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Cover Page Footnote

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U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Unesco After Acceptance Of Palestinian Membership For The Period 2012-2017

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ABSTRACT

The United States is one of the countries that established Palestine as a state. The struggle for Palestine to get full membership status in the United Nations (UN) also often gets a veto from the United States. The United States rejects Palestine at UNESCO because according to America, membership status as a country cannot determine the decision of the UN Security Council first. The research method used in this research is descriptive research method, and the writer will use secondary data. This paper examines the United States' policy towards UNESCO after the membership of Palestine for the 2012-2017 period. The conclusion of this research is that the United States officially left UNESCO after Palestine joined the organization.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, UNESCO, Palestine, United States

1. Introduction

This paper aims to explain the foreign policy of the United States (US) towards the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) after the acceptance of Palestinian membership in 2011. The U.S. is one of the countries that has denied Palestine full membership status in United Nations agencies including UNESCO. According to the U.S., recognition of the organization's membership in a U.N. autonomous body should wait for a resolution on the submission of full membership centrally at the UN Security Council (UNSC) level first.

The Palestinian struggle for international recognition is serious. In September 2011, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas submitted Palestine as a permanent member of the United Nations to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. The U.S., which has a veto from the United Nations, immediately suspended the decision with its veto. The U.S. is the only U.N. security council that vetoes any resolutions related to the Palestinians.

The Palestinians' bid to become the 194th full member of the United Nations at the U.N. General Assembly has repeatedly failed as a result of the use of U.S. veto power expressing its support for Israel's security. Although most U.N. member states from different regions of the world support The Palestinians' efforts to gain its status as a full member of the United

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Nations, the fate of Palestinian membership in the UN-1999 depends entirely on the decision of the SECURITY COUNCIL on the condition that it not get a single veto from the five permanent member states of the SECURITY COUNCIL namely the US, Russia, Britain, France and China.

UNESCO accepted Palestine's application for full membership status at UNESCO's 36th General Conference (GC) session on 31 October 2011. A total of 107 countries in the voting process held in one of the sessions approved the proposed membership submitted by the Palestinians. On 23 November 2011, Palestine officially became the 195th member of UNESCO after ratifying the UNESCO Constitution.

Membership in UNESCO opens the opportunity for Palestine to sign various conventions related to the protection of cultural heritage. Furthermore, acceptance of full Palestinian membership status has an impact on the openness of Palestinian participation in UNESCO programs. An example is the World Heritage program, which initiates a special place that has been nominated for a UNESCO-run international world heritage program. After being officially accepted as a full member in 2011, three Palestinian cultural heritage sites have been included in UNESCO's World Heritage program: the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route in 2012 in Bethlehem, the Land of Olives and Vines area in Battir located on the Jerusalem-Bet Gubrin line in 2014 and the Old City of Hebron in 2017.

The acceptance of Palestine as a permanent member of UNESCO led the US to reject the decision. But despite the rejection of the United States, it did not make UNESCO reverse the decision to accept Palestine. The acceptance of Palestine as a permanent member of UNESCO is considered capable of influencing the policies of other countries through economic and political intervention to follow their will. The United States, known as an ally of Israel, has always denied Palestinian membership in official world bodies, especially the United Nations.

The veto power of the United States has always rejected the Palestinians' move to be officially recognized as a state by the Security Council, although many countries have recognized Palestine as a sovereign state. Therefore, Palestine is looking for other avenues to gain international recognition as a sovereign state, one of which is through UNESCO. Palestine's success at UNESCO is certainly a plus for Palestine that it deserves to be recognized.

The decision to accept Palestine is considered a dilemma faced by UNESCO. As an international organization, UNESCO's decision is considered contrary to the attitude of its largest donor country. The U.S. decision to be UNESCO's largest donor did not necessarily make the organization take a similar policy. In fact, the decision issued by UNESCO as an international institution that is widely funded by the U.S. should reflect U.S. political attitudes.

The interpretation of the domestic Act became the cornerstone of U.S. political stance at UNESCO, rejecting and objecting to this decision, even providing a threat to cut off funding donors for UNESCO. Nominal donors donated by the U.S. is quite significant, reaching USD \$ 80 million or about 22% of UNESCO's total annual funds. This certainly affects the operational sustainability of UNESCO if the US and Israel, which contribute as much as 3%, actually withdraw donor funds.

This certainly proves that this decision has a serious impact on UNESCO, especially to fund most of its programs and day-to-day operational costs. But in reality this choice is still chosen with various consequences. The suitability of the organization's work field with the urgency of the problems facing Palestine regarding heritage preservation in the midst of the conflict could be one of UNESCO's considerations for accepting Palestinian membership despite rejection by the United Nations.

2. Literature Review

In this paper, the author *uses decision making process* theory, especially foreign decision making by William D. Coplin. He said that foreign policy making is based on 3 factors, namely domestic political factors, economic factors and military capabilities, and international situation and conditions. However, furthermore, the author will focus on domestic factors because the hypothetical results in this paper, American foreign policy towards UNESCO is dominated by domestic factors.

Decision making is controlled by several categories as described by William D. Coplin:

"Foreign policy acts through three categories. The first is domestic politics in foreign policy decision makers. The second is the country's economic and military capabilities. The third is the international situation and conditions that also affect foreign policy decision-making. "

According to Coplin, domestic factors that can affect a country's foreign policy are the influence of domestic bureaucracy, the influence of political parties, the influence of interest groups and the influence of mass media. Furthermore, in the discussion of this article will be discussed about U.S. foreign policy based on domestic factors.

3. Research Methodology

The type of research that will be used in this study is declutterative research. The data the authors used in the study was secondary data, then the library data the authors used in the study was data that included palestinian acceptance at UNESCO, and U.S. foreign policy at UNESCO after the acceptance of Palestinian membership in 2012-2017. In this paper, the authors point to some important points of U.S. policy toward UNESCO with Coplin's theory that domestic factors can influence a country's policies.

First, the bureaucratic factor that influences. One type of policy influencers is bureaucratic influencers (bureaucrats who influence). The role of bureaucratic influencers in the process of preparing foreign policy, in an open political system and a closed political system is not much different. In both types of political systems, domestic regulatory interests often operate behind the scenes through the provision of information to make decisions and are used as instruments for implementing those decisions. The process and influence of decision-making is determined by the rules of the country's domestic law.

Second, the political party that influences. These influencers aim to translate the demands of the people that later become political demands, namely demands to decision makers regarding government policies. Influencers seek to influence policy by suppressing rulers and by providing personnel who play a role in decision-making. These influencers will influence the domestic political establishment as well as the country's foreign policy.

Third, the interest groups that influence. The interest group that Coplin intended was a group that held an alliance that was driven by certain interests and had the goal of fighting for an interest. The interest is obtained by influencing political institutions in order to get favorable decisions or avoid adverse decisions. Interest groups do not seek to place their representatives in the house of representatives, but only to influence the competent authorities or one or two political parties.

4. Results

4.1 The Palestinian Struggle at UNESCO

The struggle for recognition as a member at UNESCO has begun since 1989. However, UNESCO's Executive Board suspended the decision on the application. UNESCO only grants Palestine status as an "observer" and not as a permanent member.

Palestinians, who are merely "observers", submitted a proposal for a permanent member submission to the agency's Executive Board. On 5 October 2011, the UNESCO Executive Council began reviewing a draft resolution from Palestine for full membership in UNESCO as well as ratifying Palestinian membership by a 40-vote vote from the 58-member Executive Council. A majority vote on the Executive Board led UNESCO to resume voting at the General Conference.

A vote on full Palestinian membership took place on October 25, 2011. The vote involved 194 countries that are full members of UNESCO. To gain full membership as a "state" that is not a member of the United Nations is if approved by a 2/3 majority (as many as 81 countries must be fulfilled) of the general conference. On 31 October 2011, a resolution to accept Palestine as a member was implemented at UNESCO's 36th general assembly. Of UNESCO's 194 full members, only 173 votes were cast. The results of the *composition of the vote* were 107 received, 14 rejected and 52 *abstentions*.

Since Palestine is still an "observer" at UNESCO, Palestinian efforts have not only granted UNESCO membership applications but also made statements about violence, destruction and the destruction of historic Palestinian sites including Al-Aqsa Mosque. This was stated at a UNESCO assembly. This is one of the Palestinian strategies to gain membership status.

One Palestinian diplomacy strategy chose UNESCO because the organization has a different structure. Within UNESCO's membership structure, no country has veto power. Each member has the same right to vote regardless of the size of the state or the size of his or her financial contributions. Like other UN bodies, UNESCO is part of the world organization but has its own membership system and procedures. In addition, UNESCO also has the right to decide to accept the membership of a country in the world. A country or group of territories that is not yet a permanent member of the United Nations, they can still apply as a member state or an associate member. This is what makes Palestine an acceptable member of UNESCO even though the UNITED NATIONS has not recognized it.

The Palestinian victory at UNESCO, according to Phyllis Bennis, a doctoral student at the *Institute for Policy Studies*, is a symbolic victory as a Palestinian attempt to win membership in the international organization as a full member. Bennis greatly appreciated that Palestine could get 107 votes at UNESCO. He argued that UNESCO was a good choice for measuring public opinion, governments and even the world that 20 years of A.-controlled peace process were not working properly. That's coupled with a promise of a U.S. threat to veto the full membership proposal at the United Nations a month after the UNESCO General Conference. He added that the two-decade peace talks did not bring the Palestinians closer to achieving their rights and statehood, nor was what happened to the Palestinians based on something that Israel or the US should decide.

The statement confirmed that Palestine has great support from the international community. The vote's victory certainly gave the Palestinians encouragement that the international community strongly supported the Palestinians being liberated from Israeli occupation and pressed the U.S. that its veto power at the United Nations did not help the peace process. In this case the neutral status that the United States has in the Palestinian and Israeli conflicts must be questioned.

Following Palestine's success as a UNESCO member state, the Palestinians announced that they would soon focus on gaining membership in 14 other UN organizations whose membership does not depend on status in the UN general assembly. But a day later, the Palestinians reversed course and ordered their representatives not to apply for membership in other UN bodies. According to Abbas, the Palestinians will next focus on full membership in the UN, because with membership in the UN, membership in other representative bodies will come automatically.

4.2 US Rejection Palestine at UNESCO

The United States is known as a super power country that has world power so that it can exercise serious control over the international system. The control of the United States is carried out in almost all dimensions of political life between nations, both on developed and developing countries. No exception to the conflicts that occur in the Middle East. The United States has always played its role in almost all aspects of politics, including the issue of Palestinian membership in organizations that comprise the world's states.

The Palestinians' desire to join UNESCO provoked a backlash from the United States. The U.S. government is seeking to step up its diplomatic efforts to block the Palestinian nomination as a full member of UNESCO. Former U.S. President Barack Obama said peace between Israel and the Palestinians would only happen through negotiations between the two sides. Obama also said neither Palestinian membership of the United Nations nor UNESCO would solve the problems between the Palestinians and Israel.

The existence of a wedge from the United States does not dissuade the Palestinians from becoming permanent members at UNESCO. In addition to diplomatic efforts at UNESCO, Palestinian leaders and diplomats have launched efforts to include Palestine as a non-UN observer state through the UN General Assembly. This is done so that Palestine is increasingly gaining recognition from the international community.

For the United States, the support of many countries to Palestine is a distraction. In a form of dislike for the United States and Israel over the acceptance of Palestine as a member of UNESCO, the two countries threatened to stop funding to UNESCO. The U.S. has a 1994 law that says the U.S. will not grant full membership to a group that lacks the traits of an internationally recognized state.

When Palestine succeeded in becoming a permanent member of UNESCO, it infuriated America even more and showed its rejection. U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said:

"The White House administration canceled the \$80 million grant it planned to do in November 2011. Palestine's membership in UNESCO triggered legislative violations that led the U.S. to stop making contributions to UNESCO."

U.S. aid to UNESCO has a fairly high value, which is 22%, while from Israel as much as 3%. Despite U.S. action to halt funding to UNESCO and the future of UNESCO, it could be underfunded to implement its programs. But what has happened to Palestine is a Palestinian success by means of diplomacy that has been initiated to various countries.

The U.S. rejection of Palestine at UNESCO has not stopped the Palestinians in their search for international support. The support was successfully obtained from international organizations, especially from the OIC and GNB. Both international organizations have such large numbers of members that Palestine makes the most of the support of OIC and GNB

member states at the time of elections in the Executive Council as well as the UNESCO General Conference, so the US decision to reject Palestine at UNESCO has no effect on Palestinian membership.

The support of both international organizations is due to the issues and major interests in Palestine. For OIC member states that are majority Muslim, it is important to guard the Palestinian territories especially al-Aqsa mosque and damage caused by the Israeli military. As for the GNB member states, they have a mission to eliminate all occupations in the world and ensure the Palestinian people are independent and free from threats so that they can live safely and comfortably in their own country.

5. Discussion

5.1 Decision making process theory (Domestic Political Factors)

In this paper, the authors point to some important points of U.S. policy toward UNESCO with Coplin's theory that domestic factors can influence a country's policies.

The case of U.S. rejection of Palestine at UNESCO is based on its domestic political foundation. U.S. federal bureaucratic legislation from 1990 and 1994 prohibited the U.S. government from providing financial aid to U.N. organizations that consider The Palestinians to be on an equal position to the state. It is listed in PL.101-246, Title IV 1990 and PL.103-246 Title IV 1994. They argued that the rejection of the recognition of the organization's membership in a UN autonomous body should wait for the resolution of the submission of full membership centrally at the UNSC level first.

The U.S. Congress is a major actor in his country's policymaking. In 2014, the Democratic party lost a landslide congressional election. As a consequence of the election defeat, President Barack Obama had to face an opponent who controlled a majority in congressional seats. The concerto-vote count controlled a majority in the Senate, gaining 52 of the 100 seats. In the House of Representatives, Republicans are represented with 175 of the 243 seats.

If linked to the case, UNESCO has predicted a reaction shown by the US, even UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova visited the US Congress to campaign for policy changes and negotiate possible constitutional changes. But the decision of the U.S. Congress, whose majority of legislators are republicans, remains unchanged. This certainly proves that U.S. foreign policy is very dependent on the party it embraces.

In 2015, UNESCO decided to revoke the U.S. voting rights at UNESCO for not paying dues for two consecutive years. At that time, the United States was also threatened to lose its position on the Executive Board of UNESCO. Barack Obama and John Kerry are seeking to return the funds to UNESCO and are seeking approval from the U.S. Congress. But unfortunately, the request was rejected by congress because it was considered to violate domestic regulations of his country.

There are several interest groups that have had their influence on U.S. foreign policy over The Palestinians such as the *American Israel Public Affairs Committee* (AIPAC). AIPAC is an institution that has successfully passed its supporting candidates for seats in the legislative council as well as members of Congress. Even AIPAC is very close to U.S. congressional politicians and can certainly influence American policy.

The interest group will do various ways to carry out its actions so that the policies taken by the US are in accordance with Israel's interests. In 2008 AIPAC made contact with Israeli-related Congress officials in Gaza. From this, a non-binding resolution was formed from members of Congress that contained support for the Israeli aggression.

With pressure from interest groups defending Israel, all U.S. foreign policy toward the Palestinians will always be in Israel's favor. The rejection of the Palestinians' desire to join UNESCO is concrete evidence of Congress' role as a U.S. foreign decision-maker, particularly with regard to Palestine and Israel.

6. Conclusion

The success of Palestine becoming a permanent member also has a serious impact on UNESCO. One of the effects is the expansion of U.S. policy toward UNESCO. The U.S. was among 14 countries that opposed Palestinian membership during the vote at UNESCO. The policy issued by the U.S. is a very significant cut in dues funds. In general, the impact caused after the U.S. cut its funding is that UNESCO must make strict savings especially on the cost of the program of activities that have been designed.

In addition to the annual funding, the United States, currently led by President Donald Trump, issued a new policy of withdrawing from UNESCO. One of the reasons Trump wants to quit UNESCO is because the organization has been considered an "anti-Israel" bias since the Palestinians existence. The recognition of Al-Aqsa Mosque and The Old City of

Hebron as historic Palestinian sites led Trump to assume that "anti-Israel" bias was already too thick at UNESCO. The withdrawal policy from UNESCO is also followed by Israel which will be carried out by the end of 2018.

It concluded that the foreign policy issued by the United States towards UNESCO after the acceptance of Palestinian membership in the period 2012-2017 was dominated by domestic factors. The authors found 3 dominant factors: the bureaucratic factors that influence, the parties that influence and the interest groups that influence. The authors found no mass media factors that could influence U.S. foreign policy toward UNESCO in the wake of its acceptance of Palestinian membership.

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