

The Dynamic of the US-Indonesia Defence Relations: The “IMET Ban” Period¹²³

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Abstract: The International Military Education and Training (IMET), has given Indonesian military personnel access to U.S. doctrine and tactics. However, due to the dynamics and changes in priorities of interest between the U.S. and Indonesia, the IMET programme has experienced a critical period, when for over a decade, from 1992 to 2005, the U.S. Congress imposed a ban on the programme for the Indonesian military. The country also adopted an embargo towards Indonesia in responding to the “Santa Cruz” incident in East Timor in 1991. Not only had the embargo limited defence cooperation with the United States, but also with its alliance countries. During the “IMET Ban” period, access to U.S. professional military education was significantly reduced. The ban fully restricted Indonesian military’s development since the country relied on the American military’s doctrines and tactics. The ban further disrupted the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations. Therefore, through desk research, this article uses process tracing approach to qualitatively examine the dynamic of the US-Indonesia defence relations during the “IMET Ban” period. The lessons learned during this period in the article are important to help the current Trump and Widodo administrations navigate their bilateral defence relations.

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³ The article uses the term of the “IMET Ban” Period or the “lost decade” to represent the period where the Indonesian Military suffered during the imposed US embargo towards the country, from 1992 to 2005, following the Santa Cruz incident in East Timor in 1991.

Keywords: defence; military; Indonesia; United States; IMET

Introduction

Indonesia has a strategic importance for the U.S. Therefore, the U.S. has continuously contributed to helping the country develop its military after Indonesia's independence. Many programmes, including International Military Education and Training (IMET), have provided Indonesian military personnel access to U.S. doctrine and tactics. Both countries view IMET as an indicator of their defence relationship. Nevertheless, due to the dynamics and changes in priorities of interest between both countries, the IMET programme has experienced numerous challenges. For over a decade, the U.S. Congress enacted a ban on the IMET programme for the Indonesian military, from 1992 to 2005. During this period, Indonesia's access to U.S. professional military education was considerably reduced. The ban completely constrained Indonesian military's development since the country relied on the American military doctrines and tactics. The ban also affected the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations.

Thus, through desk research, the article qualitatively studies the dynamic of the US-Indonesia defence relations during the "IMET Ban" period by answering two research questions: (1) "What are the factors and actors that have affected the U.S. International Military Education and Training programme for Indonesia?" and (2) "How have changes in the U.S., Indonesia, and the Indonesian military affected the IMET programme for Indonesia?" As part of the process tracing, the article examines various archival documents and other secondary resources materials from books, journals, and internet, to help answer these questions.

Understanding the causes and the processes which resulted in the U.S. ban on IMET for Indonesia shares lessons learned that are significant for both countries in sustaining their defence relations, particularly in the current Trump Administration. Recently, the U.S. Defence Secretary, Mark Esper, and the Indonesian Defence Minister, Prabowo Subianto, met during

the ASEAN Defence Ministerial Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) (Nathalia 2019). The ministers discussed the possibility of the U.S. to enhance training exchanges and opportunities with the TNI. Hence, the reflection on the “IMET Ban” period is important to navigate how the two countries maintain their defence relations.

The History of the “IMET Ban”

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, human rights became a primary issue for the U.S. in its foreign relations and its domestic politics. As a result, the U.S. began to question the Indonesian government’s way of handling East Timor. Complaints of human rights violations by the Indonesian military which were said to have occurred for years generated concern from the U.S. The situation worsened when members of Battalion 303 and Battalion 744 opened fire on demonstrators and killed 50 Timorese civilians in the “Santa Cruz” massacre in East Timor in November 1991 (HASS 2000b).

The massacre generated grave concern among the U.S. Congress members. This led to the ban on IMET programmes for Indonesia in early 1992 (Rivier 2012). The U.S. government changed its priority of interest from containing communism which became the focus during the Cold War era, to human rights issues. Meanwhile, the Indonesian government continued to follow a repressive approach in ensuring the cohesion of the nation without improving its human rights records. Indonesia exercised the same practices it used back in 1975. These conflicting priorities of interests started a new chapter of U.S. approach toward the country, in particular the Indonesian military.

Besides the IMET ban, the U.S. government also imposed a military embargo on Indonesia in 1992. This embargo aggravated the relations between the two countries. President Ford’s positive support which was later adopted by Presidents Carter and Reagan, changed under President George Bush. Pressured by the U.S. Congress following the “Santa

Cruz” incident, he restricted military-to-military engagement with the Indonesian military. When replacing Bush, President Clinton put more pressure on the Indonesian government by issuing an instruction to ban arms and military equipment sales to Indonesia (ICG 2002).

Since the end of World War II, American presidents had perceived security assistance, including the IMET programme, as an important foreign policy tool. It had also become an effective means of U.S. global engagement in containing the Soviet Union (Clarke, O’Connor, and Ellis 1997, 126). After the decline of communism, both Bush and Clinton administrations were constrained by U.S. Congress’ pressure concerning Indonesia’s human rights policy. This condition made them adjust their approaches in managing defence relations with Indonesia. The two presidents had very limited alternatives to maintain the U.S.-Indonesia military ties.

After the Indonesian government conducted military operations in East Timor in 1975, the U.S. Congress requested for an investigation. The Congress members instructed the Government Accounting Office to investigate the issue since the Indonesian military used U.S. military equipment (GAO 1992). In 1977, a Congressional hearing was organised to investigate the East Timor case (HASS 2000a). However, during this period, the Cold War still became a dominant factor and the U.S. highlighted the same priority of interests with Indonesia in fighting communist expansion.

The U.S. Congress plays a critical role in approving the IMET programme for a partner country like Indonesia. Any IMET programme planned by the State and Defence Departments must be approved by the Congress. This U.S. Congress’ role signifies the democratic civilian control in supervising the IMET programme (Clarke, O’Connor, and Ellis 1997, 107). The role also enables the Congress to restrict military support to Indonesia.

The “IMET Ban” in 1992 commenced a new “roller coaster” interaction in U.S.-Indonesia defence relations (Haseman 2002, 20).⁴ The ban shocked the Indonesian government and military. At that time, Indonesian expected that the U.S. government would support in defending the country in the “Santa Cruz” case, as the U.S. State Department still issued arms sales license to the Indonesian military following the incident (Agung DH 2018). Indonesia felt that the U.S. approved of its military approaches since annexing East Timor.

Nevertheless, the situation changed which was demonstrated by the Congressional decision to stop the IMET programme with Indonesia. As a security cooperation programme, IMET is authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act which required Congressional approval (APD 2011). The effect of the Leahy Act sharply influenced the U.S. approach to the Indonesian military, despite the previous strong relationship between the two countries’ military leadership and personnel.

The Initial Dynamic of the “IMET Ban” Period

Though the Congress banned the IMET programme for Indonesia, the U.S. government and military still attempted to continue their defence relationship. After 1993, United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) maintained some limited trainings with the Indonesian military through the Joint Combined Exchange and Training (JCET) programme. This programme focused on mutual benefits for U.S. Special Operations forces in training with foreign militaries, and it was not listed as a prohibited activity in the Leahy Amendment (Haseman and Rabasa 2002, 114). However, this programme was later suspended in 1998 after being politically criticised in the Congress and by some lobby groups. Since then, the Indonesian military had very limited opportunities in U.S. training and education.

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Having observed the strategic importance of Indonesia in the Southeast Asia region, USPACOM still continued some engagement with the Indonesian military. Admiral Blair, the USPACOM Commander, fought to maintain some cooperation activities with the Indonesian military (Priest 2000). He approached the Congress and top Government leaders. Nevertheless, the situation in East Timor worsened the militia killed three UN workers in 1999. Blair was subsequently sent to deliver a strong message to the Indonesian military to take responsible action. His pressure was seen negatively by the Indonesian military which impacted on the bilateral defence relations.

In contrast, during the so-called “lost decade” (1992-2005), the U.S. relationship with several Indonesia’s neighbours, Thailand and the Philippines, improved (Haseman and Rabasa 2002, 118). Though the Philippines military adopted a similar repressive approach in dealing with anti-government movement, the U.S. did not apply the same limitation set by the Leahy Amendment. In the Philippines, it only limited the most senior commanders instead the whole unit (Sambhi, 2011). Similarly, Thailand experienced the same situation as the Philippines military had. Despite the military coups, the U.S. still allowed the Thai military personnel to study in the U.S. This condition was possible because both countries had established a mutual cooperation agreement with the U.S. (ILW 2013, 17).

Post WTC: A New Approach

After the World Trade Centre (WTC) incident in September 2001, the U.S. led the Global War On Terror (GWOT). Since Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, the U.S. started to change its stance on Indonesia (Beeson, Bellamy, and Hughes 2006, 464). Likewise, Indonesia signalled a positive response. Within a few days after the 9/11, President Megawati visited the U.S. During the visit, both presidents expressed their agreement to build their partnership in combating terrorism and strengthen their military-to-military relations

(White House 2003). Despite this progress, the official defence and military-to-military relations between the U.S. and Indonesia were still limited by the “IMET Ban.” Nevertheless, the need to reengage with Indonesia regarding counterterrorism started to stimulate more discussions in the U.S.

In his visit to Indonesia in 2003, President Bush and Megawati discussed key issues about counterterrorism cooperation (White House 2003). They agreed on the importance of military reform in supporting Indonesia’s transition to a mature democracy and their military ties normalisation. Megawati welcomed U.S. support to help foster civil-military relations in the form of IMET and Regional Defence Counter Terrorism Fellowships. Both leaders also showed their agreement on the importance of observing human rights (White House 2003). However, the Congress still adopted the ban, despite the fulfilment of the U.S. Congress’ request by Indonesia,

In late 2004, when Indonesia suffered from the Aceh tsunami, the U.S. government offered its help. Having observed the limitation of Indonesia’s capability in dealing with the disaster, President Yudhoyono accepted the presence of U.S. military as part of the joint disaster relief operations besides other foreign militaries. Following the U.S. engagement in providing the humanitarian assistance in Aceh, Indonesia attempted to reengage with the U.S. (Vaughn 2007).

After Yudhoyono taking office, the situation changed. As a graduate of U.S. military and civilian educational institutions, he made new approaches. Yudhoyono tried to reconstruct the bilateral defence relations. In 2005, the U.S. eventually resumed the IMET programme which is viewed as a key parameter for the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations.

Analysis

In this section, the article observes three key elements of the US-Indonesia defence relations.

First is the United States, as a country. Second, is the Indonesian Government. And third is the Indonesian Military. The interactions between these elements are critical in driving the dynamic during the “IMET Ban” period.

The United States

After the U.S. Congressional ban on IMET, the State Department adopted several restrictions towards Indonesia. In 1993, the Department blocked the transfer of F-5 aircraft for the Indonesian military (ETAN 2000). Similarly, it also restricted small arms and riot control equipment sales for the country in 1994 (ETAN, n.d.). The stance taken by the Department implemented the Leahy Amendment.

However, there was a shift of the U.S. government’s approach in 1996. When Pakistan was identified developing its nuclear weapon capability, the U.S. cancelled its F-16 sales to this country (FAS, n.d.). Seeking an alternate buyer, the U.S. offered the jets to Indonesia (FAS, n.d.). The U.S. later reaffirmed its plan to sell the F-16s to Indonesia (Pine 1996). Despite this offer, President Suharto cancelled the purchase in 1997, while he simultaneously rejected the E-IMET programme. Suharto felt that the U.S. Congress pressure on Indonesia’s human rights violations had humiliated Indonesia (McBeth 1997).

Consequently, Suharto’s decision aggravated the bilateral defence relations. In the following year, the U.S. government suspended its JCET programme (Story 1999). The U.S. military organised these programmes without notifying the Congress. With support and influence from the lobby groups, the U.S. Congress found out about the programme. Thus, the Congress forced the U.S. military to end the programme (Story 1999). In 1999, the killing of three UN workers by the militias, made the Congress put more pressure on the Clinton administration. Thus, Clinton imposed a ban on military transfers to Indonesia (ICG 2002, 1).

Nonetheless, when the WTC tragedy occurred in September 2001, the U.S. reconsidered its policy toward Indonesia. The U.S. viewed Indonesia as a potential partner in

combating terrorism. The investigation showed that the perpetrators of the 9/11 terrorist attack were linked to Al-Qaeda (Kelly 2001). This terrorist organisation is known to have connections with other radical Islam groups. Therefore, the U.S. needed to cooperate with Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority country to optimise its counterterrorism effort. Cooperation with Indonesia helped fight terrorism in Southeast Asia since the terrorist network in the region is affiliated with the Al-Qaeda (Vaughn 2007).

Just a week after WTC tragedy, Megawati went to the U.S., becoming the first president from a Muslim populated country to visit and express condolences for the U.S. over the terrorist attacks (Breckon, n.d., 54). This visit indicated a positive signal for further cooperation between the two countries. In a joint statement, both presidents expressed the strategic importance of cooperation in combating terrorism as their common enemy (White House 2001). Military engagement between the two countries was identified as key parameter in the bilateral efforts.

Following the official visit, the U.S. began to address the issue of IMET resumption for Indonesia. The U.S. started to provide a special programme known as Counter Terrorism Fellowship Programme (CTFP) for Indonesian military in 2002 (DOS 2002). Numerous education and training programmes which could not be accessed earlier by the Indonesian military were granted through CTFP. However, most of the offered programmes were related to counterterrorism.

The shift of national interest to combating terrorism after 9/11 encouraged the U.S. to readjust its policy towards Indonesia. In 2002, local terrorists launched a suicide bombing in Bali which killed over 200 locals and foreigners including Americans (Whiteman 2012). This indicated that terrorists also targeted Indonesia even though it was a Muslim population dominated country. President Bush visited Indonesia and met with Megawati in 2003. The two leaders shared a mutual understanding of the importance of advancing the U.S.-Indonesia

bilateral relations, particularly in dealing with terrorism. Therefore, the Bush administration proposed the resumption of IMET programme for Indonesian military. The administration also attempted to waive the restriction against allowing the U.S. military to reengage with the Indonesian military through IMET, Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Foreign Military Financing (FMF) (Vaughn 2007).

The golden opportunity came when the tsunami struck Indonesia in 2004. There were over 250,000 casualties. The U.S. expressed its willingness to provide its Navy's resources to help the Indonesian military perform its disaster relief operations which attracted Indonesia's attention (Nye 2011, 21-22). Due to the difficult situation and limited sea and airlift capabilities, Indonesia accepted the offer along with the presence of multinational disaster relief mission. U.S. engagement in the Aceh Tsunami relief operations was viewed as a turning point in the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations since the two countries highlighted the need for further cooperation after the disaster. At that time, the U.S. was given access to operate within a part of the Indonesia's territory in rescuing the victims of the tsunami.

After a few years of negotiations between the Bush administration and Congress, the U.S. decided to resume the IMET programme for the Indonesian military. In 2005 Secretary of the State, Condoleeza Rice, officially announced the resumption (Jakarta Post 2005). This resumption began a new chapter of the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations which had been substantially degraded because of the limitation set by the congressional ban. The resumption was followed by attendance of Indonesian military personnel in various professional military education like the U.S. Army Ranger and Airborne courses. The resumption improved the interaction between the U.S. and Indonesian military through the courses organised by the U.S. military.

The Indonesian Government

The Indonesian government relied on the U.S. in helping build up its military capability during the “Cold War” period. The internal threat of communism encouraged the country to work together with the U.S. during this period. The U.S. was also concerned about the influence of communism in Indonesia, especially after its failure in containing communism in Vietnam (Vaughn 2007). Thus, this mutual priority of interest to prevent the spread of communism helped Indonesia align with the U.S. during the “Cold War” period.

Nevertheless, the case was different when the Berlin Wall collapsed and the Soviet Union dissolved. The U.S. shifted its priority of interest and focused more on human rights, which encouraged them to view Indonesia differently. In contrast, the Indonesian government perceived the national unity as its priority. Indonesia abandoned the human rights concerned by the U.S. government. The strong U.S.-Indonesia strong relations in the previous period, made Indonesia confident enough to use the same approach as it exercised earlier.

The “Santa Cruz” massacre involved two Army battalions. The incident killed around 50 civilians. This tragedy shocked the world, including the U.S. Congress (HASS 2000b). Encouraged by human rights groups, the Congress imposed a ban on providing assistance to Indonesia, in particular the IMET programme for Indonesia. The impose led to the beginning of the “IMET Ban” period.

Throughout this period, Indonesia made some efforts to negotiate with the U.S. administration. Despite the ban on IMET and some military equipment sales, the Indonesian government decided to open a commercial dockyard for maintenance of the U.S. ships in 1992 (Richardson 1992, 35). This decision was viewed as a key stance taken by the Indonesian government. The need to maintain its engagement with the U.S was believed to be one of the reasons for the decision. In fact, in that year, neighbouring countries like Malaysia and Singapore had also offered their facilities to be used by the U.S. military.

Positively, this decision partially led the U.S. to shift the sales of F-16s from Pakistan to Indonesia in the following year (Pine 1996).

However, Congressional pressure affected the decision making process in the Indonesian government. President Suharto was upset with the ban on IMET placed on his country and administration. The U.S. used a different stance in dealing with the same human rights violations in Philippines, a neighbour of Indonesia. Suharto felt that all the pressures had humiliated Indonesia. Although the Indonesian government initially agreed to purchase F-16s from the U.S., he later cancelled it (McBeth 1997). Additionally, he rejected the E-IMET programme which was offered by the U.S. government as an alternative to the IMET programme.

Suharto's reaction complicated the defence relations between the countries. Trapped in a difficult situation during the late 1990s financial crisis, Suharto was forced to step down (Berger 2008). He was replaced by his Vice President, B.J. Habibie. Surprisingly, Habibie took a different approach in dealing with East Timor. He offered a referendum which later ignited a clash between the pro-Indonesia and pro-independence factions in East Timor. The chaotic situation led to another incident in East Timor. Pro-Indonesia militias which were allegedly backed up by the Indonesian Special Forces stormed a UN office and killed three of the workers in 1999 (PBS 1999).

This incident gained international attention and resulted in a more intensive pressure on Indonesia. Following the incident, the U.S. adopted an embargo on military transfers to Indonesia (ICG 2002). This limited the ability of the country to sustain its military equipment that had been bought from the U.S. During Habibie's administration, the interaction between the two countries was still affected negatively by the East Timor issue. Human rights violations by Indonesia were viewed by the U.S. as limiting factor in resuming the IMET programme.

After Habibie, President Abdurrahman Wahid came into office. Dealing with the limitation set by the U.S. in accessing and purchasing U.S. military equipment, he sought alternate sources like Russia and China. The two countries sold some military equipment and weapons, including aircraft like the SU-27 and SU-30 (HIS Jane's 2004). The situation during Wahid's administration did not really change since Indonesia perceived that the human rights issue was an internal domain which should not be intervened by other countries.

However, another tragic incident occurred in Indonesia in 2002. An ambush on Freeport workers convoy in Papua killed two Americans (Elegant 2003). This created a significant impact on the restoration process of the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations. The U.S. viewed that Indonesia did not cooperate in resolving the case (Elegant 2003). Since Freeport is an area in which military forces provide security, therefore the Indonesian military also conducts operations in the area. There was an allegation that the Indonesian military was involved in the ambush. Hence, the U.S. government needed to work with the Indonesian military for further investigation.

After negotiations, the Indonesian military demonstrated a willingness to help the U.S. investigation. Antonius Wamang was later tried and found guilty of leading the attack on the civilian convoy which killed the American civilians (ABC 2006). This cooperation facilitated the process of reengaging with the U.S. Nevertheless, those personnel who were related with human rights violations in East Timor and member of the Indonesian Special Forces, Kopassus, were banned from taking part in the programme (Comer 2010, 68).

The change of dynamics within the Indonesian government has affected the interaction with the U.S. In fact, different administrations used distinctive approaches which impacted in the process of gaining full resumption. The last two presidents, Megawati and Yudhoyono, contributed significantly in facilitating the process. Megawati used the counter-terrorism agenda to reengage with the U.S. Meanwhile, Yudhoyono, as pro-democratic leader

and a U.S. graduate, used the tsunami as a starting point for reengagement (Vaughn 2007). He understood the importance of cooperating with the U.S. to advance the interest of the two nations. The resumption of IMET during his administration ended the “IMET Ban” period and began a new chapter of defence relations between the two countries.

However, during the “IMET Ban” period, similar with the prior period, there was no influential role played by the Indonesian House of Representatives which had gained more power after the reform process in the country. In viewing the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations, the House of Representatives took the same stance as adopted by the executive branch. In contrast, the human rights groups contributed in restricting the interaction between the two countries. These groups were able to meet U.S. senators which stood against the human rights violations in East Timor (TLHRC, n.d.). Their input gave more information to the U.S. Congress. In fact, it stimulated the process of imposing the ban on IMET for the Indonesian military.

The Indonesian Military

In the same way with the Indonesian government, the Indonesian military demonstrated a similar approach in interacting with its American counterpart. Since the military was used as a political means by the President Suharto, it operated under his administration’s policy. Despite the disruption of the U.S.-Indonesia bilateral relations in the “IMET Ban” period, the Indonesian military attempted to maintain its connection with the U.S., especially many of the top leaders had participated in the IMET programme earlier. When the ban on IMET and several other arms sales was imposed, the Indonesian military still interacted with the U.S. through the JCET programme (Story 1999). Nevertheless, the JCET programme was ended in 1998. This limited the interaction of the Indonesian military with the U.S.

An incident which occurred in 1999 in which the three UN workers killed put more restrictions on Indonesian military, in particular the Special Forces, known as Kopassus. The

unit was accused of supporting the pro-Indonesia militias who did the killings (John 2010). Following the incident, Indonesian military had very little access to their American counterparts. In 2000, the USPACOM tried to invite some Indonesian representatives to the Cobra Gold exercise in Thailand. This annual exercise is organized by the U.S. and Thailand (Peacock 2012). Several other countries have participated in this event.

During Wahid's administration, the Indonesian military shifted its orientation toward other countries like Russia for providing military equipment. Indonesia purchased SU-27s and SU-30s from Russia instead of F-16s from the U.S. which used to dominate the elite unit in the Indonesian Air Force. Many of the young top notch Indonesian Air Force officers were assigned to the Sukhoi squadron and sent to Russia for training. The decision was made because the Indonesian military personnel had limitation in taking part in the IMET programme after the ban imposed in 1992.

Following the WTC tragedy, the embargo set by European Union (EU) ended. This allowed the Indonesian military to access the EU market. Similarly, the Indonesian military also started receiving limited resumption of the IMET programme through E-IMET. The U.S. offered CTFP for the Indonesian military in 2002 (DOS 2002). Thus, there were increasing numbers of Indonesian military personnel studying in the U.S. as part of the professional military education programme.

In 2001 there were no Indonesian personnel attending any IMET programme. A year after, the number increased to 405 personnel in 2002 (DSCA 2011, 67). Yet, the incident in Freeport affected the number of personnel in which it was reduced to 276 based on the reduction of the IMET budget for the Indonesian military. In 2003, after improved cooperation by the Indonesian military in the Freeport investigation, the IMET budget allocation was levelled up. This facilitated the participation of 596 Indonesian military

personnel in the programme. Before the resumption, the number increased to 721 personnel and it was even increased to 933 after the full resumption in 2005.

Findings

Having observed from the U.S. side, there are several important points to acknowledge. First, there was a shift of priority of interest from containing communism in the beginning of the “IMET Ban” period to cooperating for counter-terrorism in the end of the “IMET Ban” period. This stance was taken by the U.S. government since it needed to secure its strategic interest in the region. Hence, partnership with Indonesia was important for the U.S. Despite all the dynamics that occurred in the early phase of this period, the U.S. attempted to approach the Indonesian government to help accommodate its Global War on Terror agenda after the WTC tragedy.

The Bush administration worked hard to negotiate with the Congress in allowing the IMET resumption for Indonesia. Since IMET itself is perceived as an principal indicator of the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations, the full resumption of the programme contributed significantly to accelerate the reengagement process between the two countries and militaries. The U.S. officially announced the full resumption of IMET in February 2005. This event started a new chapter of cooperation between the U.S. and Indonesia. Dynamics between political actors, either the executive leader and his cabinet or the legislative, has influenced the process of managing the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations. The roles of those political actors are viewed as another important point for analysis.

Additionally, the role of the U.S. military in influencing the president and the U.S. Congress is also acknowledged as another essential factor in the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations. Admiral Blair, USPACOM commander, tried to fight for the sustainability of a good defence relations between the two countries. The U.S. military also attempted to

maintain its engagement with the Indonesian military through the JCET programme. From 1993, the U.S. military used the programme to help build the capability of the Indonesian military. Yet, the programme had to be suspended in 1998 due to Congressional pressure.

In 2000, the U.S. military invited numerous Indonesian representatives to take part in a U.S.-organized joint exercise Cobra Gold in Thailand. In fact, after the 9/11, the U.S. military also recommended further cooperation with the Indonesian military. Having learned about the strategic importance of the country, the U.S. military represented by USPACOM sought a full resumption of the IMET programme. The U.S. military also deployed its personnel and units to assist the tsunami disaster relief operations. Based on the limitations of the Indonesian military in sea and airlift capability in this operations, the U.S. military saw first-hand the importance of reengaging with its Indonesian counterpart. The U.S. role in the “IMET Ban” period was quite influential. However, the Congressional pressure limited the ability of U.S. military to take the initiative in resuming the IMET programme for Indonesia.

The last factor that can be included in the analysis is the influence of human rights and lobby groups. The role played by these groups was influential in driving the Congressional pressure during the “IMET Ban” period. When the pro-Indonesia militias killed the UN workers and also fought with the pro-independence groups which causing large number of casualties, these groups started to bring more input to the U.S. Congress. In fact, they were able to meet personally with key senator like Patrick Leahy who recommended a stringent condition for the resumption of the IMET programme for the Indonesian military (personal communication, February 11, 2013).

Meanwhile, on the Indonesian side, conflicting interest had limited the ability of the country to adjust its policy with the U.S. government’s concern on human rights issue. Territorial integrity and unity of the country which became the priority of the Indonesian administrations was used to legalize any human rights violations in East Timor and some part

of the countries. Past experience in dealing with the invasion in East Timor in 1975 in which the country received full support from the U.S. government created a mindset that human rights issue would be overlooked by the U.S.

Therefore, the role of all the Indonesian presidents was really influential in this period. Various administrations adopted a slightly different policy. However, most of them perceived that the U.S. tried to intervene in Indonesia's internal affairs. The last two presidents were fortunate for having experienced 9/11 terrorist attacks which forced the shift of priority of interest towards Indonesia those of and conducting counter-terrorism operations together. The 9/11 terrorist attack is perceived as one of the turning points in the change of U.S. attitude. Additionally, the access given by Yudhoyono's administration to U.S. military's involvement in the Tsunami disaster relief operations was also viewed as another turning point in the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations. These two turning points helped restore the relations that led to a full resumption of the IMET programme.

In contrast, the Indonesian House of Representatives did not play a significant role in influencing the Indonesian executive branch despite a larger role that they had than in the previous period. The House of Representatives was not also able to interact with the U.S. Congress and help negotiate the resumption of the IMET programme for the Indonesian military. Meanwhile, the human rights NGOs and lobby groups in Indonesia showed a more substantial role in collaborating with other human rights groups. They worked together in bringing the human rights issue to attention of the U.S. Congress which later accommodated their concern and adopted the full ban on the programme.

For the Indonesian military, in the beginning of the "IMET Ban" period, interaction with their U.S. counterparts was still maintained since many of the leaders had U.S. educational background. However, during the "IMET Ban" period, particularly after the killing of the UN workers in 1999, the Indonesian military suffered from the full restriction in

engaging with the U.S. military. Throughout this period, there had been a significant decreasing amount of personnel taking part in the programme.

This restriction changed when the U.S. shifted its national interests' priority to combating terrorism. The shift allowed the Indonesian military to gain more access to U.S. military training programme. In 2004, Lieutenant Colonel Kustanto Widiatmoko attended the Intermediate Level Education (ILE) course at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) under the Counter Terrorism Fellowship Programme. This course was lastly participated by an Indonesian officer in 1993 under the IMET scheme (Indonesian Military, n.d.). In 2005, a full resumption took place and helped the Indonesian military to maintain its U.S. military equipment and update its U.S. based doctrine.

Discussion: Four Important Factors

Having observed the "IMET Ban" period, it is evident that there are four important factors which have influenced the process of granting the IMET program for Indonesia. First, is **the mutual interest between the two countries**. When both U.S. and Indonesia have mutual and complementary interests, the defence relations between the two are positive which facilitates access to IMET program for the Indonesian military personnel. When there were conflicting priority of interest between the two countries, good relations were difficult to maintain. At the end of the "Cold War" period when the Berlin Wall collapsed and the U.S. had no more near-peer competitor, the U.S. shifted its priority of interest from containing communism to supporting human rights as part of democracy. Meanwhile, the Indonesian government focused on its territorial integrity and unity even if detrimental to human rights. This conflicting priority of interest resulted in the IMET ban imposed by the U.S. Congress after the Indonesian military killed 50 civilians in the "Santa Cruz" tragedy in 1991. The

conflicting interest between the two countries lasted until 2001 and changed only after the WTC and Pentagon terrorist attacks.

The second factor is **the domestic politics in the two countries**. Politics itself covers the role of the executive and legislative branches, especially in the U.S. The president and his administration play an important role in maintaining the defence relations with a partner country like Indonesia. During the “Cold War” period, President Ford approved the plan proposed by President Suharto to deal with East Timor in a meeting at Camp David in 1975. Similarly, the U.S. military which was represented by USPACOM also provided assistance for the Indonesian military. By the same token, President Carter, Reagan, and Bush also expressed their willingness to support Indonesia in containing the sphere of influence of communism and dealing with its internal communist threat.

Nevertheless, the situation was a bit different when President Clinton was in the office. He started his administration when the IMET ban had been imposed by the U.S. Congress. With the pressures he had from the Congress, he had limited flexibility in maintaining the relations with Indonesia. In fact, he imposed a ban on military transfer for Indonesia in 1999 after the killing of three UN workers in East Timor. He also put pressure on Indonesian government to invite an international presence to help dealing with the East Timor issue. Different attitudes demonstrated by the U.S. presidents highlight the importance of the role of president as part of the politics factor.

Similarly, the role of the President of the Republic of Indonesia is also critical in maintaining defence relations between the two countries. President Suharto had a very good relationship with the U.S. presidents during the “Cold War” period. He made several visits to the U.S. while he was in office. He also accepted a number of visits organized by the U.S. presidents. However, by the end of the period, President Suharto felt that Congressional ban

had humiliated Indonesia. This consideration encouraged him to refuse the E-IMET program and cancel the plan to buy the F-16s offered by the U.S. government.

By the same token, other presidents like Megawati and Yudhoyono, also demonstrated their influence in the process. Megawati visited the U.S. just a few days after the WTC incident which signalled a positive gesture for cooperating with the U.S. in dealing with terrorism. In the same way, Yudhoyono also accepted the U.S. offer to help in coping with the post tsunami relief operations. It is obvious that the roles of the presidents of the two countries are critical in shaping the political process.

Nevertheless, the decision making process of determining U.S. aid to Indonesia is heavily influenced by the U.S. Congress. As a country which grants the IMET program for partner countries, the U.S. has full authority to decide who receives it and how much. Since the U.S. Congress controls the appropriation of money, its approval is required for countries to receive IMET funds. Therefore, U.S. Congress is also viewed as a key player in the politics. Due to the Congressional ban on IMET fund to Indonesia imposed in 1992 the U.S. government and military were restricted from providing the IMET program to Indonesia. Despite the efforts to influence the Congress, the IMET program was still constrained by the limitation set by the Congress. In fact, the Leahy Amendment which was proposed in 1997 put more restriction on the Indonesian military since it requires a vetting process to certify whether the candidate for the IMET program is free from any human rights violation record.

In contrast, the role of Indonesia's House of Representatives is not as influential as the U.S. Congress in the 1990s. The decision to cancel the purchase of F-16s and refuse the offered E-IMET program was taken by President Suharto without consulting with the House of Representatives. Additionally, there was no solid interaction between Indonesia's House of Representatives and the U.S. Congress. In fact, Indonesia also did not have pro Indonesian NGOs and lobby groups which could influence the Congress in the U.S. Unlike its

neighbouring country, Philippines, Indonesia was not able to counter NGOs and lobby groups which focused on human rights issue. When the East Timor massacre was brought to the U.S. Congress, the IMET ban on Indonesian military was subsequently imposed.

The third factor which should be accounted in the analysis is **the role of military from the two countries in defence relations**. In the first period, both militaries had a very good interaction. Since many Indonesian military personnel received some of their professional military education in the U.S., they adopted the U.S. doctrine in their organization. Additionally, Indonesia also used a large amount of U.S. military equipment, including aircraft and weapons. Though the U.S. Congress had imposed IMET ban on Indonesian military after the East Timor massacre, the U.S. military still attempted to maintain the connection with their Indonesian counterparts.

USPACOM commanders, like Admiral Blair, testified before the Senate and highlighted the importance on maintaining good relations with Indonesia. He proposed that IMET program would help the U.S. engage with the Indonesian military. Furthermore, the USPACOM also developed an alternate way by organizing the JCET program for Indonesia's special operations forces. Yet, the program was ended in 1998 when the Congress put pressure on Clinton's administration to restrict all engagement with the Indonesian military. In addition to JCET, the U.S. military recommended the E-IMET program as a solution to facilitate access for the Indonesian military to the IMET program. Despite all the ups and downs throughout the period, the U.S. military managed to stay close with the Indonesian military. When the full resumption was granted, the U.S. military started to intensify its interaction with Indonesia's armed forces. However, Kopassus is still being limited by the Leahy Amendment due to its past record on human rights issue. It is clear that military plays an essential role in influencing the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations.

The fourth important factor to consider is **other players like NGOs or lobby groups**. As explained earlier in the analysis, both NGOs and lobby groups were able to influence the U.S. Congress. Those NGOs and lobby groups which focused on human rights issue shared their concerns with the Congress. Since the Congress plays a key role in the budget and therefore the decision making process, the efforts of those groups influenced the decisions. As a result, a ban was imposed on the Indonesian military from accessing the U.S. IMET program. So, in understanding the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations, it is also necessary to take into account other players like NGOs and lobby groups.

Conclusion

This article identifies the mutual priority of interests, the domestic political factors including the role of executive and legislative branches, the role of the military, and also other players like the NGOs and lobby groups as important factors which have affected the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations in the “IMET Ban” period. The dynamics which involves all these factors and actors, has dominated the interaction between the U.S and Indonesia that affects the decision making concerning IMET for the Indonesian military.

All the lessons learned of the "IMET Ban" period is thus, essential for both the United States and Indonesia in helping them manage their defence relations, especially in the Trump Administration. President Trump currently prioritises his domestic interests and also has a lesser interest in the Southeast Asia region (Kolmaš and Kolmašová 2019, 68). Despite this fact, the interaction between factors and actors in the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations will still be the same.

Furthermore, the key lessons learned during the “IMET Ban” period will help the Joko Widodo Administration develop its policy in engaging with the major powers, particularly the United States. In the post “IMET Ban” period, Indonesia has continuously

organised bilateral defence cooperation activities with the U.S. military, which helps refine its military tactics and doctrines. This is critical for the modernisation of Indonesia's TNI as desired by President Widodo.

With the beginning of his second term, Widodo's new defence minister, Prabowo Subianto, has met the U.S. Secretary of Defence, Mark Esper, during the ADMM-Plus in Bangkok, Thailand (Nathalia 2019). As a former graduate of the U.S. military training and education, Prabowo knows better how to deal with the United States. He has also experienced the disadvantages of the "IMET Ban" period where he was banned from entering the country (Jakarta Post 2019). Therefore, lessons learned during this period will guide him in managing the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations amidst the trade war between the United States and China.

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