

“Expanding and Strengthening the U.S.-Indonesia Security Partnership: The Military Education Component”

An Open Forum with

Prof. Dr. Juwono Sudarsono

Professor of International Relations at the University of Indonesia; Former Indonesian Defense Minister (1999-2000 and 2004-2009); USINDO Advisor

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The United States and Indonesia have both been partners in security and defense matters for a number of decades. The launch of the Comprehensive Partnership Agreement (CPA) in 2010 further signifies the growing strategic partnership between Jakarta and Washington, including in the area of professional military education.

On March 20, 2012 USINDO hosted an Open Forum panel discussion with three distinguished academics with an extensive knowledge and first-hand experience in military education programs. Each of these panelists discussed military education in both Indonesia and the United States and how cooperation in military education

between the two countries can benefit them greatly.

Prof. Dr. Juwono Sudarsono spoke of the need of cooperation in military education in the context of Indonesia's democracy.

Prof. Juwono began his speech by saying that there is a need for cooperation between the United States and Indonesia in military education -a message that he conveyed twelve years ago at USINDO Open Forum in Washington DC. This is mainly because the Indonesian army, navy and air force military officers form a very important component to nation building and democracy building in Indonesia.

He further maintained that as part of democracy building in Indonesia, military education plays an essential role in strengthening the national defense system, in that it helps military officers prepare the defense strategy which solidifies the essence democracy.

Prof. Juwono also stated that democracy building should be supported by economic democracy. There can be no sustained democracy without economic democracy. Further, military education should be substantially rooted in the culture and realities of the Indonesian economy.

Based on the above context, Prof. Juwono encouraged Indonesian young military officers to study other essential fields, especially economics because in reality there is simply not enough money to provide an adequate defense budget. Furthermore, it can also help them to master better planning and budgeting, as well as to ensure the process is transparent and accountable.

Related to the point of transparency and accountability, Prof. Juwono also stated that the Indonesian military is supportive of the elected civilian leaders and look to them to further consolidate Indonesia's democracy.

Prof. Juwono emphasized that a long-term relationship between Indonesia and the United States depends on the professionalization of the militaries of both countries, so that the two partners can understand the depth and the present role of the military in Indonesia's democracy.

Dr. Michael S. Malley, who has himself taught Indonesian military officers, discussed how education is needed for the progress of the Indonesian military. Many people discuss two main components of the U.S-Indonesian comprehensive partnerships: education and security cooperation. But only a handful of people discuss the intersection of these two components, which is a military education.

Dr. Malley stated that strengthening cooperation in military education is important to provide a stronger foundation for the U.S.-Indonesian security partnership.

He explained that the Naval Post-Graduate School (NPS) provides postgraduate education for military officers and civilian defense workers from around the world including those from Indonesia. One of the aims of NPS is to educate professionals, mostly military officers, on the countries they might work in, such as Southeast Asia. Students from foreign ministries can also study at NPS, typically in short courses.

NPS has also run courses in cooperation with the Indonesian Defense University.

Comparing military education between the U.S. and Indonesia, Dr. Malley said it is not uncommon for U.S. military officers to earn Master's degrees in military institutions or even civilian institutions. This flexibility helps them acquire more extensive experience and wide-ranging realms of critical thinking.

He believes it would be beneficial if this were possible for Indonesian military officers as well. Some steps have been taken, thanks to the U.S.-Indonesian military education partnerships including one between the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey and the Indonesian Defense University. He called for more universities to develop programs furthering US-Indonesia military education cooperation, including cooperation in broad education fields as well as security fields, and open to both military officers and civilians in the military.

Prof. Dr. Sri Hartati Suradijono described the importance of education for military officers to ensure the quality of the military. She quoted Jean Victor Allard, former Canadian Defense Chief of Staff, who said: *"It matters little whether the [Canadian] Forces have their present manpower strength and financial budget, or half of them, or double them; without a properly educated, effectively trained, professional officer corps, the Forces would, in the future, be doomed to, at the best, mediocrity; at the worst, disaster."*

Prof. Hartati pointed out that there still confusion between the terms 'training' and 'education' especially in the

military. "Training" is focused on a predictable response to a predictable situation, while "education" provides the reasoning to respond to an unpredictable situation. Critical thinking is important in the face of the unknown. In this regard, education can shape the mind and help one to think critically, creatively and scientifically.

She also emphasized that officers and soldiers must have intercultural and cross-cultural competence, which is the ability to adapt and meet with people from other cultures.

A combination of education, intercultural competence and ethics would create officers that will be able to adapt to a wide range of unpredictable situations.

Currently, the Indonesian Defense University (IDU) is trying to spread this principle to other National Defense Universities abroad. IDU also aims to create strategic leaders, who have strategic vision and critical thinking.

However she said she still perceives some reluctance by either the officers themselves or their superiors to pursue advanced higher education ; higher education for some military officers is still undervalued.

Prof. Hartati also spoke about the need for assistance from other countries such as the United States in creating a cross cultural network and increasing the general exposure and competencies of military officers in Indonesia. Of course, teaching English to military officers in Indonesia is a continuing requirement to improve military

education cooperation between the U.S. and Indonesia.

Questions and Answers

Q: What partnerships does the Indonesian Defense University have with other universities and what kind of partnerships are they?

Prof. Hartati: IDU works with the United Kingdom's Defense University as well as military education institutions in other countries including Australia and China. For example, if IDU students are in an exchange program with another national defense university abroad, IDU will pay for the travel fares while the tuition fees will be the responsibility of the host university.

Q: To Dr. Malley: what is your comment on the capacity of cooperation between the private and military sectors?

Dr. Malley: One of the ways in which you help to ensure an efficient outcome in a defense contract is to get educated people on both sides of a transaction. If one side is well represented and one side is poorly represented, then the well represented side will win. If you want to avoid that, you need to be better educated, first on the engineering side, probably also on the business side.

Q: How do people get chosen into IDU?

Dr. Hartati: The IDU would put entrance announcements in the media. Anyone can apply to IDU. There are no tuition fees as accepted students will receive a scholarship. There are students from the TNI as well as from the Defense Ministry (Menhan). Prospective students

from the TNI are usually sent from their units, but some apply directly. Prospective civilian students may apply directly. However, IDU is looking for quality not quantity. The courses are limited to 35 students each.

All prospective students must possess an S1 (Bachelor's) Degree and pass both a TOEFL exam and a TPA (Academic Potential Test) exam. After the tests, prospective students will also undergo an interview. Courses at IDU are conducted full time and students are expected to be able to attend courses full time as well.

Q: One of the more controversial issues in the U.S.-Indonesia military cooperation has been resuming training with Kopassus. People have strong and sometimes differing views on this. However, the current predominant view seems to be that today's and tomorrow's Kopassus should not be penalized for the actions of the Kopassus in the past. Can Prof. Juwono give us his update on this, as well as the views of the Indonesian military?

A: Kopassus is still difficult for some people to accept owing to its reputation for its past actions. However, not all units were involved. Kopassus's trials and punishments were enough for the majority of the U.S. Congress but not for NGOs (non-governmental organizations). In 2009, I urged the President and the Kopassus commander to go to the U.S. to explain the current state of Kopassus to the United States Congress. However, there was an objection from the U.S. State Department based on their view. However, since then, there have been

Kopassus officers who have trained in the United States.

Q: The United States needs Indonesia to contain China. [But,] what is the real objective of this partnership? As you know, for instance, Indonesia has also bought military equipment from other countries such as Russia.

Dr. Malley: The U.S. and China are engaged in some sort of competition.. Whether there will be conflict or not, diplomacy is important.

What does the U.S. want? The U.S. wants a stronger partnership with Indonesia, something the Indonesians are also enthusiastic about. A U.S.-Indonesian security partnership should not be just about containing China.