

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**FIGHTING EXTREMISM THROUGH COOPERATION  
AN INDONESIAN PERSPECTIVE**

**BY**

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**Background**

Since 2002, Indonesia has been a victim to four major attacks, namely the first Bali bombings, the J.W. Marriott Hotel bombing, the Australian Embassy bombing, and the second Bali bombings. All these terrorist atrocities killed hundreds and injured many. Prior to that, from 1999 through 2000 a chain of attacks and church bombings struck Indonesia during the Christmas season. In addition, there were religious and communal conflicts in Ambon and Poso instigated by radical groups who exacerbated the conflict through provocation by using extremist religious ideology.

A number of reasons used to explain the causes of terrorism include poverty, low level of education, feeling of oppression, sense of marginalization, etc. All this then culminates in a feeling of injustice that is exploited and manipulated by using radical ideology in the name of religion.

That is why a counter-terrorism strategy that is only focused on the use of only physical force or harsh law enforcement measures would not be effective. What is required is a counter-radicalization effort through humane approaches (soft power).

During the past two years, Indonesia saw no major terrorist attacks. I am not saying, however, that we have fully eliminated terrorism. Despite having significantly weakened the terrorists, potential seeds of terror still linger because terrorism is a political cum ideological motivated crime.

Today we are facing a similar threat.

### Indonesia's Experience

In charge of counter-terrorism for five years, I have learned that physical measures alone are not sufficient to deal with terrorism. The ideology of terror is such that success in using hard power

throughout the process of raids, capture, detention, imprisonment and capital punishment fails to stop the terrorists.

A radical ideological movement using violence is not a new in Indonesia. For more than fifty years, we have been dealing with such movements. In the 1950s, a radical movement named Darul Islam (the mother organization of Jamaah Islamiyah) launched violent attacks. In facing this threat, we used military force and draconian laws. Many of the leaders of this movement were captured or killed in military operations, or executed after sentencing. During the 1980s this movement reemerged. Once again we used military operations and applied draconian laws. On the one hand we succeeded in suppressing this movement, however the results were short lived at best.

The leadership of today's radical group comprise of children, grand children or relatives of those who were killed or executed in the past.

Let us look at developments in Indonesia during the last five years.

After the first Bali bombings in 2002, all the perpetrators were arrested, tried and sentenced. However, the following year, 2003,

the same group attacked the J.W. Marriot Hotel. Once again, the perpetrators were arrested, tried and sentenced. Nevertheless, in 2004 the Australian Embassy was attacked. The perpetrators were arrested, tried and sentenced. Finally, in 2005, the same group launched another attack in Bali.

This tells us that law enforcement alone is not sufficient for dealing with this problem.

There is no doubt that the group responsible for those terrorist attacks was al Jamaah al Islamiyah (JI), a group that derives its motivation from a radical religious conviction. However, it stems from a narrow-minded and shallow interpretation that according to moderate religious leaders is wrong-headed and extreme in nature. Using this sort of radical religious ideology, extremist groups propagate hate and animosity among religions and among nations to win followers. At the same time, they call for revenge for injustice using force and terror. Their calls for action are the opposite to the tenets of all religions that resist violence, including Islam.

A string of investigations and court proceedings have proved that many of the terrorist attacks bear the involvement of al Jamaah al

Islamiyah. Some 450 suspects have been captured, 253 have been tried in courts, while the rest are in the process of being brought to justice.

A large measure of our success is the result of international and regional cooperation between law enforcement, intelligence and security agencies. We have enjoyed training programmes, strengthened networking, and effective capacity-building and excellent intelligence exchanges. Such cooperation has led to our being able to stop JI plans, arrest suspects and capture its key masterminds, including most recently Abu Dujana.

Facing this challenge, the Government of Indonesia has responded by launching a two-pronged basic counter-terrorism strategy. First, transparent and just physical measure by law enforcement agencies. Second, innovative use of soft power through programmes to do away with radical teachings and neutralize the dangerous ideology, which hijacks religion as a pretext to commit violence.

In action, the two approaches are executed simultaneously. For instance, suspects are given soft and humane treatment throughout

the process of law enforcement from investigation to bringing them to justice to their imprisonment.

In a bid to defeat the extremist campaign of call to violence, religious and racial hatred and animosity, we encourage the voice of reason by moderate religious leaders. They call for tolerance, pluralism, and peace in academic discourses, television and radio programmes, in printed media and in cultural medium such as the *wayang* (shadow puppet).

### Strategy for the Future

Terrorism is not a conventional crime. It is politically or ideologically motivated. The complex and changing nature of the terrorist networks requires us to continually reassess and renew the measures traditionally used.

Therefore, a creative and non-conventional strategy is needed to deal with this crime. The strategy should be focused on countering radical ideology through a programme of deradicalization.

Programme of deradicalization could take the following form:

- Develop alternatives to radical ideology through partnerships with religious leaders and religious organizations.
- Emphasize moderate teachings and non-violent resolutions to religious conflict through massive religious education campaigns.
- Provide courses in history, technology and science to religious clerics, *pesantren* heads and their students (*santri*) that would enhance *pesantren* curricula and the style of pedagogy. Islamic schools of higher learning would be active partners in facilitating such collaborative efforts to broaden the scientific horizons of *pesantren* and their student boy.
- Rehabilitation programs, during police detention and imprisonment, would be aimed at turning former terrorists into provident members of their families and communities. Through this programme we can carefully identify those who would be cooperative and are susceptible to work with us. Follow-up socialization programmes would monitor the development of these former terrorists and provide ongoing training to improve their social and mental competence. Through these programmes, we would be able to break the recruitment network by collaborating with former leaders of militant cells and organizations who disagree to using violence and terrorism.

- Massive book distribution programme that would introduce persuasive and balanced studies of Islam and comparative religion through school libraries and religious study groups.
- Media strategies would be designed to neutralize radical media campaigns and their ability to rally public sympathy.

Thank you.