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Bureaucratic Resistance and The Challenge of Implementing ASEAN Our Eyes: Case Study of Jolo Church Bombing 2019

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ABSTRAK

Arus Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) memicu kekhawatiran dunia, termasuk negara-negara di Asia Tenggara. Pada tahun 2017, Indonesia mengajukan inisiatif “Our Eyes” untuk menciptakan sebuah wadah bagi negara-negara ASEAN untuk bertukar informasi intelijen guna memberantas kegiatan terorisme transnasional. Inisiatif tersebut kemudian diubah menjadi “ASEAN Our Eyes” (AOE). Tetapi, beberapa tahun setelah dibentuknya inisiatif tersebut, terjadi peristiwa pengeboman gereja di Jolo, Filipina. Insiden tersebut menunjukkan hambatan untuk mengimplementasikan inisiatif AOE. Pelaku diidentifikasi sebagai Warga Negara Indonesia yang berhasil masuk ke Filipina berkat bantuan jaringan teroris lokal di Filipina. Idealnya, inisiatif AOE dapat mencegah serangan tersebut. Artikel ini akan mendiskusikan dinamika domestik di Indonesia dan Filipina mengingat pentingnya memahami dinamika lokal nasional sebelum menilai efektivitas dari sebuah inisiatif di tingkat kawasan. Kajian ini menggunakan konsep resistansi birokrasi untuk memahami karakteristik dari organisasi intelijen di kedua negara. Tulisan ini mengidentifikasi potensi kebocoran informasi dan budaya patron-klien yang menghambat pertukaran informasi intelijen antar organisasi intelijen. Sulit untuk mengharapkan terciptanya sebuah pusat data intelijen terintegrasi di tingkat kawasan apabila proses pertukaran informasi tidak terjadi di tingkat nasional atau lokal.

Kata kunci: *Pertukaran Informasi Intelijen, ASEAN, Our Eyes, Resistensi Birokrasi, Politik Domestik*

ABSTRACT

The flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) sparks concerns around the world, including Southeast Asian countries. In 2017, Indonesia proposed “Our Eyes” initiatives to create an intelligence-sharing platform among Southeast Asian countries to stave off the transnational terrorism. This initiative was later adopted as “ASEAN Our Eyes” (AOE). A few years later, however, the Jolo Church Bombing in the Philippines demonstrated the impediments to implementing the initiative. The perpetrators were identified as Indonesians who entered the Philippines through the assistance of local terrorist networks. Ideally, the initiative could have prevented the attack. This article will discuss the domestic dynamics in Indonesia and the Philippines since it is critical to understand the local dynamics in the region before assessing the effectiveness of regional initiatives. This study employs the concept of bureaucratic resistance to understand the nature of intelligence organisations in these two countries. It identifies the potential leakage of information and the perennial problem of patron-clientelism that hinder the relevant intelligence agencies in each country from sharing information with each other. We could not expect a well-integrated intelligence database in the region if the intelligence sharing between local agencies do not exist.

Keywords: *Intelligence Sharing, ASEAN, Our Eyes, Bureaucratic Resistance, Domestic Politics*

INTRODUCTION

The Jolo Church Bombing incident in 2019 raised doubt about counterterrorism cooperation among ASEAN members. In January 2019, Indonesian couple Rullie Rian Zeke and Ulfa Handayani Saleh detonated explosives at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral in Jolo, Sulu. Prior to their departure to the Philippines, the couple underwent a rehabilitation program held by the Indonesian government for deportees.¹ Detailed information about their identities came to light following a series of arrests of members of Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), the umbrella organization of Islamic State (IS) sympathizers in Indonesia.

Indonesia and the Philippines initially disputed the identity of the Jolo Church Bombing's perpetrators. The Philippines had an internal debate in confirming the identity of the perpetrators. In the aftermath of Bombing, President Rodrigo Duterte was quick to claim that the perpetrators were from Indonesia based on intelligence information (Rappler, 2019). The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), however, asserted that comprehensive investigations were required before releasing a conclusive statement (The Philippines Star, 2019). The AFP did not deny the fact that President Duterte received information from various intelligence agencies that led to that statement. Despite the AFP's cautious statement, Philippine Interior Secretary Eduardo Ano was certain that the Abu Sayyaf Group assisted the Indonesian couple in attacking the churches (The Jakarta Post, 2019). Indonesian officials did not immediately confirm Ano's statement as they believed that further confirmations from the Philippines National Police (PNP) and the AFP were required (The Jakarta Post, 2019).

This early development between Indonesia and the Philippines was ironic given that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) released a new initiative, "Our Eyes Initiative (OEI)" in January 2018. The defense pact is an intelligence sharing cooperation to combat terrorism, radicalism, and extremism in the region. Defense senior officials from each country were expected to hold regular meetings to exchange intelligence information about the current condition in their respective countries (Reuters, 2018). Following the 5-month Marawi Siege in the Philippines, high ranking officials are concerned about the flow of foreign fighters within the region since fighters from other ASEAN countries joined the siege (Reuters, 2018).

Unfortunately, the Jolo Church Bombing demonstrated that intelligence sharing remains a delicate issue. Moreover, the principle of non-interference among ASEAN

countries creates perennial obstacles to forming a solid initiative. Different statements from the Philippine authorities and security apparatus in the initial stages of the investigation showed that there are more complex domestic politics that should be taken into consideration when analysing a regional counterterrorism cooperation. Hence, this article would like to discuss the complex interactions between domestic politics and regional counterterrorism cooperation. This paper would like to address the following question: What are the obstacles to implement ASEAN Our Eyes intelligence sharing? It will use the case of Jolo Church Bombing 2019 as a case study and to analyse the domestic dynamics in the Philippines and Indonesia that intelligence mishaps.

This paper will first discuss existing literatures on ASEAN counterterrorism cooperation. Second, it will elaborate the concept of bureaucratic resistance as an analytical framework for this research. Third, it will discuss the current developments of Our Eyes Initiatives and the incident of Jolo Bombing 2019. Lastly, this study will attempt to understand the challenge of implementing intelligence sharing by using the concept of bureaucratic resistance and the case of Indonesia and the Philippines.

ASEAN Counterterrorism Cooperation

Following the 9/11 and Bali Bombings tragedies, there have been various studies on ASEAN's counterterrorism cooperation. Past studies have been skeptical about ASEAN's counterterrorism cooperation due to lack of concrete actions. ASEAN's meeting and platforms are seen merely as a talk-shop. These literatures identified, at least, three main factors which hamper the effectiveness of ASEAN CT Cooperation; domestic dynamics; the principle of non-interference; and the role of external actors (Singh, 2003; Chow, 2005; Tan & Ramakrishna, 2004; Emmers, 2009; Banloi, 2009; Tan & Nasu, 2016). Under the domestic dynamics, scholars identified various challenges that influenced ASEAN states' responses, such as the socio-economic conditions, lack of coordination among relevant institutions, and the shortage of necessary resources. The disparities of socio-economic conditions among ASEAN countries shaped different approaches. In weak countries, namely Indonesia and the Philippines, the corruption cases in security agencies are rampant which undermine the countries' CT efforts (Singh, 2003; Chow, 2005; Tan & Ramakrishna, 2004; Emmers, 2009). Meanwhile, Singapore as a developed country has no major issues with its CT efforts and has been successful in curbing the terrorist networks in its own land (Singh, 2003, p. 210-211). The role of external actors also stimulated debates among ASEAN countries in which Muslim majority countries,

namely Indonesia and Malaysia, were very cautious about the assistance of the United States (Singh, 2003; Chow, 2005). There was a fear that the United States' Global War on Terror (GWOT) agenda would jeopardize the life of the Islamic community across the world. Last but not the least, the principle of non-interference of ASEAN hinders ASEAN efforts in intelligence sharing for fear of external actors' meddling in their domestic matters (Chow, 2005; Tan & Nasu, 2016).

The national dynamics and different responses among ASEAN member states have become the main issue in the discussions about counterterrorism cooperation. Despite the transnational nature of terrorism, the majority of ASEAN countries perceive terrorism as a mere domestic issue, thus national solutions have been prioritized (Chow, 2005; Emmers, 2009). Each state also has different legal measures to cope with terrorist threats. In the early stage of its reformation era, Indonesia had inadequate legal measures and a weak security apparatus. In contrast, Malaysia and Singapore already had strong legal measures under internal security acts which allowed security apparatus to take preventive actions against terrorist networks (Singh, 2003; Tan & Ramakrishna, 2004; Chow, 2005). Implementing an internal security act in Indonesia would be very sensitive and could only undermine the powerbase of the ruling government due to past experiences with the authoritarian regime. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, the issue of terrorism has been mainly addressed with counterinsurgency approaches given that the terrorist networks acquired specific areas and have been carrying out armed struggles against the government. Complex interactions between the root cause of terrorism threats and available counterterrorism policies have shaped different perceptions on how to deal with the threats. Besides threat perceptions and domestic policies, the literatures also identified interagency rivalries that hamper the implementation of counterterrorism policies. The problem of sharing of intelligence information, unfortunately, does not only occur between ASEAN countries, but also within each country itself. The tug of war between the armed forces and police emerges as a common problem. At the regional level, ASEAN also lacks the cross-institutional cooperation which could provide an effective chain of cooperation between the police and armed forces in ASEAN (Borelli, 2017, p. 16).

Most literature also highlighted ASEAN countries' cooperation under the sub-regional scheme. When the discussions among ASEAN members hit deadlock and consensus could not be reached, ASEAN members states would seek an alternative through bilateral or trilateral cooperation. One such remarkable trilateral cooperation was the signing of the Agreement on Exchange and Establishment of Communication

Procedures in May 2002 by Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia (Chow, 2005; Emmers, 2009). Under this agreement, the signatories should share intelligence information, enhance their border security, and participate in joint-training (Chow, 2005; Emmers, 2009). In 2017, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia formed a trilateral patrol cooperation to monitor the Sulu-Celebes Sea that has been a hotbed for transnational crime and terrorist networks (Tan, 2018, p. 142). Although trilateral cooperation is an alternative to expediting an agreement on a counterterrorism scheme, this form of cooperation is not without loopholes and critics. Sharing of intelligence information remains a sensitive issue and most countries are reluctant to share such information (Banloi, 2009). Member states are not obliged to share the information. In most cases, unless they are asked by other member states or their own national interests are put at stake by an incident, they will not share the relevant information. The principle of non-interference remains intact.

Despite the criticism toward ASEAN's counterterrorism cooperation, Ramakrishna and Tan (2004, p. 92) opted for a more balanced stance; "it deserves a more balanced evaluation". Ramakrishna and Tan highlighted the criticism about the ineffectiveness of ASEAN's intelligence pact. Yet, they argued that various arrests of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) key leaders in Southeast Asia would not be possible without intelligence cooperation among ASEAN member states (Tan & Ramakrishna, 2004, p. 92). Ramakrishna and Tan acknowledged the problem of acute interagency rivalry within ASEAN countries and suggested capacity building and improvement of legal measures to prevent unnecessary frictions or bureaucratic issues.

These literatures have been very useful in understanding the ASEAN CT cooperation. However, the literatures were primarily crafted in the aftermath of 9/11 and the Bali Bombings tragedies. It has been two decades since these tragedies occurred, but similar issues still remain. What has gone wrong? Intrastate interagency rivalries have arguably become a main topic of domestic dynamics that hampers the counterterrorism efforts. However, there have been very limited discussions about the root causes of the interagency rivalries themselves. Is it only a matter of sluggish economic growth that leads to competition over resources? Are there any other reasons that lead to such unhealthy competitions? This paper would like to fill in the gap in the existing literature by answering these questions with the concept of bureaucratic resistance.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Intelligence Sharing and Bureaucratic Resistance

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attack, there is an increasing need for intelligence sharing between states. The nature of terrorist activities is no longer domestic, but transnational. Each country should expand their intelligence cooperation to gain relevant information about terrorist activities. There are limitations if countries rely only on their own intelligence capabilities. Not even the United States could work on its own. The United States' intelligence agencies often encounter obstacles in gathering intelligence information in other countries. They would need linguists and local experts who could understand the landscape and characteristics of the local terrorist networks (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 528; Reveron, 2006, p. 454)

Unfortunately, intelligence sharing between countries is not an easy feat. The nature of intelligence information as secretive information tends to hinder relevant national and international agencies from sharing information with each other (Walsh, 2010, p. 12). Each country prefers to limit the flow of information and the receivers of information; thus, the information will not be leaked to the targets or third parties or adversaries (Walsh, 2010, p. 9). The uncertainty and fear of defections among the states become a major obstacle in implementing intelligence cooperation. The intelligence agencies will consider the cost and benefit of involving in an intelligence cooperation. The intelligence community would like to protect their information and the source of information itself. They do not want to risk leaking their undercover operations (Maras, 2017, p. 190).

The framework of bureaucratic resistance can be utilised to understand the reluctance of the intelligence community to share information with each other. Fägersten (2010) adopts the study of bureaucratic politics to understand the similar developments among intelligence bodies. In general, the bureaucratic politics model explains that a state cannot be seen as a single entity as there are various governmental bodies and each of them have their own interests and perceptions on the notion of national interests (Allison & Halperin, 1972, p. 43). Fägersten later adopts the concept of bureaucratic politics as bureaucratic resistance whereby there are the notion of self-interests and the deeply entrenched ideas within an organisation that hamper the intelligence sharing efforts. He defines the two variables as; bureaucratic interests and bureaucratic culture (Fägersten, 2010, p 502). The idea of bureaucratic interests identifies the long-time investment and assets of the agency. It takes a long time to build trust and establish a vast network who can support the work of the organisation. Subsequently, the organisation will be reluctant

to cooperate and share their own assets to the other organisations, national or international. Cooperation with other organisations tends to look unattractive and will not benefit the members of the organisations (Fägersten, 2010, p. 516). Meanwhile, bureaucratic culture explains that an organisation will have shared ideas, expectations, and long-established working practices. This specific culture defines how things work inside an organisation. In the case of intelligence organisations, they have a very strict and secretive working environment hence any changes to the established working flows may undermine their long-established working environment. Fägersten argues that each counterterrorism agency also has different organisation cultures and perspectives in assessing the threats. For instance, an external-security oriented organisation would see intelligence information as a means to alter the other's policies to fit their own values and goals. Whereas, an internal-security oriented organisation tends to see the intelligence information as a source of power organisations (Fägersten, 2010, p. 517). In short, the external-security oriented organisations are more willing to share the information to influence the others' views, while the internal-security oriented organisation tend to keep the information to themselves because it is their bargaining power.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article will use the case study of Jolo Church Bombing 2019 to understand the challenge of implementing the ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE). Case study approach attempts to use an individual case to understand the general cases. This approach will allow us to identify various intervening variables that lead to the hypothesis or explain a causal relationship (George & Bennett, 2005). Jolo Church Bombing is a suitable case to identify various factors that will create obstacles for the implementation of AOE. This incident occurred after the initiative was adopted by ASEAN and involved two countries which are identified as the hotbed of terrorist networks in the region; Indonesia and the Philippines. The case also demonstrates the complexities of domestic dynamics in each country that would be valuable to understand the impact of domestic politics to the region. It will assess the domestic dynamics by using the concept of bureaucratic resistance. The two variables that will be used to analyse the dynamics are; bureaucratic interests and bureaucratic culture. Nevertheless, the author acknowledges that the case study approach is also prone to case selection bias whereby a case is selected for the sake of confirming the desired outcome (George & Bennett, 2005). This research will attempt to verify the

information by examining various sources, such as academic articles, newspapers, interviews with government officials, and official governmental documents or statements.

DISCUSSION

ASEAN Our Eyes

The Marawi Siege has alarmed the region about the flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF). Retired Gen. Ryamizard Ryacudu, the Indonesian Defense Minister (2014-2019), expressed his concern about it and highlighted an urgent need for the sharing of intelligence information among ASEAN countries. Ryacudu proposed the “Our Eyes Initiative” which was modelled after the Five Eyes alliance, an intelligence alliance consisting of the United States, Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada. The initiative would serve as a multilateral intelligence sharing platform between six ASEAN countries; Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, and the Philippines (The Straits Times, 2017). Ryacudu acknowledged the lack of an integrated intelligence sharing platform in Southeast Asia. Intelligence cooperation among ASEAN member states is primarily bilateral or trilateral due to the complex nature of the region. Hence, Ryacudu aspired to establish an integrated multilateral intelligence platform where the member states hold regular meetings to maintain their communications and create an integrated real time database (Ryacudu, 2020). Under this initiative, the Ministry of Defense from each country would become the point of contact and responsible for producing analysis based on the intelligence information that they gather from the intelligence bodies in their countries (Adityawarman, 2019). Our Eyes Initiative was formally adopted at the 12th ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM) in Singapore in October 2018.

This initiative was later adopted as “ASEAN Our Eyes” (AOE) in 2019. It is no longer an initiative which comprises only a few of ASEAN member states. All states agreed to adopt it as one of ASEAN’s intelligence frameworks and join it. AOE ideally would provide preventive measures and early warning detection systems for terrorism, radicalization, and extremism in the region. Ryacudu, the founding father of this initiative, writes in his book that there are a few of issues which AOE aims to focus on; terrorism financing, the return of Foreign Terrorist Fighters, propaganda on social media and other sources (Ryacudu, 2020, p. 174). AOE has held, at least, six working group meetings. During the working group meetings, the member states have formed the Terms of References (TOR) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). AOE aspired to form

Our Eyes Command Centre (OECC) that will assess the collected information and later will be reported to the Ministry of Defence (Ryacudu, 2020, p. 173). Based on the TOR, once the information is deemed urgent to be discussed in a strategic meeting, AOE will utilize the ASEAN Direct Communication Infrastructure (ADI) as its communication platforms and other relevant platforms to support its program. ADI was established to provide a secure communications hotline between the ASEAN member states. It is also a part of confidence building measures among member states to stave off tensions and misunderstanding during a crisis (Kyodo News, 2021). Upon the collection of information, the outcomes of AOE are subjected to review and endorsement of the ASEAN Defense Senior Official's Meeting Working Group (ADSOM WG) and ADSOM.

Table 1. ASEAN Our Eyes Working Group Meetings Schedule

No.	Meeting	Place	Date
1.	The First Working Group Meeting	Jakarta, Indonesia	29-30 October 2018
2.	The Second Working Group Meeting	Semarang, Indonesia	22-25 January 2019
3.	The Third Working Group Meeting	Palembang, Indonesia	4-5 March 2020
4.	The Fourth Working Group Meeting	Video Conference	11 August 2020
5.	The Fifth Working Group Meeting	Video Conference	4-5 May 2021
6.	The Sixth Working Group Meeting	Video Conference	10-11 January 2022

Source: ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Website (2022)

<https://admm.asean.org/index.php/events.html>

The Indonesian government as the proponent of AOE has been at the forefront in forming the systems under AOE. When it was first established, OECC operated in the Indonesian Ministry of Defence had collected intelligence information and analysed them (Ryacudu, 2020, p. 173). The Indonesian government also invited experts from Australia to create the Our Eyes Intelligence Management System (OE-IMS) to process a large amount of data on the extremist activities in the region. The use of this centralized system also aims to gather relevant actors from each country to understand the working system of the platform and to encourage them to learn about the importance of intelligence sharing (Ryacudu, 2020, p. 176). Regardless of its good intention, the establishment of AOE is not without opposition within Indonesia. The initiative came from the Ministry of Defence, hence the other relevant counterterrorism agency voiced out their oppositions against this initiative. According to a government official from the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), it is not necessary to establish AOE given that ASEAN already has other relevant platforms to share information between the member

states, such as ADMM. They also scrutinize the purpose of AOE due to its nature as an “intelligence gathering platform”, yet it only shares information related to terrorism or extremism.² Despite the oppositions, Ryacudu mentions in his book that AOE will not limit itself to the information on terrorism or extremism. It may expand its scope to maritime security related information (Ryacudu, 2020). However, the plan to expand to maritime security could also lead to political ramifications because there are already relevant bodies for the issue, such as the Indonesia Marine Police (Polair) and the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (BAKAMLA). The absence of division of labour would only exacerbate the overlapping responsibilities between relevant agencies.

The Jolo Church Bombing

The defeat of the Islamic State (IS) and the Covid-19 pandemic have created obstacles for aspiring jihadis to emigrate to Syria. The Philippines is believed to be the next epicentre for some jihadis who remain committed to fighting.³ Historically, the Philippines has always been the battlefield and training ground for jihadis in the region. In the past, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)’s – the mastermind behind Bali Bombings - members from other countries, mainly Indonesia and Malaysia, also underwent training in Mindanao, Southern Philippines. During the Battle of Marawi, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) identified Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) who joined the local jihadis. AFP could not provide exact figures on the number of FTF, but it recorded at least 32 foreign militants were killed during the battle and some of them were minors (Yusa, 2018). In the aftermath of the Battle of Marawi, FTF remained active in the Philippines. The 2019 Jolo Church Bombings demonstrated the active role of FTF in launching attacks in the Philippines. In January 2019, Indonesian couple Rullie Rian Zeke and Ulfa Handayani Saleh detonated explosives at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral in Jolo, Sulu. Prior to their departure to the Philippines, the couple underwent a short rehabilitation program held by the Indonesian government for deportees. The rehabilitation was only a month, then the deportees were repatriated to their respective hometown (Anindya, 2019, p. 225). Although the deportees should have been under the radar of the Indonesian government upon their release from the rehabilitation programme, some of them managed to evade surveillance and moved to other regions.

Detailed information about the couple's identities came to light following a series of arrests of members of Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), the umbrella organization of Islamic State (IS) sympathizers in Indonesia. It was believed that the couple were

influenced by Khalid Abu Bakar, a fellow deportee who played the role of an ideologue, to fight in the Philippines if emigrating to Syria was not feasible. The couple entered the Philippines at the end of 2018 through Sabah and met their point of contact from the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). They were prepared to carry out suicide bombings but had no specific targets as ASG would be in charge of identifying the targets (The Straits Times, 2021). In October 2020, the Philippines security apparatus arrested two Indonesian women who were allegedly plotting suicide bombings (Philippines News Agency, 2020). One of them was identified as Rezky Fantasia alias Cici, the daughter of Rullie and Ulfa. Rezky was married to Andi Baso, an Indonesian fugitive who died in an encounter with the Philippines security apparatus in Sulu (Rappler, 2020).

The investigation on the identity of Jolo Church Bombing demonstrated the uncoordinated domestic intelligence networks. The Philippines' President Duterte and Interior Secretary Ano's were quick to claim that the perpetrators were an Indonesian couple. Duterte and Ano's statements enraged the Indonesian authorities as comprehensive investigations had yet to be done by the time the two Philippines' higher authorities released the statements. The Indonesian Embassy in Manila contacted the Philippines' National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) to enquire about Ano's statement and the source of information. Ironically, NICA stated that the agency had no idea about the basis of Ano's statement, and they would seek for clarification (Tempo, 2019). AFP was also hesitant to release any statements because they were still waiting for the final investigation. The coordination between Indonesia and the Philippines only occurred after the incident. AFP claimed that they shared important notes and information to the Indonesian National Police (Polri) which led to the confirmation from the Indonesian authorities that the couple are indeed Indonesian (Philippines News Agency, 2019). Such incidents could have been prevented if the sharing of information were done regularly. Unfortunately, the relevant authorities only coordinated when an incident happened.

The case of Rullie and Ulfa demonstrated the loopholes of intelligence sharing within Indonesia, Philippines, and between ASEAN Countries. The couple were deportees, they should have been under the strict surveillance of the Indonesian security apparatus. However, they managed to cross the border via Malaysia before joining the ASG. On the Philippines side, government officials and security apparatus did not release the same official statements in the aftermath of attacks. These dynamics show that there is a bigger problem that should be examined in understanding the challenges of

intelligence sharing between ASEAN countries. It is not only the problem of coordination between countries, but also within a country itself. Without solid cooperation between agencies in a country, it would be difficult to expect smooth information sharing between countries.

Bureaucratic Resistance of Indonesia and Philippines Agencies

Bureaucratic Interests

According to Fägersten, bureaucratic interests indicate the asset or investment that the organisation has built for a long time, such as networks, knowledge, and personal relationships. Each organisation has an established way of doing business and their personal network has helped them to gather information from relevant sources. To understand the dynamics during the Jolo Bombing incident, we should also trace back the past intelligence mishaps that involved relevant agencies in Indonesia and Philippines. Hence, we could analyse the characteristics of those agencies and understand why both countries failed to prevent the Jolo Bombing and analyse the future trend in implementing ASEAN Our Eyes. Indonesia and the Philippines are infamous for the patronage system in the organisation.

In the Philippines, the distrust between PNP and AFP often led to deadly incidents in the hunt of terrorist networks. Both PNP and AFP tend to withhold information for fear of the leakage of information to the adversaries. A notable case was the death of 44 PNP Special Action Forces (PNP-SAF) in the Operation Plan (Oplan) Exodus in 2015. Oplan Exodus was a special operation to hunt down Marwan, a leader of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). SAF briefed President Benigno Aquino about the plan who later instructed SAF to coordinate with AFP. Despite the order from the President, the Director of SAF (DSAF) Gutello Napenas did not communicate with AFP and only shared the information to SAF and some PNP executives (Villareal Jr., 2016, p. 32). The AFP was informed on the time of the operation itself. Subsequently, they were too late to provide the necessary artillery support when it was needed (Villareal Jr., 2016, p. 28). Napenas argued that sharing information with AFP would only jeopardize the operation because they would leak the information to Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Napenas suspected that the past failures of the operation against Marwan was due to the operational security leaks within the AFP (Villareal Jr., 2016, p. 32). Hence, he was unwilling to share all the information that SAF had collected to hunt down Marwan.

In a similar vein, the relevant agencies in Indonesia were also reluctant to share information with each other as they believe that it tends to undermine their efforts. The fear of leakage of information hinders the agencies from sharing information with each other. With regard for deportees, for instance, the information or details about the repatriation of the deportees was circulated only for limited agencies. Each agency also has their own data on deportees, resulting in different statements and data about the number and locations of the deportees. There was also a case when the information about the repatriation was leaked by local police. Subsequently, it garnered attention from the local media which undermined the repatriation process (Anindya, 2019, p. 234). The repatriation process attempted to hide the identity of the deportees from the community as the authorities feared that the local community would refuse to accept them in the society, and it would only hinder their reintegration process into the society. Therefore, various information related to terrorism is mostly centralized to the Detachment 88, the police's counterterrorism special unit. Highly sensitive information, particularly about the top targets will not be shared for fear of a leakage of information. For instance, in 2016, there was a series of arrests of terrorist suspects in Batam, yet the local police were only informed about the arrest operation on the day itself.⁴

These cases demonstrate that the relevant agencies have invested their networks and knowledge with their own organisational structure to collect intelligence information. Subsequently, they attempt to ensure that the information will not be leaked, and their operation or programmes could succeed. If sharing of information also means the leak the information to the third parties or adversaries, they would rather withhold the information to their own organisation. They would not want to risk their "asset" by sharing it with the other agency.

Bureaucratic Culture

The leakage of intelligence information demonstrates the fundamental problems within an organisation, namely the recruitment process and personnel audit. Both Indonesia and the Philippines suffer from the deeply entrenched bureaucratic culture of the patronage system. In the Philippines, there is a perennial problem of "Padrino System". The Padrino system is a patronage system in which an influential person will assist their relatives or acquaintances to get the desired positions in an institution or agency (Gripaldo, 2005). Within PNP, this system promotes the practice of corruption and nepotism in the Philippines. Subsequently, underqualified persons or even criminals could pass the

recruitment process by exploiting this system. Meanwhile in AFP, this tradition creates a problematic recruitment process whereby the commanders tend to recruit individuals who can be loyal to them without considering their ability to process and analyse intelligence information (Vicentico E. Jr, 2020). The tradition creates a sense of reluctance for each unit to share information. The AFP consists of various units, such as the Eastern Mindanao Command (EASTMINCOM) and Western Mindanao Command (WESTMINCOM). However, these units rarely share information with each other which hampers the intelligence efforts (Vicentico E. Jr, 2020, p. 13). While the financial motives could not be omitted from this case, there is also a sense of prestige and pride from each unit that prevents them from sharing information (Vicentico E. Jr, 2020, p. 13). Keeping important information for themselves will enhance their bargaining positions to the civilian authorities (Anindya, 2020). In exchange, they will be given more strategic positions in the policy making and implementation process.

In Indonesia, the patronage system and factionalism are nothing new. This bureaucratic culture has been deeply ingrained since the New Order regime whereby President Suharto attempted to ensure his regime's survival by instilling the patronage system to the security organisations. He would only recruit people whom he believed to be loyal to him. This culture is also associated with the culture of “Bapak-ism”. The culture of “Bapak-ism” which can be translated as “father-ism” has been deeply ingrained in Indonesia. In a group, there will be a “father” figure that will lead their members and cultivate a sense of loyalty to the group which creates a strong bond among them. This culture also defines the relationship between “Bapak (father)” or the leader and the “anak buah ” whereby there is a degree of authority of the leader in shaping the organization's goals and values. The implementation of this culture aims to maintain internal order and deter the members of organizations from challenging the top leadership (Shiraishi, 1992, p. 155). Hence, the members should behave accordingly in order to gain rewards (Pye, 1999; Irwanto, Ramsey, & Ryan, 2011). While material and strategic positions are valuable rewards, it also increases the self-esteem of individuals (Ramakrishna, 2009). However, we could not deny the fact that in-group bias could undermine interagency coordination. It tends to be detrimental to intelligence gathering whereby each sharing of information is an important feature to connect the dots between individuals and terrorist networks. In addition, it compromises the recruitment and career advancements within relevant intelligence agencies whereby favouritism and personal networks are preferred instead of personal capabilities.

CONCLUSION

This paper has set out to investigate the root causes of the problems in counterterrorism cooperation in ASEAN. This author concludes that ASEAN Our Eyes will encounter significant obstacles in intelligence gathering due to the inherent problem of bureaucratic resistance. The Ministry of Defense from each country is supposed to gather intelligence information from the relevant agencies. They are expected to pool all relevant information about the terrorist networks in their country and stop the movements of the terrorist suspects. However, this article shows that intelligence gathering is not an easy feat. Each agency is hesitant to render their information to the other agency. At one point, they believe that sharing information will only undermine the accumulated efforts in hunting their targets. The coordination agency could not offer reassurance that sharing of information will not lead to the leakage of critical information. Subsequently, each agency will stick to their established working flow and resist change.

Fägersten's bureaucratic resistance is a helpful framework to analyse the obstacles of sharing of information between relevant agencies in a country. Although this study uses the case of Jolo Church Bombing which only involved Indonesia and the Philippines, the bureaucratic problems, namely the patron-clientalism, are also pertinent issues in other Southeast Asian countries (Hlaing, 2007; Ockey, 2007; Chamber, 2020). Many Southeast Asian countries have been struggling in reforming the governance system from the residue of the corrupt authoritarian regime. The detrimental culture of patron-client has permeated for decades and a macro regional solution might be insufficient in addressing the problems. There is an urgent need to address the local and national problems first before moving forward to the regional solutions. For instance, fixing the underlying problems in the recruitment process that tends to recruit individuals based on favouritism instead of merit. On one hand, this system could ensure loyalty and prevent leakage of information from the organizations, but at the same time it also prevents the flow of information between organizations.

AOE would be a great counterterrorism initiative to create an integrated database on the region's terrorist networks. However, ASEAN should also ensure that similar integrated databases also exist in each country. AOE could not expect the Ministry of Defence to gather comprehensive intelligence information. Not to mention, in each country, the Ministry of Defence is not necessarily an intelligence coordination agency. It is likely to exacerbate the overlapping responsibilities and confusions among

intelligence institutions in a country. Instead of streamlining the reporting system, this new established initiative will add another layer in the current system. AOE should ensure that its system will not complicate the existing intelligence establishment in each country. AOE should also point out what would be the benefit of supporting the initiatives for the region. In the end, FTF is a complex phenomenon and requires solid coordination between relevant agencies to handle it. There are strings of networks across the countries and regions to help them to move from one place to another. Firm intelligence sharing would help in breaking the chain and prevent them from executing their plans in carrying out terror activities.

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Note:

¹ Following the outbreak of Syrian Civil War, many individuals were lured by the Islamic State (IS)' propaganda for the final apocalyptic battle in Dabiq, Syria. They aspired to emigrate to Syria to live under the banner of the caliphate on the final day. However, emigrating to Syria is not an easy feat. There were many aspiring jihadis who were stopped before entering Syria, mainly at the border of Turkey and Syria. These individuals were deported back to their home countries (see Anindya, 2019).

² Interview with an Indonesian government official from the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), 2 March 2022.

³ It is important to note that not all aspiring jihadis are willing to emigrate to the Philippines as it does not have solid attractions as Syria does. Syria is believed to be the final battle ground between the Islamic Messiah, Mahdi and the false Messiah, Dajjal.

⁴ Interview with a police officer in Batam, December 20, 2016.