

Name : MH. Ainun Maidi

NIM : 20130510419

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**The Establishment of Information Resource Center as The United States
Cultural Diplomacy Toward Indonesia**

Abstract

The United States and Indonesia bilateral relation has been established in two years after Indonesian independence in 1945. The United States consider that Indonesia as an important country to be engaged, since it is the world's third biggest democracy based system, has the biggest muslim population, the tenth-biggest economy on the planet by obtaining power, and has the world's most prominent marine biodiversity and its second most prominent earthbound biodiversity and others important aspect from Indonesia. The cooperation between both countries improving year by year, and it makes The United States renowned and familiar among Indonesian citizen. By entering Barrack Obama administration, The United States expand its relationship with Indonesia, it was called Comprehensive partnership. The cooperation conducts lots aspects including fostered consistent high-level engagement on democracy and civil society, instruction, security, atmosphere, oceanic, vitality, and exchange issues. However, The United States image in Indonesia not that good due to several actions that The United States has been done inside or outside of Indonesia. It escalates Indonesian citizen to have negative perceptions toward The United States, especially for those who have contradictory thought with The United States such as Islamic movements or organizations. The United States respond it by established the Information Resource Center in Indonesia as a term of cultural diplomacy. This undergraduate thesis will analyze why The United States established Information Resource Center in Indonesia. In order to describe reason beyond it, this undergraduate thesis using theory perception and concept of soft power.

Keywords:

The United States, Indonesia, Perceptions, Information Resource Center

Introduction

This undergraduate thesis is composed to explain more detail in advance about Information Resource Center (IRC) programs in Indonesia and analyze the reason beyond its establishment in Indonesia and its relation with citizens perception in Indonesia. In which the IRC itself works under The United States Embassy, Jakarta and The United States Consulate General, Surabaya. Information Resource Center (IRC) serves as a tool of The United States cultural diplomacy in Indonesia throughout various program.

Under Barrack Obama administration, The United States through Bureau of Information and Publication established what they called as American Spaces in which consist of 800 platforms all over the world, and in Indonesia, it called Information Resource Center (IRC), in which it is one of The United States Embassy's most effective tools for communicating The United States policy and introducing citizens of Indonesia to American history, government, society, and values. Information Resource Center exemplifies The United States commitment to free access to information. It has computers with the Internet and educational software, an excellent set of reference books, audio/video materials, and other great resources. It also has a lending library of popular American fiction and a friendly staff to serve everyone who is interested in the United States. Information Resource Center is the primary source of informed commentary on the origin, growth and

development of The United States society, politics, economics and culture and a major tool supporting The United States cultural diplomacy objectives.

The United States and Indonesia Bilateral relations

The relationship between Indonesia and The United States had been in existence since before the Proclamation of Independence in 1945. Then, on December 28, 1949, The United States opened The United States Embassy in Jakarta and appoint first The United States ambassador to Indonesia, Horace Merle Cochran.

On February 20, 1950, the Indonesian government appointed Dr. Sastroamidjojo as the first Indonesian Ambassador to the United States. Both countries have a strong foundation in cooperation for the benefit of both parties, which is based on the basic values respected joint or shared values, namely democracy, good governance, respect for human rights and a pluralistic and tolerant society. Based on these premises, Indonesia expects to achieve a broader relationship with The United States government and depth in various fields in accordance with the needs and development of both parties.

The cooperation between The United States and Indonesia becoming more advance when it is entering Barrack Obama administration. The United States and Indonesia relations have gone up against expanding significance. Indonesia is the world's third largest democracy, has the biggest Muslim-larger part populace, is the

tenth biggest economy in the world by acquiring power, and has the world's most noteworthy marine biodiversity and its second most noteworthy physical biodiversity.

Both bilateral relationships produce Comprehensive Partnership, introduced in 2010 when President Obama set out to Indonesia, cultivated predictable abnormal state engagement on vote based system and common society, training, security, atmosphere, sea, vitality, and exchange issues, among others. In view of its prosperity, in 2015 the two nations overhauled the relationship to the United States and Indonesia Strategic Partnership, stretching out participation to issues of local and worldwide (AFFAIRS, 2016).

The United States problem in maintaining bilateral relations with Indonesia

In international relations, state as political actor composing cooperation with a lot challenges. It is always run dynamically, there is a moment when cooperation between states getting stronger and also it could be an opposite when states could not be able to deal with certain cases and it turn into a conflict. It is also happening with The United States and Indonesia bilateral relations, Indonesia which known as divers nation having bunch type of society. The differences conduct in several aspects, such as race, religion and others. As moslem majority state, which is also applying democratic system, it is a big challenge to maintain the country. It is also triggering the people to speak up throughout community group, social movement, political party and others.

Those community group which shaped in several form, such as movement and others playing role as supporting partner for state cooperation. But also, in the other way, it could be a challenge or problem when they are not be able to deal with certain policy and cases. The United States facing problems in maintaining its relationship with Indonesia when it is concerning on public or social view, since there are a lot of people having negative perception toward The United State itself.

In fact, those people who have contradictory thought with The United States becoming stronger caused they gathered in a movement, especially those which could be categorized as a left wing named PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* - Prosperous Justice Party), HTI (*Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* – Indonesian *Hizb Ut Tahrir*), and FPI (*Front Pembela Islam* – The Islamic Defenders Front) and also right wing which conduct communist movement. Those community group having negative perception toward The United States and implement it through several term such as publishing soft protest through online and offline media, held public protest to the embassy and consulate general or even forcing Indonesian government to avoid certain cooperation with The United States.

The writer classifies how perceived negative perception of Indonesian society flowed to the United States through several two ways: direct and indirect. The first direct, which means action of these perceptions voiced in tangible form. Usually this is done at the Embassy or Consulate General by instrument is a mass with considerable amount, and done because of the insistence of certain insistence. The

second is indirect means to use various tools such as media, both online and offline to publish negative thought provoking them against the United States with the hope for change with the things they have done and done individually or in groups via a press release or official website. For example, the negative perception coming from Hizbut Tahrir which protesting The United States regarding terrorism case (Widjaya & Astuti, 2008).

The establishment and function of Information Resource Center in Indonesia

Information Resource Center or IRC established by United States Department of State, Bureau of International Information Programs, it established following the United States and Indonesia comprehensive cooperation. IRC works in Indonesia under The United States Embassy, Jakarta and The United States Consulate General, Surabaya which playing role as the official representative of The United States in Indonesia (Sinaga, 2016). The Structure started by Ambassador as head of the Embassy, continued by implementing affair which is Public Affair Section, continued by Cultural Affair and IRC works under control of Cultural Affair itself.

IRC having function in maintaining five main job description. Again, it is purposed in order to keep mutual understanding between The United States and Indonesia, especially the citizens of Indonesia. First, spreading and promoting information about The United States. Second, introducing The United States culture, for example movies, art and others. Third, alumni engagement, exchange program

and professional. Fourth, “Study in The United States” is a program purposed to attract people to study in The United States and also providing Indonesian student to have an access for educational consultation. Fifth, English teaching and learning (Sinaga, 2016).

Information Resource Center process in build positive perception among Indonesian citizens

The United States has been done several accomplishment in persuade Indonesian citizens to have positive perceptions toward The United States itself, even it is not on all Indonesian citizens thought. Taking an example, as one of Information Resource Center working area which is providing information about The United States by giving a real living experience in The United States, this is what comes up from East Java Vice Governor, Syaifullah Yusuf who commonly called as Gus Ipul, he stated that “The democratic process in The United States can be inspiring other countries”.

The United States overall image around the world including remains largely positive by 2015. Across the nations surveyed (excluding the U.S.), a median of 69% hold a favorable opinion of the U.S., while just 24% express an unfavorable view. However, there is significant variation among regions and countries. While in Indonesia, counted based on Barrack Obama administration in, the starting point was jumping significantly from 37 percent to 63 (Wike, Stokes, & Poushter, 2015). That

is also reflecting the changing of The United States foreign policy in which turn into using soft power. And during Barrack Obama administration, it is dynamically change but with close number, and overall can be considered higher than the previous administration. This is showing that Information Resource Center establishment in Indonesia is effective to build positive perception among Indonesian citizens.

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