# Multilateral Cooperation Between Indonesia Malaysia and the Philippines in Terms of Securing the Southeast Asia Region Post Marawi Attack

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# ABSTRACT

Security approach, examine frontier area with two different point of views, firstly frontier area possible become a shield and safeguard, of internal territory in order to avoid a problem that carried by groups, that have a special mission with the aim of destroying the system that has been going well. Such as democracy, economic and politic. Secondly the area which bordering the country also enable become an area that **hotbed** of various threats that can disrupt the internal territory of a country. In addition, it is relevant because frontier area actually vulnerable due the geographic position that bordered with different country and the first entrance of a country.

One group that has a goal to destroy a well-developed system is Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). This group was born and spread their influence for the first time in Syria. Nowadays, it has spread to many radical groups almost all over the world. One of them is Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Philippines. In the first of May 2017, Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte declared that Mindanao Island is martial law condition due to a battle between the military and radical groups associated with ISIS in Marawi district. Indonesia as a country where borders with Philippines, especially North Sulawesi and Kalimantan directly with Mindanao Island become a very vulnerable as the entrance of this radical group to Indonesia.

In addition, in order to analyzes this theme, author adopt Security Cooperation approach which will focus on the efforts of the Indonesian government in securing Indonesia border region in preventing the radical groups in Indonesia frontier area, especially those originating from Philippines. Furthermore, the research method using qualitative where conclusions based on cases that depart from the general into specific case. Moreover, this type of research is descriptive analysis which will answer the question of who, what, where, when, or How. As a result, according of this research, Indonesia has made various efforts in securing the frontier area by maximizing traditional security approaches, and engaging in cooperation with some countries, especially the country bordering the Philippines.

#### Keywords: ISIS, Frontier area, Security Approach

## Background

#### The Marawi attack

The region of Miandao over the years has experienced the vulnerable situation especially after the repeated attacks from various radical groups operated around the region. The present situation in Marawi indeed attract regional attention, especially in Southeast Asia. Those attacks erupted on May 2017, when the President of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte has declared that Miandanao Island is under martial law due to a horrific battle between the military and radical groups associated with Islamic State of Iraq and Syrian (ISIS) in the city of Marawi, on the island of Miandanao, the Philippines.

One of the most notorious radical group in the Philippines is Maute. It is a group of Muslim rebels that have been waging a revolt since 1970s for an autonomous region in Miandanao. In terms of the member of this extremist group, they have remained in Marawi Island since 1970, and over the time, this group has trigger the war to military and caused more than 130.000 victims<sup>1</sup>. Another important points is Maute and the other radical groups claimed that they wanted to create an Islamic Caliphate in Southeast Asia. Therefore, this condition is aggravated with terror that occurs in the Philippines.

The Maute groups found that they have long preparation for the war in 2017. It is based on the evidence shows that the group has piled up arms and food supplies in mosques, aisles and dungeons. In addition, this group also supported by other groups from Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Saudi Arabia, Checz Republic and Morocco<sup>2</sup>. As stated previously, when the Maute attacked the city of Marawi and caused disorderly situation in the Philippine's domestic and the Region, the President Duterte has decided to fight back the Maute through the army, supported by number of helicopters and tanks. As a result, this situation caused

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> K. Wadrianto Gloria. 2017. Apa yang Terjadi di Marawi, dan Siapa Isnilon Hapilon?, Available at:

http://internasional.kompas.com/read/2017/05/24/13041501/apa.yang.terjadi.di.marawi.dan.siapa.isnilon.hapilo. <sup>2</sup> S. Bin Saju Pascal Teroris di Marawi Persiapkan Perang Jangka Panjang, available at:

http://internasional.kompas.com/read/2017/06/05/16202851/teroris.di.marawi.persiapkan.perang.jangka.panjang



many casualties, they were 165 soldiers, 920 militants as well as 47 civilians and 1,780 hostages were rescued<sup>3</sup>. Know that the terrorist have forfeited plenty of their followers, as a result, the condition forced the groups to find the new places to hide. Under this circumstance, the closest place from Marawi is North Sulawesi and North Kalimantan Province, Indonesia.

Indonesia as an archipelago state, own hundreds of Islands where spread from Sabang to Merauke. This situation in addition is possible that Indonesia, especially those two provinces become highly risk due to the possibility of new home base for the Maute's group. Another important point to note is the fact that one of Maute's leaders named Bahrumsyah is an Indonesian citizen who went to Syria in early 2014 and joined ISIS as one of its fighters<sup>4</sup>. However, although he was reported died in Syria in March 2017 due a suicide attack, this man's network still has the deepest and most longstanding relation and connection to Miandanao. Undoubtedly, he also still has many followers from Indonesia and the Philippines who support existence of ISIS in Southeast Asia. Considering the fact that some Indonesian citizens were involved with terror in Marawi. This condition proves that Maute must have established communication with some radical groups in Indonesia, especially after what happened in Marawi.

#### **Research Methodology**

This scientific paper is qualitative, which will conclude the answer of the research questions based on the general to specific information. In addition the type of research is Descriptive analyzes which will describe the whole topic on this case the overview of Marawi attacks and analyzes the role of multilateral cooperation between the Philippines and other countries in Southeast Asia region, followed by Australia and New Zealand, for the sake reducing the terrorist movement and growth in the region. Furthermore, the data source is secondary, which obtained through literature reviews consist of journals, electronic news, trusted websites and relevant resources to the theme.

#### Theory

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Jim Gomez. 2017. Philippines declares end to 5-month militant siege in Marawi, Associated Press. apnews.com/78d9ed99e45540fb9be359d828bf4881; CNN Philippines Facebook Page, "Breaking News: Joint Task Force Marawi holds a press briefing after the announcement of the end of combat operations in Marawi,

www.facebook.com/CNNPhilippines/videos/2057484284491460/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict IPAC. 2017. Marawi, The "East Asia Wilayah" and Indonesia. IPAC Report No. 38

#### **Security Cooperation and Alliance**

Security cooperation is usually recognize as the collaboration between the disputing parties, that is why the alliance sometimes define as the "sui genesis" entity. However this believe does not always become the common belief. If International relations perspective seen as the anarchy where conflict and the principal probably occurr between every actors, so that alliance possible become the conflictual. The security cooperation rely on the important goals, which is the existence of the nation state, especially on the resources, values and activities every nation and emphases on self-help. The contemporary security cooperation also conducted in terms of prevent threat and provide additional encourage to alliance.

In addition the cooperative security emphases every nation to conduct the security cooperation to many countries through the multilateral mechanism. Furthermore the ultimate goal of the security cooperation is against the aggression through the military maintenance. In the collective security framework, the principal of "one for all, all for one" is implemented. The aggression to one country means aggression to all member state of the collective security, as the consequence, the all member will punish the aggressor. In the opposite, member of cooperative security is working together for the sake of increasing the stability of region which hoping to all country where located in some particular regions<sup>5</sup>.

# Explanation

#### The existence of Terrorist in the Philippines

On May 23rd 2017, the government of the Philippines forces clashed with armed forces of two ISIS affiliated groups, which are Abu Sayyaf and the Maute. The dispute triggered by the military when tried to arrest the top leader of ISIS, which is Isnilon Hapilon. Due to the military decision, it prompted attackers to fight back and declaring new ISIS caliphate in the Philippines. As the situation getting worst, the church was burned by ISIS, followed by two schools and the city jail. In addition, the terrorist group also occupying the main streets and major bridges in Marawi for the sake of making the region is rush. As a result most of people become refugee and police officer for a moment was taking care the situation.

The top commanders Isnilon Hapilon and brothers Abdullah and Omar Maute were members of the local groups of Abu Sayyaf and the Maute. Both groups were blamed by the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Carlsnaes Walter. Dkk. 2013. Handbook Hubungan Internasional. Bandung. Penerbit Nusa Media.

government for several bombings, attacks against the government and some kidnapings in the Philippines. As previously mention, the battle involved number of countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as Yemen and Czech Republic. In addition, number of facts shows that these groups also hired some child soldiers from local schools in Marawi<sup>6</sup>.

The conflict lasted for five months and resulted mass displacement of civilians, more than 360.000 people forces to find new places for their shelter, and most of them stay in many places near by the neighboring municipalities<sup>7</sup>. The widespread of infrastructured destruction which belongs to civilian, and of course number of lives was loss. There are six member of terrorist groups in Marawi and declared itself as the Islamic state, and their ultimate goal to create the Islamic caliphate in Southeast Asia. The Maute group is believing is one of the active member of these groups, led by the Maute and Abu Sayyaf<sup>8</sup>. From the government report shows that the war in Marawi was the most significant foray into Southeast Asia by Islamic state-linked groups. Twenty-two battalions of the Philippines army, air force and Navy reported were involved in order to fight back the terrorist, and it was believed as the longest and bloodiest battle since World War 2<sup>9</sup>.

Before the government announced the end of war in near October, the military declared that Omar Maute and Isnilon Hapilon were killed, however according to the media, the dead body was never found<sup>10</sup>. Finally on October 17th, the government announced that Marawi city had been liberated, and few days later, on October 23rd the President Duterte declared that the War was end<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Maxine Betteridge-Moes. 2017. What happen in Marawi Available in

https://www.google.co.id/amp/s/www.aljazeera.com/amp/indepth/features/2017/10/happened-marawi-171029085314348.html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> United Nations Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2017. Humanitarian bulletin Philippines Issue, available at:

reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHAPhilippines\_Humanitarian\_Bulletin\_No6\_July\_2017\_FIN AL.pdf; Department of Social Welfare and Development, DSWD DROMIC Report #93 on the armed conflict in Marawi City, 14 October 2017,

reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DSWD%20DROMIC%20Report%20%2393%20on%20the%20 Armed%20Conflict%20in%20Marawi%20City%20as%20of%2014%20October%202017%2C%2012AM.pdf; National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management council, Response clusters situation report #18 (as of 21 July 2017, 4PM) Marawi siege,

reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Summary%20of%20Response%20Clusters%20SitRep%20%231 8.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC). 2017. Marawi, the "East Asia Wilayah" and Indonesia, available at: www.understandingconflict.org/en/conflict/read/61/Marawi-The-East-Asia-Wilayah-and-Indonesia.
<sup>9</sup> Carmela Fonbuena. 2017. Available at: "Marawi: 153 days and more," Rappler

www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/186075-marawi-series-rappler-timeline.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Neil Morales and Mauel Mogato. 2017. "Philippines vows to crush pro-Islamic State groups after two leaders killed," Reuters, available at: www.reuters.com/article/us-Philippines-militants/Philippines-vows-to-crush-pro-islamic-state-groups-after-two-leaders-killed-idUSKBN1CL06I.

As previously mention in the background that these groups has lost plenty of their followers, and the government believe according to their intelligent agent that the Maute and Abu Sayyaf is in the lowest position in Marawi and seek to another places for hiding. Indonesia especially the North Sulawesi and North Kalimantan become the closest part to Marawi, where bordered by the sea. As a result, two Indonesia provinces is highly risk and possible become the new places for Maute and Abu Sayyaf.

Depart from the problem, Indonesia demonstrate the possibility to counter the terrorist movement with strengthen cooperation among military, police and intelligence agencies between Indonesia and ASEAN member countries and beyond of that establish cooperation between Australia and New Zealand. On this further explanation, the author will divided by two major efforts lead by Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, which are internal and external.

## **Internal Effort**

## Securing frontier area check points

The ministry of Defense and Ministry of Coordinator of Politic, Legal and Security affairs, as well as Military and Police department have established cooperation in order to secure the entrance the check point in Indonesia's frontier area, such as airports and ports. The government on this circumstances stressed the frontier area of Indonesia-Philippines. In Indonesia itself the Government has focused to number of cities and towns in North Sulawesi and East Kalimantan province as the concentration place for increasing the security and securing the check points of Indonesia. The decision for making these places due to the location where near by the Miandanao region.

In the Sebatik Island, one of sub district in Nunukan district East Kalimantan Province, has decided by the Police Department of Nunukan named Brimob Kompi C to have been given extra security, especially to several check pints in Sebatik Island. In order to arrive in Sebatik island from Marawi only require 8 hours by boat<sup>11</sup>. Maratua famous as the leisure place in Berau district also become one of concentration place for adding some police officers. Based on the report from government to media, at least there are 20 more police

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Sukoco. 2017. Kepolisian Resor Nunukan mengirim Brimob Kompi C. Available at:

https://regional.kompas.com/read/2017/06/02/06295221/antisipasi.peristiwa.marawi.brimob.diturunkan.jaga.per batasan

officers provided to secure the area. Besides that, the frontier of Indonesia Island named Miangas become the closest place to Marawi, it takes 5 hours from Marawi to Miangas<sup>12</sup>. As the consequences the police and army have worked together for the sake of securing Miangas. In addition, Indonesia navy conducted sea patrol along North Maluku until Sulawesi<sup>13</sup>.

# **External Effort**

## **Engaging Trilateral Cooperation**

Besides strengthening through adding number of soldiers and pollice officers in Indonesia's check point, the Government of Indonesia believe that engaging external cooperation with other parties will create safer situation in Indonesia. The Military aspect for instance Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines have agreed to establish join sea patrol<sup>14</sup>. A year before the join sea patrol establish, actually these country has agreed to work together especially in defense minister level. In May 2016, the 1st Trilateral Defense Minister was held in Yogyakarta Indonesia, and attended by the foreign minister and the top leaders of army and police department from every countries.

There are four agreement in terms of securing the Sulu seas, as follows: 1. Conducting joint sea patrol. 2. Quick Respond. 3. Establish of National Vocal Point as well as, 4. Hotline Communication. Furthermore, the following meeting was conducted in Manila in June 2016, and Joint Declaration Statement was established with several points of agreement such as: 1. Coordinated activities between three military forces, especially associated with maritime security. 2. The possibility to build the joint command post in selected location as the connector the military ship among these countries. 3. Establishing joint air patrol. 4. The Maritime Patol Working Group (TMPWG) which will manage the operational way in trilateral maritime patrol. The command centre of maritime will manage by every country and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Nibras Nada Nailufar. 2017. Pemerintah Tingkatkan Pengamanan di Perbatasan Indonesia Filipina. Available at:https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/05/28/16393261/pemerintah.tingkatkan.pengamanan.di.perbatasan.in donesia-filipina

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Nanda Perdana PutraHanz Jimenez Salim. 2017. Polri dan TNI Perketat Pengamanan di Perbatasan Filipina. Available at: https://www.google.co.id/amp/s/m.liputan6.com/amp/2968655/polri-dan-tni-perketat-pengamanan-di-perbatasan-filipina

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Kristian Erdianto. 2016. "Patroli Bersama Tiga Negara di Laut Sulu akan Direalisasikan Tahun ini".
 Available at: http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2016/09/13/18123501 /patroli.bersama. tiga.

must take responsibility in every aspect of their job desk and secure their asset. 5. Establish the transit corridor in maritime area as the joint awareness. 6. The sharing intelligent information in terms of maritime security, and 7. The mechanism of trilateral database<sup>15</sup>. One month later to be exact at July 14th 2016, those three countries re-sign the new framework of joint working named The Sulu Sea Patrol Initiative (SSPI) following with Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

# **Marine Patrol**

After number of agreements have achieve through trilateral cooperation between Indonesia Malaysia and the Philippines, in June 2017, the first point of Joint Statement, officially launched the Marine Command Centre (MCC) at June 19th 2017. The MCC launched in the City of Tarakan Indonesia, on this special day, the ceremony was accompanied by three war ships from each country. The agenda in addition was attended by three defense minister of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, which are General Ryamizard Ryacudu, Dato' Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, Delfin N. Lorenzana respectively, and followed by top leaders from army government representative<sup>16</sup>.

The three nations also agreed that coordinated patrol will established, unlike joint patrol. The coordinated patrol, is conducting a patrol by every country in their own territory. The joint patrol on the other hand is conducting patrol in pairs with three nations. The leaders of this agreement thought that joint patrol was less effective because in order to do the patrol, all country have to gather in the same time. By doing this, the decision for choosing which one the first place for doing patrol will take unusual time and more considerations. That is why, for the sake of making the action more effective, each country will do the patrol by their self, however still under the centre coordination. On this circumstance, the MCC is doing its job.

The coordinated patrol also demonstrated with the Indomalphi Quick Response (IQR)<sup>17</sup>. This strategy is used when something happen especially associated with the terrorist

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> JOINT STATEMENT. 2016. "TRILATERAL MEETING ON SECURITY AMONG THE PHILIPPINES, INDONESIA, AND MALAYSIA", available at: https://dfa.gov.ph/newsroom/statements-and-adviso riesupdate/13060-joint-statement-trilateral-meeting-on-security-among-the-philippines-indonesia-and-malaysia

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Wujudkan Keamanan Perairan Sulu, TNI Resmikan Maritime Command Center. 2017. Available at: http://monitor.co.id/berita/848/wujudkan-keamanan-perairan-sulu-tni-resmikan-maritime-comm and-center, pada tanggal 1 Maret 2018.



movement occur in sudden and quick time. For instance looking after the terrorist or if something emergency happen. This method is allowed army who involve in the action to across the border area of the member of this cooperation. This particular condition named as "Hot Search", however although the parties is allowed to accross the border area, yet the army have to ask permition to the authorities in the country. In addition, the decision to allow the outside army to enter the territory only valid in the sea area, unlike in the land, the national army is responsible for finish the mission.

As the following up of establishment of MCC, the three nations have launched number of patrol stations in city of Bongau and Tawi – Tawi. Placement of Indonesia connecting army also available in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah and Davao, Miandanao, Tawau and Tarakan<sup>18</sup>.

## Air Patrol

Beside the Indonesia effort and 2 other countries in order to secure the Sulu seas through marine patrol, the government of Indonesia sure that adding extra security especially with involving the air force is neccessary. As a result in October 12th 2017, in Air Force Base Subang Malaysia, the Air Patrol Trilateral has launched<sup>19</sup>. On the agreement stated that Malaysia as the host of the launched air patrol ceremony will lead the operation with mobilize Malaysia air force, followed with the Philippines and Indonesia respectively. The packet of this agreement will conducting the joint military exercise and as well as air patrol in the maritime area and the coastline regularly in areas that are considered vulnerable. Every parties on this agreement decided will lead the operation in rotation of course by using the host country's air assets<sup>20</sup>.

Beyond engaging trilateral cooperation as previously discuss, the ASEAN has set up the Joint Declaration to Australia too, for the sake of cooperation to combat international terrorism. The Joint Declaration was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR on September 7th 2016. In total there are 13 actions that the participant should undertake to strengthen the cooperation in order to counter the threat from terrorist or extremist groups. One of the highlight of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Lokasi pos komando Indonesia Malaysia Filipina. 2017. Available at: https://www.google.co.id/search?q=bongao+philippines

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Launching Trilateral Air Patrol Indonesia-Malaysia-Filipina. 2017. Available at

https://www.kemhan.go.id/2017/10/12/launching-trilateral-air-patrol-indonesia-malaysia-filipina.html<sup>20</sup> Fabian Januarius Kuwado. 2017. "Indonesia-Malaysia-Filipina Sepakati "Trilateral Air Patrol" di Laut Sulu", diakses di http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/10/13/09361081/indonesia-malaysia-filipina-sepakati-trilateral-air-patrol-di-laut-sulu



action is engaging cooperation through dialogue and exchange of intelligent information among their agency and develop practical and effective ways in terms of responding the threats from the terrorist<sup>21</sup>. The decision to engage the cooperation with Australia due to the capacity and track record Australia in terms of managing and acquiring the confidential information based on their expertise and knowledge of intelligence agency. Toward this cooperation, ASEAN member state, especially the three countries hope that Australia would help them in terms of seeking the information about the terrorist movement and growth.

In July 28th 2017, Indonesia especially in Manado become the host country for conducting the multilateral forum between Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, The Philippines Australia and New Zealand. The meeting will stress the joint effort for pressing the new basis of ISIS in Southeast Asia. The forum agreed to establish the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Forum to strengthen information sharing and cooperation between law enforcement and intelligence services<sup>22</sup>. After that, the cooperation also agreed to encourage cooperation among governments and companies that provide social media services, video file sharing and messaging. The other two important points are strengthening the function of immigration offices, step up the fight against terror financing, and of course conducting studies on the way of life terrorism in their respective countries<sup>23</sup>.

#### Conclusion

In recapitulation, the establishment of trilateral agreement between Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines is necessary due to the bigger escalation of terrorist growth especially in the city of Marawi on Miandanao Island. Number of agreements have established before the Marawi attack in order to maintain the stability the Sulu Sea and the Philippines neighbor. A year later after the Marawi attack and the President Duterte declared that Marawi city is under martial law in May 2017, the leaders of trilateral agreement agreed to strengthen and establish Join marine patrol and transform to coordinated patrol under the coordination of Marine Command Centre (MCC). In addition, the air patrol is another action as the backup for marine patrol.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Australia Joint Declaration. 2016. Available at: http://asean.org/storage/2016/09/ASEAN-Australia-Joint-Declaration.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Nations agree to fight ISIS. 2017. Available at: https://www.armytimes.com/flashpoints/2017/07/29/nations-agree-to-boost-fight-against-isis-in-southeast-asia/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Indonesia-Australia Host Counter. 2017. Available at: https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/indonesia-australia-host-counter-terrorism-meeting

Indonesia in particular North Sulawesi and North Kalimantan as the closest region to Miandanao is on standby status, some of extra police officers and soldiers are transferred to several frontier check points of Indonesia in order to secure the frontier of Indonesia territory which consider as the vulnerable place and possible as the entrance for terrorist group from Marawi.

Beyond the trilateral agreement, Indonesia is hosting several forums with inviting Australia as the co-host and New Zealand as well as several ASEAN member states. Furthermore the ultimate goal of this forum is strengthening cooperation among parties especially the intelligent sharing information aspect about the growth and the funding that run international terrorist activity.

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