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COUNTER-TERRORISM COOPERATION IN THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (ARF) FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INDONESIA DEFENSE DIPLOMACY

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Abstract

Terrorism is a threat that not only jeopardizes a country's security, but also the survival of ASEAN as a regional organization, the security of peace and stability, and the region's overall economic possibilities. This research aimed to examine the implementation of Counter-terrorism (CT) cooperation in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) from the perspective of Indonesia's defense diplomacy. The research method used was the qualitative method which is based on the combination of interviews and literature review regarding ASEAN's or ARF's Counter-terrorism cooperation and Indonesia's defense diplomacy from the year 2015-2019. The findings showed that CT cooperation is less discussed in the mechanism of the ARF since the current focus of ARF is on Trafficking in Person (TIP) and threats of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN). Meanwhile, from the perspective of defense diplomacy, Indonesia has successfully initiated ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (VECT) with Australia and New Zealand in 2019. However, it is undeniable that CT cooperation through the ARF mechanism remains difficult to achieve due to several obstacles, including the differences of national interests and legal framework, the principle of non-interference, and the existence of mutual distrust between participating countries.

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INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is a threat that not only threatens the security of a country, but also the survival of ASEAN as a regional organization, the security of peace and stability, and the overall economic prospects of the region (Carpenter et al., 2016). Over the last 30 years, there have been several incidents in Southeast Asia triggered by Islamic radicalism and long-standing violent separatist movements in terms of terrorism threats (Febrica, 2010).

Southeast Asia, historically, is a region located at the main intersection of the world. It causes this region to become more accessible for the external powers. According to Singh (2007), the religious motives or otherwise, has caused terrorism in this region is always be a national concern. As a result, national authorities take a long time to deal with terrorism since terrorists evolved significantly. Several security threats led to terrorism in Southeast Asia including *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM) or The Free Aceh Movement in Indonesia, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, and the threats posed by the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO) in Thailand.

The threat of terrorism in Southeast Asia is increasing along with the presence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Al-Qaeda which attempt to build a stronger operational area in this region. The indication of this threat is proven by the appointment of Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon as the *Amir* or leader of ISIS in Southeast Asia in 2016 in the Philippines (Amin, 2018). Southeast Asia has been directly confronted by three generations of global terrorism. The first generation was Al Qaeda, which attacked the World Trade Center in the USA in 2001, the second was ISIS worldwide jihad in 2014, and the third was the return of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) (Sembiring, 2018). It is the United Nations (2018) which reported that FTF has

received military training in Iraq and Syria are more likely to carry out an attack and support the emergence of local terrorists. In this case, Mitchell (2016) stated that if there are no coordinated national and international measures, transnational organized crime (including terrorism) will have potential consequences. As a result, it may be stated that no single country can deal with terrorism without international cooperation.

The ARF is seen as a crucial forum for developing political consensus on anti-terror strategies. ARF is laying the groundwork for coordinating cooperation so that it does not conflict with other ASEAN mechanisms. This may be observed in the process of proposing input at the ARF, which is supervised by officials who are directly responsible for anti-terrorism policies at the national level and also backed by officials from ministries or agencies responsible for counter-terrorism (CT) issues. However, ASEAN Counter-terrorism cooperation faces several challenges, including differences in national interests and legal frameworks, the principle of non-interference, and the distrust among member countries (Wilujeng & Risman, 2020).

According to the background, this research attempts to examine the implementation of counter-terrorism cooperation in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) from the perspective of Indonesia's defense diplomacy in 2015-2019. This article is structured in four parts. First, the article briefly explains the history of counter-terrorism in ARF. Second, the article discusses ASEAN's/ARF's counter-terrorism cooperation. Third, it covers Indonesia's defense diplomacy to promote ASEAN's/ARF's counter-terrorism cooperation. In the final part, the article concludes about how effective Indonesia's defense diplomacy to promote ASEAN's/ARF's counter-terrorism

cooperation has been implemented.

METHODS

The research method utilized in this article is qualitative. In supporting the analysis, this article combines interviews and a literature review. Author seeking to find out research substance discussed by understanding the signification, process, and connection of the unit analysis (Define, 2002).

The defense diplomacy concept will be utilized to analyze the implementation of Counter-terrorism cooperation in ARF to reduce the hostility or tensions and to enhance confidence-building within member states. Wibisono & Kusumasomantri (2020) categorizes Counter-terrorism cooperation into police cooperation, judicial cooperation, intelligence cooperation, migration, border management, as well as cooperation in combating terrorist financing. Meanwhile, Laksmana (2012) categorizes defense diplomacy into three functions: confidence-building measures (CBMs), defense capabilities enhancement, and defense industrial development; each of which is served through various forms of activities.

In ARF, defense diplomacy is paramount of importance to improve Confidence Building Measure (CBM) to maintain the relationship among participated countries. According to Asmoro (2017), defense diplomacy is expected to create a conducive strategic environment for Indonesia. The main objective of CBM is the attempt to cultivate good relationships with other countries to equalize perceptions and create favorable bilateral and transparent cooperation. It is expected that by putting out this effort, tensions of mutual suspicion and threatening each other will be reduced. Hence, the development of the military capability of a country will not be misinterpreted as a threat to other countries.

On the other hand, Rolfe (2015) stated

that defense diplomacy can foster more constructive and inclusive interactions if it prioritizes stability and security over military force (hard power) and political interests. There are at least nine benefits of military and civilian cooperation in defense diplomacy, including:

1. Reduction in hostility or tensions
2. Symbolic positioning by signaling a willingness to work with and trust interlocutors
3. A more competent armed force with a commitment to accountability mechanisms
4. Transparency in terms of capacity and intentions
5. Development and reinforcement of good relationships with partners
6. Changing perceptions of each other
7. Confidence building
8. Encouragement through incentives and rewards
9. Building a domestic constituency for the armed forces.

ASEAN's or ARF's Counter-terrorism Cooperation

According to Omelicheva (2010), Counter-terrorism is a combination of public and international policies aimed at restricting the activities of terrorist groups or individuals affiliated with terrorist organizations as an effort to protect the public from terrorist threats. As a policy, Counter-terrorism includes a series of actions such as freezing terrorist organization's financial assets, making Counter-terrorism agreements, guiding the use of military force in other countries' territories, raids on suspected terrorist locations, providing military and economic assistance to other countries that also fight terrorism. In a broad sense, Counter-terrorism encompasses government policies, in this case not only by law enforcement agencies but also by defense institutions.

Wibisono & Kusumasomantri (2020) categorizes Counter-terrorism cooperation into police cooperation, judicial

cooperation, intelligence cooperation, migration, border management, as well as cooperation in combating terrorist financing. Furthermore, Multilateral Tabletop or Field Exercises, Voluntary Training Courses, Capacity-Building Workshops, and ARF Pilot Projects are examples of such activities. The ARF work plan brings ASEAN Counter-terrorism (ASEAN-CT) collaboration closer to the Counter Violent-Extremism (CVE) portion of CT by empowering participants in disrupting terrorists' attempts to utilize connectivity networks and freedom of information to spread their beliefs (ASEAN Regional Forum, 2015).

The new focus on anti-terrorism strategies in the ARF and the new Inter-sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime will surely be a significant improvement to increase information sharing and operational cooperation. However, the extent of cooperation remains to be seen. The real measure of ASEAN's capability for cooperation is its ability to agree on the substantive implementation of policy and shared standards and to share responsibilities and costs in its various member states. As implementation costs may vary significantly from state to state, such challenges are likely to generate new fractures within ASEAN or simply be ignored for the sake of organizational unity. It may not be easy to maintain them as they meet and may contradict domestic and national motives, even after cooperative processes have been establishing (Chow, 2005).

At an operational level, significant overlap occurred in the realms of terror and other fields of transnational crime, such as money laundering, drug, and human trafficking, and/or piracy. This idea highlighted the importance of comprehensive security as promoted by ASEAN in the Southeast Asian region. Critically, the method above did not necessarily indicate that the governments of ASEAN considered terrorism

insignificant in comparison with other security threats. Rather, their shared reluctance to fully securitize transnational crime and non-military concerns, in general, ensured that counter-terrorism policies within ASEAN member states generally barred the deployment of armed forces as the exclusive means of combating terrorism (Tan & Nasu, 2016).

Furthermore, ASEAN members have attempted to combat terrorism by a variety of approaches, including military activities, socioeconomic, ideological, and educational policies, and the enactment and enforcement of counter-terrorism laws. They have also attempted to increase counter-terrorism cooperation with external allies such as Australia and the United States. Despite the regional efforts outlined above to increase counter-terrorism cooperation, Southeast Asian states did not treat terrorism in the same way (Tan & Nasu, 2016). Indonesia and Singapore, for example, have traditionally taken a non-militaristic, law enforcement approach to deal with the issue, whereas Malaysia and Thailand have relied on more coercive, militaristic responses. These countries' strategic decisions are undoubtedly influenced by history. Malaysia's experiences with armed communist rebellions, as well as Thailand's response to the separatist insurgency in its southern Malay-Muslim regions, are likely to have influenced their predilection for a military approach to terrorism threats.

One of the most important functions of the ARF is that it promotes a more holistic approach to regional security, encouraging security cooperation on issues such as environmental degradation, weapons proliferation, and transnational crime without trampling cultural and societal sensitivities to the extent that global mechanisms frequently do. This approach, however, is not without difficulties and frustrations, in that adherence to cultural norms slows the pace of institution-building and limits the nature and scope of

their activities, which may appear counter-productive to some at a time when urgent and drastic measures are required to combat genuine security threats (Ogilvie-White, 2006).

Indonesia's Defense Diplomacy

According to Gindarsah (2016), Indonesia's defense diplomacy has played a significant role in advancing the agenda of strategic hedging. At one level, Indonesian defense and security officials participate in ASEAN's multilateral processes to assist institutionalize regional standards of behavior such as confidence building, non-interference, cooperative security, and peaceful conflict resolution. At another level, Indonesia has used bilateral defense diplomacy to improve its military capabilities and indigenous strategic industries.

Inkiriwang (2020) noted that Indonesia's defense diplomacy is based on four motives through joint exercises including strategic engagement, CBMs, capacity building, and international reputation. These factors contributed to the development of defense diplomacy in Indonesia in this period. Identifying these motives is in addition to Gindarsah (2016) statement about the role of CBMs and military capabilities in the defense diplomacy in Indonesia.

In addition, the ARF remains one of ASEAN's primary tools for strategic engagement and confidence building, both inside Southeast Asia and with regional partners although the merits of these arguments can be debated. The rising defense diplomacy of ARF to mitigate the potentially negative consequences of great-power politics is a continuation of the logic of ASEAN's 'soft institutional balancing' with the region's main powers. It is 'soft' because it lacks military alliances, and it is 'institutional' because it relies on multilateral procedures to handle foreign threats (Laksmiana, 2012).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History of Counter-terrorism in ARF

ARF is considered an important forum in developing political consensus related to anti-terror policies. Furthermore, ARF is developing the foundation for coordinating cooperation in order not to overlap with other mechanisms in ASEAN. This can be seen in the process of proposing input at the ARF which is guided by officials who are directly responsible for anti-terrorism policies at the national level and also supported by ministry or agency level officials responsible for Counter-terrorism (CT) aspects. The next step is the policy recommendations that have been proposed at the ARF must be reported to senior officials and the Minister of ARF for endorsement.

ARF has 27 member countries consisting of all ASEAN member countries (Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines), 10 ASEAN Dialogue Partners (United States, Canada, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Russia, New Zealand, and the European Union) and several countries in the region such as Papua New Guinea, Mongolia, North Korea, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, the meaning of the ARF establishment was the emergence of the phenomenon of regionalism and security that was built through cooperation that was considered capable of meeting security management needs in the Asia Pacific region in the post-cold war period. This is because the main purpose of multilateral interaction is to encourage participating countries not to discriminate, attack one another and then promote transparency and efforts to continuously promote peace issues and build peace (Acharya, 1997).

In line with the incident of 11 September 2001, the ARF agenda was dominated by the issue of terrorism. This

was reflected in the statement of the ARF Minister of Foreign Affairs at the meeting in Brunei Darussalam that there was a need to use all steps in investigating, arresting, and punishing those responsible for acts of terrorism and preventing further attacks. The ARF inter-session meeting dealing with the CBM issue also noted that there was a joint statement by the ARF regarding acts of terrorism as attacks on humanity and was completely unjustified legally based on any motivation. The ARF participating countries also stated their commitment to prevent and combat all forms of terrorism and cooperate at the regional level in efforts to Counter-terrorism measures (Chandrawati, 2008).

Furthermore, ARF also focused on the terrorism issue at the 9th ARF meeting in 2002. As illustrated in ARF joint statement, terrorist attacks have a huge impact on the security environment. Thus, to combat international terrorism, ARF requires an immediate step. Referring to this step, the ARF decided to establish an Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CTTC) and issue ARF joint statement regarding measures against financing terrorism. In addition, ARF members also agreed to collaborate in Counter-terrorism processes, especially in the Asia Pacific region through legal assistance, funding measures from legal application cooperation.

The issue of CT and transnational crime has indeed become a priority issue at ARF. This is evidenced by the firm commitment of ARF in establishing the mechanism of the ARF Inter-sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ARF ISM on CTTC) since the consensus reached in 2003 at the ARF Senior Official Meeting.

Since the establishment of the ARF ISM on CTTC, Indonesia has always been the main actor in encouraging CTTC cooperation. This can be seen in the role of Indonesia as co-chair of the ARF ISM on CTTC in 2007-2008 with India, in 2013-

2014 with New Zealand, and in 2015-2017 again became co-chair with India. The efforts made by Indonesia in addressing the issues discussed in the ARF ISM on CTTC complement efforts undertaken by other mechanisms in ASEAN such as the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) or Senior Official Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and the ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM)/ADMM-Plus (Sekretariat Nasional ASEAN, 2019).

ASEAN's or ARF's Counter-terrorism Cooperation

According to Sembiring (2018), Southeast Asia currently is faced with the third generation of terrorism which is proven by the return of foreign terrorist fighters all over the world. The data of FTF spreading in Southeast Asia and South Asia can be seen in Table 2.

From the data shown, it can be seen that in 2017, there were 671 Indonesians who traveled to Syria and Iraq, including 208 women and children. In addition, 84 fighters returned from Syria and Iraq, while 66 were prevented from departing Indonesia. Finally, Turkey has prevented 679 people (approximately 40% of women and children) from continuing their travel. Given this fact, it is apparent that Indonesia has a large number of FTFs. Given the quick growth of terrorism, this can likely pose a threat to the security of other Southeast Asian countries. As a result, comprehensive cooperation is required to control the spread of terrorism.

According to Wibisono & Kusumasomantri (2020), capacity-building is another milestone that ASEAN-centered extra-regional cooperation has achieved in the field of Counter-terrorism. A variety of joint training and tabletop exercises are held between forces, not just for CT capacity building but also for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief initiatives. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has created an Inter-sessional Support Group to address challenges such as marine

Table 1. ARF ISM on CTTC Meetings 2003-2018

No	ARF Meetings	Location	Date
1	1 st Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Karambunai	21-22 March 2003
2	2 nd Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Manila	30-31 March 2004
3	3 rd Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Bangkok	6-8 April 2005
4	4 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Beijing	26-28 April 2006
5	5 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Singapore	2-4 May 2007
6	6 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Semarang	21-22 February 2008
7	7 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Ha Noi	4-7 May 2009
8	8 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Bandar Seri Begawan	28-30 April 2010
9	9 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Kuala Lumpur	29-31 May 2011
10	10 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Quang Nam	16-17 Maret 2012
11	11 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Ha Noi	4-5 March 2013
12	12 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Bali	14-16 April 2014
13	13 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Nanning	14-15 May 2015
14	14 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Siem Reap	21-22 March 2016
15	15 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Semarang	6-7 April 2017
16	16 th Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CT-TC)	Bali	21-22 March 2019

Source: ASEAN Regional Forum (2018)

Table 2. Estimated number of the movement and interception of Foreign Terrorist Fighter Since 2012 (Figures from member countries, per October 2017)

	Traveled to and arrived in the Syrian Arab Republic/ Iraq	Percentage woman and children	Returned from the Syrian Arab Republic/ Iraq	Prevented from leaving the home country	Prevented from continuing travel by Turkey
Bangladesh	40 ^a	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Indonesia	671	31% (208)	84	66	639
Malaysia	95	30% (29)	8	<i>b</i>	265
Maldives	49 ^d	<i>b</i>	0	47	5
Philippines	4 ^e	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>

Source: United Nation (2018)

security (disaster relief), humanitarian assistance, transnational crime, and terrorism. Meanwhile, the ASEAN Defence Ministerial Meeting (ADMM)

Plus conducted a table-top exercise in 2012 and a CT exercise in 2013.

Another point is that ASEAN Regional Forum also performs as a hub for

establishing a Work Plan to implement the PoA for 2013-2017 in 2014; it issued the ARF Work Plan on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crime focusing on priority areas of cyber security, illicit drugs suppression, mitigation of the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) by subversive actors, counter-radicalization or alternative narratives against extremist ideologies; anti-terrorism financing; and involuntary trafficking of persons. ARF has also supported wider non-traditional security exercises which both improve capability and build trust between participating countries (Wibisono & Kusumasomantri, 2020).

Although ARF ISM on CTTC has been established since 2003, the CT issue nowadays is less concerned due to a very broad focus of ARF discussion. Based on ARF Work Plan for CTTC 2019-2021, there are four priority areas of cooperation carried out at ARF, including (1) Illicit Drugs, (2) Chemical, Biological Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN), (3) Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE), and (4) Trafficking in Persons (TIP). ARF currently is more focused on the issue of Trafficking in Person (TIP) and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN).

From all the ARF priority areas, PCVE becomes one of the efforts adopted by ARF in dealing with terrorism. In this cooperation, ARF member states can explore collaborative identification programs and countering the spread of terrorism through different platforms such as the internet and social media, religious centers, schools, including institutions of higher education, communities, organizations social and sports, as well as inmates in detention centers and the violent extremists abroad (ASEAN Regional Forum, 2019c).

In the realm of achieving comprehensive cooperation, ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

emphasizes that terrorism can only be defeated by a sustainable and comprehensive approach that involves active participation and collaboration of all countries, international and regional organizations in forming partnerships with civil society and private sector. In addition, appropriate actions are necessitated to prevent, inhibit, destroy, isolate, and weaken the terrorist threat and recognize the main role and responsibility of the state and certain institutions to prevent and Counter-terrorism the local, national, regional, and international level (ASEAN Regional Forum, 2019b).

Indonesia Defense Diplomacy to Promote ASEAN's or ARF's Counter-terrorism Cooperation

Diplomacy that has been carried out by Indonesia in CTTC ARF cooperation, among others: (1) Indonesia proposes the need to develop the scope of cooperation in the CTTC field by considering the dynamics and complexity of the practice of crime and terrorism, especially regarding the need to start dialogue and cooperation in combating trafficking crime in Person (TIP); (2) Indonesia also expressed concern over the Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF) and the use of ICT for terrorism purposes, including in recruiting ISIS. In this case, Indonesia proposes that the ARF establish a long-term special task force for handling the case (Directorate General of ASEAN Cooperation, 2015).

Based on Inkiriwang's (2020) research, it can be noted that Indonesia's defense diplomacy relies on four motives through joint exercises including strategic engagement, CBMs, capacity building, and international reputation. First, Indonesia has increased its defense diplomacy as it is useful in facilitating a strategic engagement of the country with large powers or other major international partners based on its Strategic Engagement Motif. By conducting Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo (MNEK), it is proved

that the multilateral exercise is crucial for Indonesia's strategic engagement not only with the major power countries but also with other international partners, especially with the attendance of more than thirty countries in the region (Inkiriwang, 2021). Second, in Confidence-Building Measure (CBM) Motive, despite the different nationalities, the MNEK fosters effective interactions amongst participating military personnel. These encounters contribute to the development of trust, which becomes the focus of CBMs. Third, in Capacity-Building Motive, The MNEK can train alongside other militaries to carry out humanitarian aid, disaster relief, asylum-seeking, transnational crime, piracy, and armed robbery at sea activities. Finally, The MNEK has promoted Indonesian culture and tourism through various venues, and it has also allowed foreign forces to observe the capabilities of the TNI. Furthermore, the growing number of participants in the MNEK demonstrates that this exercise is recognized as an important defense diplomacy activity.

Effectiveness of Indonesia's Defense Diplomacy to Promote ASEAN's/ARF's Counter-terrorism Cooperation

In the implementation stage, one of the proofs of the success of Indonesian diplomacy in ARF was the adoption of the ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (VECT) on August 2nd, 2019. This statement was an initiative initiated by Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand. The important point emphasized in this statement is that terrorism is one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, in all its forms and manifestations. Any act of terrorism is criminal and cannot be justified regardless of their motivation, anytime, anywhere, and by anyone.

ARF is committed and determined to contribute further in increasing the

effectiveness of the overall effort to combat terrorism at the global level. In addition, ARF also considers the scale and complexity of terrorist threats faced by the Asia-Pacific region which continues to grow with the returnee of Foreign Terrorist Fighters.

The main challenge in CT cooperation in ARF is the reluctance of participating countries to share strategic information due to the different interests. According to Weng (personal communication, November 28, 2019):

The main obstacles of Counter-terrorism cooperation in ASEAN are: first, the level of trust (or more accurately, mistrust) amongst the member states. Second, the differences in national agendas between member states. At least between Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, there is a lot of common ground in terms of our respective national security agendas, and the threat that terrorist groups pose thereafter. But their tensions between Malaysia and the Philippines (think of the recent incident in Sabah, for instance), and this constitutes a potential obstacle to closer Counter-terrorism cooperation between those two states.

This opinion is related to Acharya & Acharya (2010) which found that the different perceptions of Southeast Asia countries in responding to the threat of terrorism are influenced by national constraints and how countries correlate terrorism with political-security issues.

For instance, it can be seen that Indonesia is less interested in cooperating with the United States since "the global war on terror" means a global war on Islam. For Indonesia, terrorism is not merely related to Islam but is very closely related to the dynamics of domestic politics. Meanwhile, for Malaysia, transnational terrorism originated from Western countries which intend to against the global Muslim community. There is an ambivalent perception about American policy that is considered as anti-Islamic and oppressing Muslims throughout the world (Acharya & Acharya, 2010).

Furthermore, since Singapore relies heavily on the trade and tourism sectors, the threat of terrorism can be a major disaster for its economy. Therefore, Singapore is openly allied with western countries especially the United States not only in the business sector but also in the security sector and other strategic issues (Acharya & Acharya, 2010). Consequently, the sensitive issue of sovereignty has made some countries reluctant to allow the presence of foreign countries in conducting Counter-terrorism cooperation.

Apart from these different interests, ASEAN member countries have the same spirits in condemning acts of terrorism. Based on data from the 2018 Global Terrorism Index, the Philippines and Myanmar are the countries in the Southeast Asia region with the highest number of deaths in 2017, and the Philippines ranks 10th in the world as a country affected by high terrorism (ASEAN Regional Forum, 2019a).

Meanwhile, Steckman (2015) in her study of "Myanmar in the Crossroads: The Shadow of Jihadist Extremism", highlighted that militant jihadists are still common in Myanmar instead of its history of communal conflict between nationalist groups and right-wing Buddhist groups resulting in Myanmar having to remain vigilant with the threat of terrorism in its country. Unlike Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, these countries have not been faced with the threat of terrorism directed at this time. But that does not mean terrorism is not possible to appear in these countries. The countries that have been considered as safe countries are possible to become the next targets for terrorists. This can be seen in the case of New Zealand which categorizes as one of the safe countries. In this case, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos might be the same as New Zealand. When other ASEAN member states increasingly enhance the security of their country, terrorists will automatically utilize those countries that are considered safe countries

to be transit countries for terrorists before continuing their travel to the Middle East.

Nevertheless, the Cambodian government has undertaken various significant steps, one of which is by working with partner countries in making counter-radicalization initiatives such as seminars and other educational programs. Likewise with Laos and Vietnam have also deepened and expanded cooperative relations with all friendly countries both at regional and international levels to increase mutual understanding and increase trust (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015). Based on these explanations, it can be concluded that one of the factors driving the implementation of CT cooperation is the existence of the same interests of each member country to fight against terrorism.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATION, AND LIMITATION

According to the foregoing explanation, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of CT cooperation in the ARF becomes difficult to achieve since there are several obstacles including the differences of national interests and legal framework, the principle of non-interference, and the existence of mutual distrust between participating countries. In this case, to manage these different interests a hegemonic power is needed to impose certain norms and provide capital and impose cooperation based on cost and benefit considerations with partner countries.

Furthermore, in the realm of achieving comprehensive cooperation, terrorism can only be defeated by involving active participation and collaboration of all countries, including international and regional organizations in forming partnerships with civil society and the private sector. Apart from the different interests, ASEAN member countries have the same goals in condemning acts of terrorism. However, the CT issue is currently less discussed in ARF due to the

broad range of the ARF discussion, which is more focused on Trafficking in Person (TIP) crimes and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear threats (CBRN).

Meanwhile, from the perspective of Indonesia's defense diplomacy, Indonesia has successfully initiated ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (VECT) with Australia and New Zealand in 2019. It is proven that Indonesia's defense diplomacy has successfully adopted ARF CT cooperation. In addition, steps that can be taken are increasing the long-term bilateral cooperation in terms of information exchange and improving capacity building. This is since terrorism is constantly evolving as new motives emerge.

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