Sambas, Sampit, Papua, and others, showed how Indonesia is prone to conflict. This obviously can be detrimental to national stability with a widespread impact.²⁶

The number of internal conflicts could lead to a form of proxy war. In fact, internal conflicts that occur are mostly form of proxy war carried by foreign entity without being notice by the government. Internal conflict hardly influenced by the virtual world and the newly rise state power can be connected. There are four main factors causing proxy war that can be linked to internal conflicts that have occurred in Indonesia. The four factors are the presence of the new Super Power, foreign private company, rapid development of virtual world, and strengthening alliances with each other.²⁷ It can be seen in the chart below:

**Picture 3. Factors Contributing to Proxy War**

²⁶ Praditya, op.cit, page. 161.

²⁷ Mumford, op.cit, page. 40-46.
the region, so it is possible that third parties will launch proxy war with the intention of to inhibit Indonesia’s progress. Especially in the post reform era, when number of internal conflict has increased with different background. Second, is "the growing virtual world", where the virtual world becomes an aspects that need to be considered since it has the capacity in various forms as well as low cost in providing non-military attack, either directly or indirectly? The existence of the virtual world is very important to support the growth of NGOs which influence the government, and even did not rule out the possibility for foreign intelligence actors who have a major role behind the emergence of diverse social organizations in cyberspace. The emergence of virtual worlds populated by foreign NGOs are often associated with various conflict.

Solutions to Overcome the Internal Conflict in Indonesia

It needs a solution that can be implemented well and can be coordinated by all stakeholder in order to overcome the challenges of internal conflicts in every region of the Indonesian Homeland. Some of these solutions are:

- Strengthening the meaning of Pancasila
  The value and meaning of Pancasila should be deepened and made as the ultimate guide for every Indonesian citizen, especially the younger generation. This solution is very effective to deal with issues of Communism ideology that recently emerge in our community. This ideology instrument must be put forward and should be used by every element of the Indonesian people, especially in facing the invisible foreign influences that could divide the nation. Pancasila will also be an intermediate instrument to address the racial issue that frequently raised by specific interest groups, especially from foreigners.

- Justice For All Indonesian People
  Law enforcement is very strong and binding aspect on all the people of Indonesia. Therefore, law enforcement carried out by officials must be done as fairly as possible to avoid social imbalance as a result of the unfair implementation of law toward the poor and loose law enforcement to the rich. The implementation of unjust laws, especially when targeting the poor
and favoring the rich would potentially cause horizontal and internal conflict.

• Strengthening the Health Political System
  Political instrument become a crucial factor in engendering a series of state policies. Those policies would be set out in the form of law, presidential decree, regulation, etc., so it is expected that there is no unhealthy practical political factors when formulating policies for the state's security. Practical politics that supports particular group interest would obviously raise an internal conflict, especially within the government body itself.

• Strengthening the Civil Society - Army - Police Relations
  The civil - army - police relation should be strengthened in order to implement a universal defense system to face the threats (internal conflict), mainly caused by foreign parties. The involvement of civil society in defense and security issues become particularly important in democratic life in Indonesia that continue to search for the best format to be implemented for now and in the future.

• Reconsider the Urgency on the Implementation of National Security
  Considerations for National Security should be initiated by every stakeholders, particularly by the Government as a state organizer. National security is required in order to face the external dynamics (including proxy war) that increasingly complex, uncertain, and threatens the security of Indonesia as nation. The presence of the National Security will also reduce the potential of overlapping between the defense officials agencies in Indonesia.

• The Professional Management of Natural Resources
  The improper land and natural resources management will be the trigger for national conflict in some regions. This will be further exacerbated when the public assume that the Government seemed to be in favor of foreign companies than its own citizens. Therefore, it require an implementation of proper governance arrangements and management of natural resources to promote the general welfare as stated in the state objectives.

• Anticipating the effects of the Virtual / Social World
Both the government and particularly the community need to anticipate any news, content-information, text, and others stemming from social media. The influence of cyberspace clearly able to divide the nation that eventually led to conflict. Public is expected to increase their awareness that foreigners have the potential to regulate the social media content/cyberspace to the negative direction.

**Conclusion**
Since the day of independence until now, Indonesia has experienced numbers of internal conflict and the number is predicted to continue to grow with a more varied background. The facts of internal conflict will eventually makes the Indonesian people to be left behind, and it would likely led to a proxy war. Moreover, the proxy war would definitely stage by using the Indonesian local resources which made the actors prefer to choose this strategy than conventional war. Thus, there is a possibility that a third party does have an influence on the series of conflicts that have been and will happen in Indonesia. Indonesia’s strategic position makes this country often infiltrated by foreign interests with various background of political, social, and economic. Therefore, it is time to get the full attention of the government on any internal conflicts that might occur to address it by strengthening the relationship between the relevant stakeholders in the field of security along with the presence of civil society role in Indonesia.

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