

## The Reasons Behind Indonesia's Unwillingness To Join The Military Coalition Of Saudi Arabia Against Global Terrorism

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### Abstract

This paper studies and analyses the reasons of which Indonesia refuses to join the military coalition initiated by Saudi Arabia against global terrorism. In general, there are two reasons for Indonesia to reject to join the military coalition. Firstly, the principles of foreign policy Indonesia embodying are active free policy as well as a non-aligned movement which make it possible for the country not to participate or take a side with any superpower countries. Secondly, Indonesia has its steps to counter the action of terrorism by using a soft approach. Therefore, Indonesia has no interest in joining the coalition with Saudi Arabia formed due to its hard power and approached through the military to combat the issue. This research uses the theory of rational choice to analyse foreign policy making influenced by Indonesian domestic factors towards the creation of the Saudi Arabia's coalition which incorporated the Indonesian name unilaterally into the coalition member's list.

**Keywords:** Terrorism, the military coalition of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, foreign policy, rational choice theory

### Introduction

Terrorism has long been threatening the peace of the world in almost all aspects of life. In fact, it is always correlated to Islamic Religion since this stigma has been formed through the uses of Islamic attributes and symbols in the majority of global terrorist attacks. The actions, thus, have a negative impact on Moslems around the world especially those in Saudi Arabia as the oldest Muslim nation in the world. Therefore, Saudi Arabia actively responds to terrorist groups carrying out the actions in the name of Islam through forming a military coalition on December 15, 2015, which has a command base in Riyadh. Defense Minister Mohammad bin Salman formed the coalition and unilaterally profited 34 countries without making any coordination before the formation of the coalition (Sapiie, 2015).

The military coalition aims to combat terrorism in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt, Afghanistan, ISIS and any global group of terrorists. However, the Defense Minister of Saudi Arabia did not provide further information regarding the coalition. In the statement delivered at the air base of King Salman in Riyadh, The Minister announced the establishment of an Islamic military coalition that should be comprised by 34 countries out of a total of 57 member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to tackle the terrorist issues without further detail explanation regarding the coalition (Aziz, 2016) . Therefore, the speculation arises that the coalition is a form of Saudi Arabia measures only to pacify western countries as they assume that Muslim nations did not make enough effort to combat terrorist and extremists. With the establishment of the coalition, it might be possible that Saudi Arabia exercises its interests in the Sunni-Syiah conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

On the other hand, the term of "terrorism" becomes increasingly unclear on both sides between Saudi Arabia and Iraq allowing them to accuse each other as a terrorist due to the prolonged conflict between the two. The Defense Minister of Saudi Arabia put twelve Hizbullah leaders into the terrorist watch list. Saudi explained that Hizbullah is behind the chaos caused by global criminal acts and terrorism. Meanwhile, Hizbullah argued that the coalition has provoked and only worsen the situation. Similarly, the chairman of Iraq and Security Committee stated that the coalition does not represent Islam. Supporting the argument, Iraq Prime Minister, revealed that some of the coalition members were unwilling to make the military contribution to the alliance (Aziz, 2016).

The Iranian government also supported the statement released by Iraq. The country's foreign minister claims that the formation of the alliance only worsens the situation in Syria and would only further aggravate the situation between both sides. As a result, the case gets heated up, and the efforts to bring peace will be even more difficult. On the opposite direction, Saudi has stated that Iran is acting in support to terrorists in Lebanon and

Iraq, resulted in a detrimental effect to Syria and Yemen (Aziz, 2016).

The same as several countries opposing the coalition such as Pakistan, Indonesia firmly opposes the coalition and affirms that the state will not join any military coalition because of its active free foreign policy as well as non-alignment movement. Thus, it is almost impossible for Indonesia to participate and take a side with any superpower countries (Habib, 1997). Indonesia also affirmed that it has its way of countering terrorism which is through a soft approach and refused to join Saudi Arabia's coalition which uses the hard path on tackling the issue (Angriani, 2015).

Accordingly, the research problem of this paper is "Why does Indonesia refuse to join Saudi Arabian Coalition to combat global terrorism?"

### **Research Methodology**

The research in this paper uses library resources with qualitative data analysis of materials collected from various books, journals, the internet, and other related resources. The theory of rational choice by Graham T. Allison is selected to analyse the two underlying reasons for Indonesia's refusal. The theory is used to investigate whether the coalition brings positive or negative impacts to Indonesia. Also, the theory will be utilised to examine foreign policy making influenced by domestic factors towards the coalition.

### **The Coalition Military of Saudi Arabia against Global Terrorism**

On December 15, 2015, Saudi Arabian government announced the formation of a 34 Nation coalition to combat global terrorism. This coalition is aimed to fight all kinds of terrorist groups. Included in the coalition are Egypt, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Malaysia, Pakistan, some Gulf countries and several African countries. Saudi Arabia stated that the countries mentioned decided to join the coalition to counter terrorism. The operation centre is stationed in Riyadh to coordinate and support military operations. Unfortunately, Iran is not included in the list since Iran has well known in its rivalry with Saudi Arabia. Both of the countries have been fighting for influence in the Middle East.

According to Saudi Arabian Minister of Defense, not only that the coalition will fight ISIS, but also it will combat against all forms of terrorist groups. The Minister further added that terrorism is a serious offence against the dignity and human rights, especially the right to life and security. He looks at several pieces of evidence of some countries, including Arabian and African, suffering from terrorism to ensure that the problem requires collective efforts, one of which is through the formation of the coalition (Aziz, 2016).

Additionally, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister, Adel Al-Juberi during an interview with the Sydney Morning Herald said that this Saudi-led coalition will share information, training, and equipment, and the provision of necessary military assistance in the fight against militant groups such as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Al-Qaeda and another kind group of terrorist. All in all, several possibilities will be undertaken, even if to field the army, to show the strong willingness of Saudi Arabia to support the movement and there is no limit for the members to ask for help (Browning & Irish, 2015b).

Saudi Arabia has decided the commander of the coalition with General Raheel Sharif appointed on January 6, 2017. General Sharif is a former Army Chief of Staff of Pakistan, retired on November 29, 2016. In the appointment, the commander proposed three conditions which then being approved by Saudi Arabian government (N. Ahmad, 2017). The three conditions are (1) Iran must be invited to and included as a coalition member, (2) work independently without orders and pressure from anyone or not there is a higher command than him, and (3) given a mandate as the mediator of the coalition members if there is a mutual disagreement. General Sharif himself was a victorious general in performing his duties. During the period as the Commander of the Pakistan Armed Forces (2013-2016), he succeeded reduce 70% of terrorist attacks in Pakistan (I. Ahmad, 2017).

### **Principles and Purposes of Islamic Military Coalition to Fight Terrorism**

#### **Principles**

Saudi Arabian government states that the Islamic Military Coalition will operate in line with the United Nation, Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), and other international conventions and will continue to commit to the provision of the charter of the UN and OIC. The Saudi government also asserts the right of every coalition member to defend itself by its objectives and principles of international laws, the Charter of the UN and

the basis of the provision of the OIC convention on combating terrorism in all its form and manifestations (Rasha & Moran, 2015).

### **Purposes**

The coalition is in the forming phase and has yet to generate a specific framework of cooperation. However, the purposes of the coalition, in general, are as follows (Browning & Irish, 2015a):

- Seek coordination in combating terrorism in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Libya and Afghanistan.
- Against international and regional terrorist organisations, assisting members participating in fighting all crime group with the provision of military support.
- To protect all members against the threat of terrorism.
- To overcome and combat other terrorist groups.

In its development, the Islamic Military Coalition will help the members to counter terrorism in a better and planned way. This partnership will be based on sharing data intelligence, training, preparing and providing military support. The coalition will also have the focus of joint operations that will facilitate and strengthen military action to tackle terrorist issues (Abbasi, 2016).

### **Indonesia's Unwillingness to Join the Military Coalition**

Indonesia is included on the lists of coalition members which is claimed unilaterally by Saudi Arabia without prior informing Indonesian authorities. Upon knowing the coalition, Indonesian government directly ordered its ambassador in Saudi Arabia to request a clarification from the Saudi side, and what did the Saudi offered for the cooperation (Angriani, 2015). Shortly after that, Indonesia then decided not to join the coalition since The Saudi authority failed to provide more details regarding the coalition. However, the main reason behind the country's refusal is because Saudi Arabia uses hard approach to combat terrorism and it has exceptionally not in line with Indonesia's soft approach and non-aligned movement in handling terrorism (Mohamad & Hanggoro, 2016). The ways by which Indonesian government is dealing with the ISIS and other terrorist groups by using a soft approach reflected through socialising Islam as the religion of peace and affection.

### **Principles of Indonesian Foreign Policies**

According to the book *Plan of Strategic Implementation of Foreign Policy of the Indonesian Republic (1984-1988)*, foreign policy can be defined as the policy taken by the government about the international world in the effort to achieve national goals. While implementing the policy, Indonesian foreign policy has a foundation generated under the ideology and the philosophy of the nation which are Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution respectively. The two foundations will not be changed in the future. Regarding, the foreign policy, it is stated in the introduction of the 1945 Constitution that (Wuryandari et al., 2008):

*"That freedom is indeed the right of all nationalities, and, therefore, the colonisation of the world must be abolished, because of it incompatible with humanity.*

*Moreover, the struggle for Indonesian independent movement has arrived at a happy moment of safe deliverance the people of Indonesia to the front gate of state independence Indonesia, which is independent, united, sovereign, equitable and prosperous.*

*For the blessings of Allah the Almighty and by being pushed by the noble desire, to live free nationhood, then the people of Indonesia declared with this independence."*

The above paragraph of Indonesian 1945 Constitution indicates that the assertion of the Indonesian government to defend its independence against invaders in all its forms which is incompatible with humanity and justice. Reflecting on that stance, Indonesia then will fight for freedom, peace and social justice independently.

Pancasila as the Indonesian ideological foundation, whose points also contained in the fourth paragraph of the 1945 Constitution, considered by Muhammad Hatta (1977) as one of elements that form Indonesian foreign policy (Wuryandari et al., 2008). The five precepts of Pancasila contain basic guidelines and frameworks for the implementation of the ideal nation, covering all aspects of lives. He added that Pancasila is one of the most influential factors defining the foreign policy. Since Pancasila unites the nation, no political parties and groups can enforce the country's politics from disobeying Pancasila (Sabir, 1987).

### Active Free Politics

Mochtar Kusumaatmadja explained that active free politics interpreted as free, in the sense that Indonesia is impartial a power that is incompatible with the personality of the nation as reflected in Pancasila. Active means that are carrying out its foreign policy, Indonesia does not be passive-reactive about its international events, but be active.” (Kusumaatmadja & Kusumohamidjojo, 1983). The principle of active free politics was first initiated by Mohammad Hatta, who was the first Vice President of Indonesia. He delivered the statement in the front of the Worker Cabinet Board (KNIP/Parlement) on September 2, 1948, following the excerpt of the speech:

*“But we should be Indonesians, who are fighting for the independence of our nation and country, have to choose between pro-Russian or Pro-American? Is there no other stand should we take in pursuit of our ideas? We should not be objects in the political struggles international, but we must remain the subject of that right to determine our attitude, right to fight our own goal, that is Indonesia fully independent.” (Hatta, 1988)*

The principle of Indonesian foreign policy has been contained within the above statement, although Mohammad Hatta does not explicitly mention the term “Active-Free”. According to Hatta, foreign policy is freely active contains two fundamental elements that are “Free” and “Active”. He links it to the international context during the cold war. Politics “Free” is interpreted as Indonesia is not in the two hostile blocks and has its way of dealing with international issues. While the term “Active” means the effort to work harder to keep peace and easing tensions between the two blocks (Hatta, 1953).

### Operationalization of The Principles of Active Free Politics

The active free principle then becomes an operational foundation for Indonesian foreign policy, tailored to the interests of national applicable in every period of Government in Indonesia. During President Soekarno’s era, the foundation of the operationalisation of Indonesian foreign policy contained in his speech “The Way of Our Revolution (Jarek)” on August 17, 1960. He stated that:

*We are not neutral; we are not empty-spectator than events in this world, we are not without principle, we are not without stance. We carry out the free policy is not just a “wash a hand”, not just defensively, not just apologetically. We are active; we are the principle, we stand! Our Principle is Pancasila, our standpoint is actively leading to peace and the welfare of the world, active towards the friendship of all nations, active toward the disappearance of the exploitation, actively opposed and hit all sorts of imperialism whenever it may be. Our “active and free” stance is, actively also step by step the footprint should be reflected in the economic relationship with the outside country, so as not to be heavy to the West or the East” (Habib, 1997).*

In the above speech, President Soekarno highlighted that Indonesia is not a passive state that only became a spectator of the international event. However, the country has its principle and stance towards any global issues based on Pancasila. While the country’s “active” role is reflected through maintaining world peace and against imperialism and colonialism, this stance is reflected from its neutral stance against the western and eastern blocks.

The Indonesian foreign policy is also mentioned within the speech of President Soekarno in the XV General Assembly of the United Nations titled Rebuilding the World as “Details of Guidelines for the Implementation of the Political Manifesto of the Republic of Indonesia” and in the outlines of Indonesia foreign policy with Decision of the Supreme Advisory Council No.2/kpts/Sd/I/61 dated January 19, 1961. The latter highlights the politics of foreign policy which is active free, anti-imperialism and colonialism and has the following objectives (Habib, 1997): a) Serving in the struggle for Indonesian national independence. b) Devoted to the struggle for national independence of whole nations in the world. c) Serving in the struggle to defend the world peace.

### Indonesia Uses a Soft Approach to Dealing with Terrorists

A constructivism approach is used for the analysis in explaining the reasons behind Indonesia’s refusal to join the Saudi Arabian coalition. Building on Cristian Reus-Smit’s opinion that takes a policy by the actor will be based on four considerations which are Ideographic, Purposive, Ethical, and Instrumental (Smit, 2014).

1. Ideographic

Besides being one of the largest population of Muslim countries in the world, Indonesia was also known as a moderate Muslim nation because it has values of tolerance, peaceful love, and non-violence. Moderate Islam initially introduced by Abdurrahman Wahid/Gus Dur who always uphold the values of tolerance among religious people. Islam moderate is a window to see Islam that is not blind to tradition, collaborate between religious and multicultural people, and not giddy in the face of global change (Umam, 2010).

The former chairman of Muhammadiyah, Din Syamsuddin stated that the term of moderate Islam is derived from an Arabic term *al-din al-washatiyah* which means “class or middle religion”, and not extreme. He added that Islam in Indonesia is distinguishable compared to other countries, especially those in the Middle East. The reason behind this is that Islam was firstly spread across Indonesia peacefully. The socio-cultural background of the country also has a significant impact on creating a peaceful, moderate, inclusive, tolerant, and non-violence Indonesian Islam (Swasty, 2015). In addition to that, the Vice Chairman Socialization of the People’s Consultative Assembly, ZainutTauhid also added that Moderate Islam is a concept where Islam can be harmonious with cultural values in society. However, it also embraces the new values that continue to emerge as long as they are still beneficial to people (Rochmat, 2016).

The Indonesian government also sounded the concept during the leadership of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono who explained that Islam could still in line and harmonious with the Indonesian civilisation. He further explained the statement, adding that “In Indonesia, Islam democracy, and modernity go hand in hand effortlessly” (Cochrane, 2009).

## 2. Purposive

Purposive considerations relate to the objectives to be achieved. As terrorist attacks have occurred 69 times from 1999 to 2016 in Indonesia, in this case, the considerations have been associated with the effort and commitment of the government to overcome and eradicate terrorism. The attacks certainly have a significant impact on Indonesia since it has directly threatened the survival of Indonesia as sovereign and united state reflecting on considerably substantial losses and fatalities in Indonesian side many of which are targeted essential objects and crowded public spaces (Wijayaka, 2016).

## 3. Ethical

Ethical considerations related to the norms applied by the Indonesian government in counter-terrorism policy. The government puts forward a softer approach to handle terrorist issues. The approach is the one that prioritises integrated as well as full actions in addressing the problem of radicalism from its sources. The approach uses powerful means such as dialogue and public participation in countering radicalism (Angriani, 2015).

The current Indonesian president, JokoWidodo, in his early leadership period noticed that other approaches could be used to overcome the terrorism-related issues. As such, through using soft approach instead of the opposite one, religious and cultural approaches could be the good examples (Mazrieva, 2017). Similarly, the current coordinating Minister of Political, Legal and Security Affairs, Luhut Bisnar Pandjaitan, emphasised that the failure of using violence to combat terrorism in several countries such as Afghanistan and Syria should be considered as a warning for not repeating the same mistakes made by other countries. Hence, a soft approach is seen to be more useful to be undertaken (Angriani, 2015).

## 4. Instrumental

Instrumental considerations relate to the institutions appointed by the Indonesian government in generating counter-terrorism policies, namely National Agency for Counter-Terrorism (BNPT). It is a non-ministerial department (LPNK) which carries out the government’s duties in the field of counter-terrorism. BNPT was established through the Indonesian president’s Regulation Number 46 of 2010 regarding national Agency for Counter-Terrorism whose now led by its Commissioner-General SuhardiAlius who was inaugurated on July 20, 2016 (Angriani, 2016). In doing its roles, BNPT uses two strategies to counter terrorism which are counter-radicalisation and deradicalisation program.

a. Counter-radicalization is the program aimed at people who have not been exposed to fundamental understanding such as counter propaganda activities, counter-narratives, socialisation, supervision of people, firearm, ammunition, explosives, vigilant activities, as well as the protection of critical national objects and public facilities (Rabasa et al., 2011).

b. Deradicalization program is interpreted as a process of shifting an extremist’s view from its false interpretation into the views that using violence to influence social change is unacceptable. Mainly, the



deradicalisation is an attempt to convince terrorist groups and their supporters to abandon violence approaches. Besides delivering the program through consultation is given to terrorist prisoners, deradicalisation has also reached Islamic boarding schools through developing assistance for them (Rabasa et al., 2011).

c.

### Conclusion

The Islamic attribution used under terrorist actions on behalf of jihad has led to the global stigma towards the Muslim community. It has a negative impact on Moslems around the world since terrorism is not part of Islamic value. Unfortunately, it is blatantly apparent that the stigma was used for a political interest by some groups. Saudi Arabia, for example, formed a military coalition to combat global terrorism through unilaterally claim. However, several countries included in the coalition by the Saudi government, have no interest in joining the coalition. As such, Indonesia refuses to be added to the list because the coalition used a hard approach to tackle the issue while the country's stance towards combating terrorism is not to put forward the military.

As a result, Indonesia declared not to join the coalition and had a different way to address the terrorism-related issues. According to the book plan of Strategic Implementation of Foreign Politics of the Indonesian Republic (1984-1988), the foreign policy defined as a policy generated by the government about the international effort to achieve national goals. Throughout its implementation, Indonesian foreign policy has a foundation coming from the country's ideals of life and philosophy which are Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution respectively. The two foundations will not be changed in the future. Also, Indonesian foreign policy and stance have clearly outlined in the 1945 Constitution.

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