
DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION AND REFLECTION ON INDONESIA'S EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE DEMOCRATIZATION IN MYANMAR

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the motives and forms of Indonesia's effort towards Myanmar in promoting democratization. To achieve these objectives, described the historical aspects of Indonesia-Myanmar relations, democratic transition in both countries, and other forms of Indonesian support for Myanmar in encouraging democratization. Qualitative methods is used in this study to collect and analyze data from interviews and literature studies. Based on this research, found that Indonesia's support for Myanmar in encouraging democratization was influenced by the historical aspects of bilateral relations between Indonesia and Myanmar, the success of Indonesia's transition to democracy, and the similarities of socio-cultural characteristics in both countries. Indonesia's foreign policy towards Myanmar in supporting democratization is done bilaterally, regionally within ASEAN, and multilaterally within UN forums. The principle of active and independent foreign policy and ASEAN norms become the guidance for Indonesia in supporting democratization of Myanmar.

Keywords: *ASEAN norms, democratization, foreign policy, military junta, bilateral relations.*

A. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Indonesia began its democratic transition period after the collapse of the New Order Regime in 1998 which was followed by reform in all areas of life. Through its success in passing the democratic transition, Indonesia is exemplified as a model and inspiration for Egypt, Tunisia and other Arab countries who are fighting for democratic consolidation. In fact, Indonesia is used as an ideal model for the running of Islam and democracy in tandem (Islam, 2011).

The election of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) as the Indonesian president in the 2004 elections has restarted efforts to strengthen Indonesia's active role in the international arena and began to pursue a large role at the

global level, one of which is the promotion of democracy. Under SBY's leadership, Indonesia has made the promotion of democracy one of the main goals in its foreign policy agenda. Indonesia emerged as a country that strongly advocated the values and principles of democracy in the Asia Pacific (Sukma, 2011). During his visit to the US in 2005, SBY stated that, "*We are now an outward-looking country, eager to shape regional and international orders and intent on having our voice heard*". Tan, (2007) interpreted that SBY's statement was a form of Indonesia's readiness to be active in international politics and regain its leadership.

At the regional level, Indonesia views ASEAN as the closest and most important partner (Wirajuda, 2010). Indonesia views ASEAN as a concentric circle in its foreign policy (Haryanto & Pasha, 2016). The emphasis of ASEAN as a *cornerstone* of Indonesia's foreign policy, is very clearly seen in the doctrine of *Dynamic Equilibrium*, which is a concept that emphasizes the development of a series of regional mechanisms that are driven by middle forces without actors who are either dominant or isolated (Poling, 2013).

One of the problems that attracted the attention of the international community in the last three decades is the issue of democracy in Myanmar. Myanmar has become one of the countries that has received an attention not only at the ASEAN level, but also at the UN forum. The issue of ethnic conflict and authoritarian leadership by the Military Junta has brought the country to the issues of Human Rights and democracy which are becoming global issues today. For Indonesia, these issues are challenges for the promotion of democracy in Myanmar and in ASEAN, especially when Indonesia wants to reaffirm its regional leadership in the region while spreading democratic principles and values after its success in passing the democratic transition in its country.

This paper seeks to explain Indonesia's efforts towards Myanmar in encouraging democratization. To explore this, the researchers tried to relate it to the history and dynamics of the relationship between Indonesia and Myanmar, which became the basis for forming a current *understanding* between the two countries so that they were considered in formulating their foreign policy towards Myanmar in encouraging democratization. In addition, to compile the arguments for the form of Indonesian foreign policy towards Myanmar and at what phase of the political transition of Indonesian support is directed at, the researcher first explained the democratic transition in Indonesia as part of the reflection of Indonesian foreign policy towards Myanmar and became part of the Indonesia's identity in disseminating its democratic principles and values. In addition, a review of the transition to democracy in Myanmar is a concern for researchers to compare it with the democratic transition in Indonesia and the basis for bilateral relations between the two countries.

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding of foreign policy becomes one of the concerns of International Relations interest when they want to understand the form of action from a country against other actors outside their territorial environments. Carlsnaes (2012) describes foreign policy as a set of actions projected to goals, conditions and actors (both state and non-state) that are outside their territories and are intended to influence other actors. These various actions are manifested through goals, commitments, or directions that are expressed in real terms, carried out by parties representing the government acting on behalf of a sovereign country. Foreign policy analysis is a subdiscipline in International Relations that explains foreign policy or foreign policy behavior based on the theoretical foundations of decision makers acting alone or in groups (Smith, Hadfield, & Dunne, 2012).

The concept of democracy and democratization is relevant to be understood in the context of this paper. Democracy is an actual word for discussion, both in theoretical and practical terms. Democracy has opened space for debate in academics with diverse meanings. However, almost all experts agree that democracy can bring to human benefit (Gaffar, 2006). Schumpeter defines democracy as an institutional arrangement (system) where individuals reach power as decision makers through competitive battles in gaining popular votes (dalam Sorensen, 2008). For him democracy is narrowly interpreted to elect political leaders through competition in the popular vote. Dahl (dalam Sorensen, 2008) argues for democracy through three main dimensions, namely competition, participation, political and civil liberties. Democracy intended by the experts above (Dahl and Schumpeter) is narrow in nature which is only based on general elections, where democracy is interpreted procedurally with the election as the essence of democracy (electoral/procedural democracy). Another perspective expressed by Huntington (1993) which states that it is not enough if a democratic system only defined as an election. Free, transparent and competitive election implementation only occurs if there is freedom of opinion, association and freedom of the press, and if the opposition candidate or party gets the right to criticize the authorities guaranteed by the constitution. Thus, elections are not everything in democracy.

Mayer said that liberal democracy tends to emphasize civil and political rights so it needs to be side by side with social democracy that carries human rights (civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights) that are in accordance with Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the existence of restrictions on power (Mayer dalam Hadiwinata & Schuck, 2007). According to Merkel, liberal democracy is important because it rests on the main conditions for the success of democratic elections. According to him in democracy it is necessary to apply the principle of equal rights in politics, freedom and

participation of individuals, guarantee of legal protection for citizens, and control of political power. Beetham & Boyle (2009) stated that democracy is related to how much people's participation in collective decision making.

An understanding of the development of democracy in Myanmar helps researchers take a picture and examine the conditions of implementing democracy in Myanmar, both in the form of liberal democracy and social democracy, as well as to analyze forms of assistance (political, economic, social, cultural, law enforcement) carried out by Indonesia in supporting democratic life in Myanmar. This also helps researcher in analyzing Indonesia's foreign policy towards Myanmar through various aspects, either political, economic, social or cultural in realizing a democratic climate in Myanmar both in the context of developing democracy in the narrow sense that includes general elections and the development of democracy in the broad meaning that covers politics, economics, social and culture.

In this paper, it is also necessary to discuss the process of social and political change in a country. Democratization is related to political changes in a democratic direction (Potter, Goldblatt, Kiloh, & Lewis, 1997). In other words, democratization refers to the expansion of citizen political participation in various political decisions. Also talking about how the transition process of political regimes, namely from authoritarianism to democratic regimes. In democratization, there are several phases or processes that a country goes through to reach a democratic country, known as the phase of democratic transition. O'Donnell, Schmitter, & Whitehead (1986) interpreting the transition as a political transition by ending an authoritarian regime and establishing a democratic regime, or can also return to another authoritarian regime or the emergence of a revolutionary alternative. The term transition here refers to the existence of an interval (interval) between one regime and another political regime.

Huntington explains the forms of change in a regime, namely transformation, replacement and transplacement. Transformation refers to

changes led by reformation elites who are in their own government. Replacement namely change led by opposition figures who are able to unite opposition movements. Transplacement namely changes led by the opposition and reformists who are in the government. In this context, democratization is the result of a joint step between the reformation elite group and the opposition, the reform elite forces and the opposition are relatively balanced so that an intense negotiation process is more possible (Huntington, 1993). Democratic transition phase addressed by Klinken (dalam Budiman, Hatley, & Kingsbury, 1999) divided into four stages, namely the decay of the authoritarian system, the transition of democracy, the consolidation of democracy, and the final stage of democracy, namely maturity (democratic maturity) that can take place over a longer period.

It should also be understood that democratization is associated with the process of formulating foreign policy. For most democratic countries, projecting certain ideas abroad is a way to increase their international influence and this often characterizes their foreign policy initiatives (Cox, Ikenberry, & Inoguchi, 2000). This idea is generally general, although not limited to democracy and the promotion of democratic ideals (Gershman, 2004; Nau, 2000). In countries that promote certain ideas, preferences and strategies have become the norm for decision makers who regulate foreign policy (Wolff & Wurm, 2011).

In practice, the state that its democracy has been consolidated more likely to promote their national values (democracy) abroad than a newly democratic country (Gershman, 2004; Nau, 2000). This is because consolidated democracies have democratic ideas that are embedded in their state affairs, while newly democratized countries tend to be preoccupied with the task of consolidating democracy in their internal countries.

C. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

In this section, the history and dynamics of the bilateral relations between Indonesia and Myanmar are first described as the basis for explaining historical aspects of the closeness of relations between the two countries and become a reference in analyzing the form of Indonesian foreign policy towards Myanmar. It also discusses about the phases of the democratic transition that Indonesia and Myanmar have passed through to become democratic countries. This discussion is also equipped with the components of the demonstration that were built. Other than that, it also discusses about Indonesia's position in facing regional dynamics. Implication of that explanation is about the projection of Indonesia's foreign policy towards Myanmar in supporting democratization.

1. Dynamics of the History of Bilateral Relations between Indonesia and Myanmar

Indonesia's foreign policy towards Myanmar in supporting democratization cannot be separated from the history of bilateral relations between the two countries which can be traced from 1947 during the Indonesian struggle in maintaining its independence. Myanmar is one of the countries that recognizes Indonesian sovereignty which is implemented through granting permission to Indonesia to open a diplomatic office in Indonesia in Yangon (the capital city of Myanmar) as the Embassy of The Republic of Indonesia in Myanmar (Yani & Sunu, 2007). In fact, Myanmar gave permission for Seulawah RI-001 aircraft to operate as civil aviation under the name Indonesian Airways. The aircraft was also used by Indonesia to smuggle weapons, ammunition and communication equipment provided by Myanmar to Indonesia through Aceh in the interests of Indonesia's struggle against the Dutch army (Pelsser, 2013).

On the dynamics of further relations, Indonesia and Myanmar and countries in Asia and Africa initiated the Asian-African Conference (KAA) in

Bandung as a form of struggle in eradicating forms of colonialism and advancing the interests of the country's development through multilateral forums (Situmorang, 2012). During the New Order era, bilateral relations between Indonesia and Myanmar were closely intertwined. Suharto's militaristic leadership in government became Myanmar's political reference from 1988 to 1997 (Rüland, 2001). In fact, Burma adopted the concept of ABRI dwifungsi which was applied in Indonesia by Suharto as the ideal military-to-civilian leadership in Burma (Harsono, 2007; Tun, 2011).

Bilateral relations between Indonesia and Myanmar suffered a post-military setback in a coup over U Nu's government carried out by General Ne Win on March 2, 1962. This marked the end of the civil administration and was replaced by the military junta (McCarthy, 2008; Roberts, 2010). The Myanmar government system was changed to socialism by applying socialist economics and isolationist politics to the international world (Min, 2008; Steinberg, 2009). The people's efforts to restore a democratic civilian government in Myanmar have always failed. Starting from the cancellation of the 1990 elections won by the National League for Democracy with its leader Aung San Suu Kyi (Roberts, 2010; Taylor, 2005; Tonkin, 2007), to the arrest of pro-democracy activists demanding enforcement of democracy in the country (Skidmore & Wilson, 2007).

The existence of mutual visits between the two leaders provided evidence that the bilateral relations between Indonesia and Myanmar were so close. This diplomatic visit can be recorded, including President Soeharto's visit to Myanmar in 1972, 1974 and 1997. During this Soeharto period, Indonesia's relations with Myanmar showed a close link. Next, namely the visit of President Abdurrahman Wahid in 1999. Next, President Megawati Soekarnoputri in 2001, and President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in 2006 through a series of his Asian visits. On the Myanmar side, General Ne Win's visit to Indonesia took place in 1973 and 1974. Then in 1997 on his personal visit to fulfill an invitation from

President Soeharto. In the period after Ne Win, Than Shwe visited Indonesia in 1995, 1996 and April 2005. During the Yudhoyono administration, the closeness of relation was established not only because the two countries were ASEAN member countries, but also by the cooperation between the two countries regarding various aspects, including Indonesia's support for Myanmar in an effort to run a democratic government.

2. The Process of Democratic Transition in Indonesia

Theoretically, democratic transition can take place in several phases. When referring to Klinken (dalam Budiman, 1999), Indonesian politics has gone through three phases of democratic transition, including pre-transition and liberalization (decay of authoritarian systems), democratic transition (ending of authoritarian systems) and consolidation of democracy.

The first phase (pre-transition) began when Indonesia entered the economic crisis in 1997 which was followed by opposition to the New Order regime which formed a reformation movement as a political rival for the regime. This phase is characterized by distrust of authoritarian regimes. The shooting of four students on May 12, 1998 as a result of repressive measures by the government has raised strong criticism of the New Order, both from within and from abroad. In this phase, as Huntington (1993) stated there was a transformation and transplacement process, where the emergence of movements from the reformation elite to end the authoritarian regime and the union of the opposition with the reformation elite to overthrow the authoritarian regime.

This event was followed by a massive demonstration by students in Jakarta until the fall of the Suharto Regime on 21 May 1998. Suharto handed over his presidency to his deputy, BJ Habibie. Authoritarian regimes supported by military power, dominant political parties, and high economic growth can be undermined by the power of *civil society* who want the establishment

of democracy in Indonesia. This also gives the message that democracy is a system desired by the majority of the Indonesian people even though Indonesia has been ruled by an authoritarian regime for 32 years.

In the Habibie era, political liberalization was carried out as a first step in the transition to democracy. As a mandate of reformation, the Habibie Government carried out the first election in 1999 after the collapse of the New Order regime which was followed by 48 political parties. This election succeeded in forming a civil government which marked the end of the transition phase in Indonesia. If we refer to Huntington (1993), democratic requirements in Indonesia has fulfilled two conditions, namely (a) the end of the authoritarian regime shown by the fall of the Soeharto regime on May 21, 1998 and replaced by Habibie, and (b) the formation of a democratic government with the election of Abdurrahman Wahid as president of the year 1999. Meanwhile, the next requirement regarding the consolidation (inauguration) of democracy is still a debate among political observers. From an institutional standpoint, the 1999 elections became the hallmark of democratic elections.

The next phase of the transition to democracy is that Indonesia enters a period of democratic consolidation. According to Linz (2010), a solid democracy is a condition that none of the major political actors, parties, interest groups, institutions, think there are other alternatives outside the democratic process to gain power. In other words, there is a stage of consolidation of democracy, democracy has become "*the only game in town*" (the only rule that applies). Thus, this stage is not a pure political process, but a process that demands social and economic change (Nun, 1993). In this phase also, institutions and practices of democracy have ingrained in the political culture of a particular nation (Sorensen, 2007).

Researcher sees that the process of democratic transition in Indonesia occur through the power of *civil society* at the time it requires authoritarian regime to step down from power Huntington (1993) described it as a *replacement* process, where there was a change led by the *civil society* that urged the regime to end its power, although in the implementation of some reformist elites in the government wanted an authoritarian regime to end. It is important to underline that there was a compromise between authoritarian rule and the new democratically formed government. Government Abdurrahman Wahid (which is the result election in 1999) had to deal with one of the paradoxes of the democratic transition, when the group New Order, either by the ruling party before (Golkar) or by individuals in power, must be accommodated because of the important role they in political and economic aspects. In the era of Megawati's leadership, Indonesia's political system was still in the '*political gray zone*', where democratization had not yet moved towards maturing democracy. The transition of democracy in Indonesia is characterized by a situation where procedural democracy has been successfully implemented but still ignores liberal democracy.

In the process of democratic consolidation in Indonesia, it can be observed that the election disputes settlement submitted by the public to the Constitutional Court and disputed elections to the High Court or the Supreme Court is evidence public recognition of the role and independence of the courts in resolving conflicts and shows the level of legal awareness of citizens better. Another advancement is the willingness of the TNI (Indonesian Army) to submit to democratic civilian supremacy formed after the 2004 General Elections and subsequent elections, which need to be appreciated as a positive support for the process of consolidating democracy in Indonesia. Thus, the electoral democracy that took place in Indonesia optimistically succeeded in

transforming the formation of a stable liberal democratic system. Indonesia in the era of the SBY administration enters a maturity effort in a phase of consolidation of democracy although not all of them yet, or reach the perfect stage of democratic consolidation phases.

3. The Process of Democratic Transition in Myanmar

Myanmar has long been led by the post-military Junta regime led by General Ne Win as Head of the Myanmar Armed Forces to carry out a coup over the civil government led by U Nu in 1962 because it was unable to resolve the internal problems of the country (Roberts, 2010). This military coup marked the end of democratic rule in Myanmar and initiated an authoritarian government (Roberts, 2010). From 1962 to 2011, the Military Junta led Myanmar. A long journey of authoritarian government for four decades with the dynamics of ups and downs of political turmoil.

Under the leadership of Ne Win, Myanmar was transformed into a socialist state, the army consolidated its power, hardline policies towards ethnic minorities, and isolated foreign policy, including its attitude of being passive in the Non-Aligned Movement (Min, 2008; Steinberg, 2009; Than, 2005). On August 8th, 1988, there was a large demonstration in the history of the democratization of Myanmar carried out by pro-democracy movement against military rule (Roberts, 2010). The demonstration was responded repressively which led to criticism from the international community which resulted in the fall of Ne Win's power and was replaced by General Saw Maung.

Saw Maung implemented a multiparty system in the holding of the elections in 1990 that was used by pro-democracy activists to carry out their political movements (Englehart, 2005). On May 1990, the opposition of the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi won the election by gaining 82% of the votes in parliament (Taylor, 2005; Tonkin, 2007). The NLD has a goal in upholding

human rights, democracy, and achieving social justice (Lintner, 1995; Roberts, 2010). However, the military regime refused to hand over power to the elected civilians on the grounds because it will affect to the weakness of the government (Roberts, 2010). The issue of democratization again became a public agenda in August 2003, when the military regime began following seven points towards democracy (*Roadmap to Democracy*) (Hlaing, 2012; Ribeiro & Vieira, 2016). The government is also negotiating a ceasefire with ethnic rebels and initiated a meeting with Suu Kyi mediated by the United Nations (Steinberg, 2009).

Pro-democracy activities did not greatly reduce the power of the authoritarian regime in Myanmar, but they succeeded in destroying the military junta as one of the most repressive governments in the world. In 2007, the Junta government responded to the Saffron Revolution with repressive actions against demonstrators from among monks and members of the NLD (Skidmore & Wilson, 2007). To reduce external and internal criticism of the country, the Military Junta drafted a new constitution in 2008 and held legislative elections in 2010. From the election results, the USDP (*Union Solidarity and Development Party*) Party supported by the Military Junta gained the most votes, namely 75%. Thein Sein was officially elected in 2011 as President of Myanmar. He is a retired General approved by Junta to secure his interests (Renshaw, 2013). The election of Thein Sein shows that the military is still reluctant to fully surrender state power to the civilian government.

The results of the 2011 elections provide the prospect of positive reformations where the political situation in Myanmar is progressing. Although Thein Sein was elected through a mechanism that was not fully democratic, he had a democratization agenda for Myanmar (Kramer, 2012). Thein Sein

immediately conducted political reconciliation with pro-democracy figures, freed political prisoners, freed up freedom of the press, allowed opposition parties to participate in elections, signed peace agreements with ethnic minorities and increased spending on health and education (Hofmeister, 2010). Not only that, foreign journalists are welcome to be involved in political reportage, political participation, economic and social development (Clapp & DiMaggio, 2013).

The next political development, namely in the 2015 election, the NLD won around 80% of the total election seats. This NLD victory gave new hope for Myanmar. In the presidential election, Htin Kyaw was elected president of Myanmar to replace Thein Sein through a democratic election process. However, the involvement of the military in the civil administration still played a strategic role. Myanmar's constitution still placed 25% of seats in parliament for military representatives. The constitution also regulated three ministries which were rations for military positions, namely the defense minister, border protection minister and interior minister. Another stipulation was that constitutional changes could be made if you get approval from the military (Turnell, 2011).

Thus, even though the transition to democracy in Myanmar has given birth to a democratic civilian government, military involvement still colored policy in Myanmar. Myanmar's political transition that began with the 2010 elections was an example of a planned transition, because the government elite supported by the military junta made a step towards democratization while maintained its interests through institutional structures. The author analyzes that during the transition period, the government elite supported by the military junta retained its interests by modifying the constitutional rules to safeguard its interests in Myanmar.

When viewed from the subjects involved in the transition to democracy in Myanmar, the main actors in the process of transitioning to democracy in Myanmar are the political elite, both those in the government, namely those

supported by the military junta and the opposition party (one of them the NLD). Interest groups, social movements or downstream political forces in the community become supporting components in the democratization process in Myanmar. Thus, democratization in Myanmar was initiated by the political elite in the government who were welcomed by the political elite of the opposition. Both of them compromise and negotiate.

Looking at the actor strategy change in Myanmar, researcher analyzed that Suu Ky used two political approaches, namely the confrontation against the military junta was doing when she became a pro-democracy activists in 1990s, where she served as a symbol of the people's struggle in raising the people's movement and mobilizing the masses to fight the regime. The second approach, namely the accommodation of the military junta after the 2010 election when she was in the position of a moderate politician who negotiated with the regime. This approach was carried out when political elites in the government (military junta) carried out reformations, modified policies and approached opposition groups to compromise and political negotiations.

4. Characteristics of Indonesian Foreign Policy under Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono

Direct and democratic elections in 2004 with the election of Yudhoyono as president, could be a sign of the end of the democratic transition in Indonesia. At that time Indonesia entered into the phase of consolidation of democracy. During the democratic transition from 1998 to 2004, there have been many social conflicts, communal violence and political competition between the civil and military sectors in Indonesia (Mietzner, 2009). Yudhoyono is the president in the reformation era, which has two strong foundation, namely political stability and security that have high legitimacy. Unlike the previous

era of leadership, namely Megawati who has internal problems in the form of turmoil of separatism and terrorism.

Also during Yudhoyono era, the implementation of direct elections for direct local elections in June 2005 as a form of implementing the largest decentralization program in the world involving around 400 cities/districts (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2010). The democratic transition has contributed significantly to positive recognition for Indonesia as the third largest democracy in the world. Furthermore, Indonesia was considered the best example of the compatibility of Islam with democracy. *Freedom House* positioned Indonesia as a consolidated democracy in Southeast Asia compared to developments in Thailand, the Philippines and Cambodia (Bob Sugeng Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011).

Yudhoyono used metaphors *Navigating a Turbulent Ocean* (sailing between turbulent oceans) as the direction of Indonesian foreign policy that illustrates the challenges faced at that time (Yudhoyono, 2015). The doctrine states that Indonesia combines independence and active diplomacy by holding the principle of not considering anyone as an enemy and seeking as many friends as possible (*zero enemy and thousand friends*).

In facing new post-Cold War challenges, according to Yudhoyono, an independent and active Indonesian foreign policy must adopt a constructive approach to prevent Indonesia from entering into a military alliance that is characterized as 'connectivity', which forces Indonesia to have a healthy relationship with the global world (Anwar, 2010). The researcher sees three characteristics that emerged from Yudhoyono's foreign policy, namely the views of Yudhoyono who was internationalist, democratization in the formulation of foreign policy, and the spread of democratic values as *soft power* for Indonesia.

Indonesia's foreign policy under Yudhoyono's administration reflected his confidence to regain his position in regional leadership. Indonesia believes

that their experience in consolidating democracy, resolving conflicts peacefully, and recovering from the economic crisis provides credibility to contribute to global challenges and play an international role (Murphy, 2012). Compared to the previous era, Indonesia's desire to return to the global stage in the Yudhoyono era was based on the use of its status as the third largest democracy in the world as well as the largest Muslim majority country (Murphy, 2009). During his visit to the US in 2005, Yudhoyono stated, "*we are now an outward looking country, eager to shape regional and international orders and intent on having our voice heard*". This statement is interpreted as Indonesia's readiness to become a leader and be active again in international politics (Tan, 2006).

Regarding its position in the region, Indonesia is often referred to as a natural leader. This status refers to four important factors, namely area, population, strategic position, and abundant natural resources (Tan, 2006). These four factors make Indonesia as a whole *de facto* accepted as an important part of ASEAN even though Indonesia's active role declined during the 1997/1998 crisis which led to the fall of Suharto. Indonesia has only regained its position as the natural leader of ASEAN when Yudhoyono was elected as president in 2004 (Emmers, 2014). This is a new challenge for Indonesia.

When we look at the size of the islands and population, Indonesia certainly has the potential to become a global power. However, most of Yudhoyono's efforts to actualize Indonesia's aspirations in playing a greater role in the global arena have been limited by domestic factors; Indonesia does not have economic capacity, politics, and the military to provide a comprehensive and sustainable impetus to become global players (Mietzner, 2014; Reid, 2012). Here is the challenge for the struggle of Indonesian diplomacy at regional and global levels.

Democratization in the process of formulating foreign policy became the next characteristic of Yudhoyono's leadership. The formulation of Indonesian

foreign policy becomes more deliberative and consultative, and is subject to the contestation of new actors. Entering the reformation era, new actors emerged in the formulation of foreign policy including the legislature (DPR), mass media, public opinion, civil society and business groups (Keller, 2013). Indonesian democracy, with the introduction of this new foreign policy actor, has brought about "*multiple centers of power*" and democratization in the formulation of Indonesian foreign policy. Democratization caused diversification of power centers. Consequently, changes occur in various decision-making processes, including in the foreign policy field.

The next characteristic is the mainstreaming of democratic values in the region. In contrast to its predecessors in the early era of reformation who focused on domestic issues, under Yudhoyono's leadership, Indonesia officially projected a democratic Indonesian identity to the international community which was incorporated into a medium-term goal. The 2004-2009 Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) states that the Indonesian Government's target in the field of foreign policy is *strengthen and expand national identity as a democratic country in the international community*. In operationalizing this target, Indonesia focused on ASEAN as a place to project its democratic identity (RPJMN 2004-2009).

Efforts to project democratic identity were then extended in the second period of the Yudhoyono administration (2009-2014). The 2009-2014 RPJM stipulates *restoration of Indonesia's important position as a democratic country marked by the great success of diplomacy in international forums* as a general goal, and stated that one of the main objectives of Indonesia's foreign policy is *to promote a positive image of Indonesia through the advancement of democracy and human rights* (RPJMN 2010-2014). Thus, the focus of Indonesia's foreign policy in the second five-year period of the Yudhoyono administration showed

increased decisiveness in relation to play a role in promoting democracy and human rights both at regional and global levels.

5. Constructive Interaction regarding Agenda Democracy

In an effort to realize a Southeast Asian environment that is conducive to the development of democracy, at the 36th ASEAN (ASEAN Ministerial Meeting-AMM) Ministerial Meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 16-17 June 2003, Indonesia initiated that ASEAN began cooperation in the field of democratic development and protection and enforcement of human rights (Luhulima, 2010). At this moment also, the issue of Myanmar was appointed as one of the agenda of the discussion. Even in several ASEAN countries a special caucus was formed, called the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC), a regional network of legislators who campaigned for constructive policies regarding Myanmar.

The idea of democracy was raised again at the 9th ASEAN Summit in October 2003. The progress of the idea of democracy in ASEAN was marked by the emergence of the concept of the ASC (ASEAN Security Community) which was first proposed by Indonesia. On the next occasion, Indonesia was given the mandate to develop an action plan for ASC. This mandate provides an opportunity for Indonesia to be able to take the initiative in including the agenda of democracy and human rights as part of the ASEAN community development project. This draft has urged ASEAN members in strengthening the system of community participation through free and orderly elections and forming an ASEAN regional commission on human rights affairs (Acharya, 2001). At this stage, the draft received responses from the majority of ASEAN member countries so that from the results of bargaining and negotiations, the POA ASC was adjusted (Heiduk, 2016).

Positive developments took place at the regional level, namely at the 11th ASEAN Summit, December 2005, ASEAN member countries succeeded in

agreeing on the ASEAN Charter draft which would become the ASEAN legal and institutional framework. In its joint declaration, ASEAN leaders stated that this charter would encourage "democracy, human rights and obligations, transparency and good governance, and strengthen democratic institutions" in the Southeast Asia region (Acharya, 2000). This charter was expected to be an entry point for the development of democracy in Myanmar with the establishment of norms that are conducive and institutionalized at the regional level.

In further developments, at the 15th ASEAN Summit in October 2009 in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand, Indonesia initiated the establishment of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights as an ASEAN human rights body. Furthermore, the ASEAN Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) was established on 11 April 2010. Both of these ideas were adapted from the original concept initiated by Indonesia because of the resistance of other member countries, who were concerned that the stronger institutional institutionalization basically has the potential to threaten the sovereignty of their own country (Emmers, 2014).

6. Forms of Indonesian Foreign Policy towards Myanmar

Indonesia's effort towards Myanmar in supporting democratization was directed at encouraging Myanmar through the stages of democratic transition. When we look at Myanmar's political development in the period 2004-2014, the form of Indonesian foreign policy was aimed at guarding Myanmar in its success "*Myanmar Roadmap to Democracy*" compiled by the Military Junta in 2003 until the year of strengthening democratization in 2014. This Indonesian foreign policy, carried out at the bilateral level, regional level in the context of ASEAN and multilateral levels at the UN forum.

a. Bilateral Ways

Bilaterally Indonesia's foreign policy towards Myanmar was carried out through *quiet diplomacy*. This was a form of persuasion rather than coercion that involved Myanmar constructively. Because of this approach, Myanmar saw Indonesia under SBY's leadership as a close friend who contributed constructively to the democratization process in Myanmar (Lang, 2012).

Bilaterally, Indonesia's foreign policy towards Myanmar was carried out through *developmental approach* beside through *political approach*. These efforts are carried out, among others, through economic cooperation (investment planting) to form a humanitarian mission in ethnic conflict in Myanmar. In the form of *political approach* support, Indonesia provided assistance in the form of technical assistance in terms of organizing the 2010 elections in Myanmar, exchanging information about the process of democratic transition through bilateral forums. In this context, Indonesia continues to strive to support Myanmar in its transition to democracy through *government-to-government* channels.

On September 2012, through *Institute for Peace and Democracy*, Indonesia collaborated with Myanmar in implementing experience sharing programs on political change and encouraging each other in continuing the process of building democracy in both countries. IPD has collaborated with a number of partner institutions in Myanmar like *Myanmar Peace Center* and *Myanmar Development Resource Institute* to share experiences from democratization of Indonesia (Ichihara, Sahoo, & Erawan, 2016).

b. Regional Way through the ASEAN Forum

The issue of Myanmar is one of the issues that has received the spotlight for ASEAN. Since Myanmar joined as a member of ASEAN on July 23, 1997, the

issue of Myanmar has been intensely discussed at ASEAN regional forums. For Indonesia, the issue of Myanmar was a challenge, especially when the projection of Indonesia's leadership in SBY's time is directed at restoring Indonesia's positive image as a democratic country and wanting to restore regional leadership in the region. The issue of Myanmar has also become a challenge for Indonesia in an effort to realize the three pillars of ASEAN cooperation, especially ASEAN political and security cooperation in pillars *ASEAN Political and Security Community* where a conducive climate for upholding democracy was a prerequisite for political and security cooperation in ASEAN. In this context, how the issue of Myanmar became a gateway for Indonesia to advance ASEAN in the context of democracy and upholding human rights. Aside from pushing Myanmar towards a democratic country, Indonesia also seeks to incorporate democratic values, respect for human rights, and fundamental freedom as a basic principle of ASEAN (Ciorciari, 2012).

In this regional context, Indonesia seeks to support the political transition in Myanmar through the ASEAN forum. Efforts to form a conducive climate for the development of democracy in ASEAN were expected to be an external factor for Myanmar to make political changes towards a democratic life. The establish of the ASEAN Charter, ASEAN cooperation in the political and security fields (*ASEAN Political Security Community*) and the establishment of human rights bodies in ASEAN (*ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights*) was a form of Indonesia's efforts to realize a conducive climate for the development of democracy in ASEAN (Putra, 2015). Other than that, at the regional level, Indonesia also supported the establishment of *The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus* (AIPMC) was formed in 2004. The organization aimed to advocate for the creation of democratization in Myanmar (BKSAP, 2009).

Indonesia is always guided by the norm noninterference applied in ASEAN. The process of democratic transition and regime change was a

sensitive issue that was discussed in official forums at the regional level. Indonesia also involved the Myanmar program which is Institute for Peace and Democracy, especially in the conduct of *Bali Democracy Forum* (BDF). In the BDF forum, Myanmar could exchange ideas through dialogue with other countries in the region. Myanmar also conveyed political developments that took place in its country, including the efforts of the military junta in democratizing.

Thus, at the regional level, Indonesia always encourages Myanmar to become a democratic country while respecting ASEAN principles or norms that are firmly held, namely the principle *noninterference* and *engagement*, while forming a conducive environment for the development of democracy in Southeast Asia.

c. Multilateral Way through the UN Forum

The form of Indonesia's foreign policy towards Myanmar at the UN forum was carried out through stance and became a mediator for Myanmar with extra regional countries. As a country that has been proven critical of the political situation in Myanmar, Indonesia continues to side with Myanmar as its neighboring country in Southeast Asia. On another occasion, Indonesia chose not to adopt a resolution regarding the human rights situation in Myanmar in the UN General Assembly and Indonesia had abstained on Myanmar issues on the UN Security Council. Many countries perceive that Indonesia was part of a country that does not support the UN resolution decision regarding the plan to bring the Myanmar issue to the UN Security Council (UNSC).

Indonesia has become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2007 and 2008. In January 2007, Indonesia had the right to vote on a resolution. During the draft resolution, the United States and Britain submitted *procedural voting* against Myanmar because of the lack of development in the Myanmar government system that has never been

democratic. The United States and Britain also see Myanmar carrying out acts of violence against its minority citizens as happened in the Karen region where many women and children are became the corps of the military regime's forces.

Indonesia also did not want to undermine relations among ASEAN countries, especially Myanmar is the object discussion in the draft resolution. In terms of security, interventions carried out by the West if the draft resolution was approved, it could endanger regional stability. Norm of *noninterference* held by ASEAN violated by interventions carried out by America. Indonesia certainly supported international involvement in Myanmar's problems, but this involvement must be constructive. Indonesia would continue to reject any resolution issued by the UN Security Council, judging from the fact that the resolution for sanctions will only have a negative impact on the issue of democracy in Myanmar.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, the form of Indonesia's foreign policy towards Myanmar in supporting democratization has not been able to touch the core problem of political transition issue in Myanmar. This is due to Indonesia's prudence in maintaining bilateral relations in both countries based on norms noninterference which is respected by both countries and principles engagement that both did. Supports from Indonesia is based on the needs of Myanmar in carrying out democratization. Indonesia's foreign policy towards Myanmar is still dominated by inter-government relations in both countries or government-to-government relations which is the formal way of diplomacy, compared to non-formal channels, such as government to people or people to people relations.

An alternative effort that is suitable for Indonesia to do in Myanmar at this time is to raise awareness while also suppressing the military government through collective efforts and coordinated at all levels, both regional (ASEAN)

and global (UN). This is what Indonesia has done. The future of democracy in the country lies in renegotiating with the voice of democracy between political parties, both those in the government (military junta) and on the opposition side.

If we look at the development of the democratic transition process that took place in Myanmar until the 2010 and 2015 elections were held, it can be said that the democratic transition that took place in the country was a result of the idea of a political elite in the government that considered external pressures and domestic conditions and interests of Junta in his position in the government. This consideration prompted the military junta to compromise and negotiate with opposition pro-democracy figures in Myanmar. On Myanmar's aspect, various international pressures, both of which sourced from bilateral, regional and multilateral relations as if it were a "presto" engine for democratization in Myanmar that could make the "soft" attitude of the military junta regime finally encourage the regime to compromise and negotiate the process of democratic transition in the country. These international pressures, one of which is Indonesia's contribution to Myanmar in encouraging democratization.

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