

Terrorism in Southwest Papua Region as Asymmetric Warfare

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ABSTRACT

War is an event that can be avoided by most countries in the world. War may be the last alternative that must be taken if diplomacy do not reach an agreement. One of the categories of warfare that results is the asymmetric warfare pattern, which has become a trend in the form of warfare in the current era. Asymmetric warfare describes modern conflicts that exploit power inequalities between the parties involved. It involves tactics and strategies that are different from conventional warfare. The Southwest Papua region has become the center of international attention in recent years due to the increasingly worrying escalation of the terrorist conflict. To understand the escalation of terrorism in Southwest Papua, we need to consider the long history of ethnic and political conflict in the region. Terrorism in Southwest Papua is not only a threat to security, but also an asymmetric war with significant long-term implications due to dissatisfaction and feelings of marginalization that have existed for decades. This article also refers to data and case studies to provide a deeper understanding of terrorism in the Southwest Papua region and its relevance within the framework of asymmetric warfare. The research method in this writing uses a library study method which will be obtained from library sources such as books, websites, articles, journals, and so on. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide an understanding of the causes of terrorism in the Southwest Papua region as asymmetric warfare occurred in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

The Southwest Papua region is emblematic of the intricate nature of conflict, where historical narratives intersect with contemporary complexities, giving rise to a landscape characterized by asymmetric warfare and terrorism. This introduction seeks to unravel the layers of this complex tapestry, shedding light on the root causes, dynamic evolution, and far-reaching implications of terrorism within the framework of asymmetric warfare in Southwest Papua.

The roots of conflict in Southwest Papua can be traced back to the mid-20th century, a time marked by shifting colonial administrations and aspirations for self-determination. The emergence of separatist movements, notably the Free Papua Organization (OPM), reflected the deep-seated desire for independence from Dutch and later Indonesian rule. However, the transition to Indonesian governance in 1963 laid the groundwork for protracted tensions, leading to armed resistance and the gradual evolution of asymmetric warfare in the region.

Asymmetric warfare gained prominence in Southwest Papua as separatist sentiments persisted and escalated over time. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed sporadic violence and guerrilla tactics, reflecting a multifaceted conflict landscape shaped by political, ethnic, and economic grievances. This asymmetry continued to intensify in subsequent decades, culminating in the adoption of terrorist tactics by armed separatist groups seeking to challenge state authority and assert their political, ideological, or ethnic agendas.

Terrorism in Southwest Papua represents a strategic tool within the framework of asymmetric warfare, characterized by its intent to instill fear, disrupt governance, and challenge state authority. The use of violence against civilian populations, state forces, and critical infrastructure underscores the strategic objectives of these groups, rooted in deep-seated grievances and aspirations for autonomy or independence. This understanding is pivotal in comprehending the complexities and dynamics of conflict in the region.

The root causes of terrorism in Southwest Papua are multifaceted, encompassing social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions. Social and political dissatisfaction stemming from economic inequality, human rights violations, and perceptions of marginalization create fertile ground for extremist ideologies and recruitment. Ethnic tensions, historical grievances, and aspirations for autonomy further contribute to the dynamics of conflict, shaping the strategies and tactics employed by various actors engaged in asymmetric warfare.

The implications of terrorism and asymmetric warfare in Southwest Papua extend beyond regional boundaries, posing significant challenges to Indonesia's national security. The strategic use of terrorism as a tool of asymmetry highlights vulnerabilities within state structures and necessitates a comprehensive approach to address root causes, foster dialogue, and promote inclusive governance. Failure to effectively address these challenges risks exacerbating instability and undermining peace efforts in the region and broader national security interests.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Terrorism

Terrorism is a complex phenomenon that is difficult to define. However, in this context, terrorism can be explained as the use of violence or the threat of violence by groups or individuals with the aim of achieving an agenda, political, ideological, or religious. This is in line with what was stated by an expert, Terrorism is an understanding that argues that the use of violence, intimidation and such methods that cause anxiety and fear, even the occurrence of casualties of life and property, to achieve goals, either individually or in groups or in an organization, which has a wide network, both on a national and international scale. Academically, terrorism is categorized as an "extraordinary crime" and also categorized as a "crime against humanity", which is inhumane (Hamzah Junaid, 2013, p. 118). In the context of this research, we will detail some of the key elements that describe the concept of terrorism.

Use of Violence or Threat of Violence. Terrorism is defined as a symbolic act designed to influence political policy and behavior by extra-strict means, in particular by the use of violence and the threat of violence (T. P. Thornton, 1964). Terrorism involves the use of violent acts or the threat of violence by certain groups or individuals. These acts may include physical attacks, bombings, hostage-taking, or serious threats to the lives or safety of others.

Political, Ideological, or Religious Agenda. Terrorism is usually carried out by groups or individuals who have a specific political, ideological, or religious agenda. They use violence to achieve these goals or to impose their views on others. **Aim to Create Fear and Anxiety.** One of the main characteristics of terrorism is its intention to create fear and anxiety among the general public or the government. This is often done in a way that attracts media attention and creates a huge psychological impact. **Civilian Targets.** One of the highly controversial aspects of terrorism is the use of civilian targets and not only targeting the TNI and Polri. Terrorist groups often attack unarmed civilians as a way to achieve their goals or to make a greater emotional impact.

Asymmetric Warfare

Asymmetric warfare is a form of conflict where there is an imbalance in military power, resources, and strategies between the parties involved in the battle. Asymmetric warfare is a form of conflict where one side has a clear military advantage while the other uses unconventional strategies, including terrorism, to achieve their goals. In this context, let's explore some of the key elements that describe asymmetric warfare.

Imbalance of Power In asymmetric warfare, one side usually has a clear military advantage, such as a government or conventional armed forces. The other side is a non-state group or guerrilla that faces limited resources and military equipment. **Political or Ideological Goals.** Conflicts in asymmetric warfare are often driven by political, ideological or religious objectives. Weaker groups may try to change government structures or achieve independence through these unconventional methods. **Impact on Civil Society.** One of the often unintended consequences of asymmetric warfare is its impact on civil society. Civilians can be victims of attacks or can be caught up in the conflict.

Terrorism in Southwest Papua

Terrorism in the Southwest Papua region has become a major concern in the context of Indonesia's national security. It is associated with guerrilla warfare and unconventional strategies that constitute Asymmetric Warfare. Analyzing the conflict dynamics arising from asymmetric warfare will help us better understand how terrorism develops and survives in the region.

In the 1940s to 1960s, there was a separatist movement in the Southwest Papua region, which was then still called Papua New Guinea and controlled by the Netherlands. Separatist groups, including the Free Papua Organization (OPM), began to emerge and advocate for independence from Dutch colonial rule. In 1963 Papua New Guinea became a UN-administered territory, and its administration was transferred to Indonesia. This sparked resistance to the Indonesian government from some Papuans. In 1969 a referendum was held known as the "Pepera Plebiscite," which was controversial and considered unfair by some. The result was that Papua remained part of Indonesia, however, some separatist groups rejected the result and continued to fight for independence.

From the 1970s to the 1990s, the separatist conflict in Southwest Papua intensified. Other groups used guerrilla tactics and terror attacks to achieve their independence goals. From the early 2000s to the present, the conflict has become increasingly troubling with a series of terror attacks and armed confrontations between separatist groups and Indonesian security forces. Terrorist groups in the region began to use terrorist tactics in their struggle, so officially the Head of the Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), who at that time was held by Commissioner General Pol. Boy Rafli Amar, called the group the Papuan Terrorist Separatist Group.

Understanding the causes of the terrorism conflict in Southwest Papua is very important in efforts to manage the conflict and develop sustainable solutions for peace in this region. Separatist issues are one of the main causes of conflict terrorism in Southwest Papua. Some separatist groups in the region are still fighting for independence from Indonesia and use terrorism tactics as a means to achieve this goal. Local dissatisfaction with the Indonesian government also plays an important role. Some communities in Southwest Papua feel that they are not getting fair benefits from the natural resources in their region. This dissatisfaction can be an incentive to support or even join terrorist groups. The history of conflict between Southwest Papua and the Indonesian government, especially since the handover from the Netherlands in 1963, creates deep tensions in the region. Some separatist groups feel that they were forced to become part of Indonesia and continue to fight for their independence. Terrorist groups in Southwest Papua have also allegedly received support from third parties, including states or international organizations. This support may include training, weapons supplies, or financial assistance, complicating the conflict.

METHODOLOGY

The research method in this writing uses a literature study method that will be obtained from literature sources (generally books, websites, articles,

journals, and so on) or using Qualitative Methods. Qualitative research is one of the research methods that aims to gain an understanding of reality through an inductive thinking process. In this study, researchers were involved in the situation and setting of the phenomenon under study.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Root Causes of Terrorism

The root causes of terrorism in Southwest Papua, as in many conflicts around the world, are complex and multifactorial. In this region, there are a number of factors that contribute to the existence of movements or groups involved in acts of terrorism. Some of the root causes of terrorism in Southwest Papua may include:

- a. **Social and Political Dissatisfaction:** Some groups in Southwest Papua are dissatisfied with their social, political, and economic situation. This dissatisfaction can stem from a number of issues, including economic inequality, human rights abuses, and lack of access to basic services.
- b. **Claims of Autonomy and Independence Rights:** Some groups in Southwest Papua have long advocated for greater independence and autonomy. These claims are potential triggers for armed conflict.
- c. **Ethnic and Tribal Issues:** Southwest Papua is a region rich in ethnic and tribal diversity. Inter-tribal or ethnic conflicts can be a source of tension and terrorism.
- d. **Lack of Development and Opportunity:** Lack of economic development and limited employment opportunities in the region can create an environment where radicalization and recruitment into terrorist groups are more likely.
- e. **Corruption and Compulsion:** Compulsion, which is the practice of abusing power by security forces, government, or other officials, can also be a root cause of the Southwest Papua conflict. Perceptions of injustice or abuse of power can fuel resistance and acts of terrorism.
- f. **Unequal Access to Natural Resources:** The control and exploitation of natural resources in Southwest Papua can be a source of conflict. Armed groups may be involved in illegal trade or competition related to resource exploitation.
- g. **Traditional Violence:** Violence and conflict that has roots in the culture or traditions of the tribes in Southwest Papua can also contribute to tensions and armed conflict.

Conflict Dynamics

The conflict dynamics in this asymmetric warfare are heavily influenced by the strategies of terrorist groups, government responses, and external factors. One of the main dynamics of the conflict is the claim for independence by separatist groups in Southwest Papua. They want independence from Indonesia or greater autonomy in the management of their territory. The Indonesian government, in contrast, considers Southwest Papua an integral part of the country.

In addition, social and economic discontent, including economic inequality and access to resources, has been a trigger for conflict in Southwest Papua. Some residents of Southwest Papua feel that they do not benefit sufficiently from the exploitation of the rich natural resources in their region. Lack of transparency in natural resource management in Southwest Papua has created distrust and tension.

Natural resource exploitation activities are often not transparent, and local communities feel excluded from decision-making related to their resources. Separatist groups such as the Free Papua Organization (OPM) have been active in promoting claims of independence and autonomy. They have engaged in armed attacks and other provocative acts. The conflict in Southwest Papua has been accompanied by human rights violations, including acts of violence by Indonesian security forces. These violations include killings, torture, and civil rights abuses.

Despite the longevity of the conflict, there have been peace efforts by various parties, including the Indonesian government, regional authorities of Southwest Papua, and separatist groups. However, these efforts are often met with challenges and difficulties. Political developments at the national and local levels can affect conflict dynamics in Southwest Papua. Elections, central government policies, and changes in regional administration can have a significant impact.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The results of the process and outcomes of conflict resolution in Papua for more than fifty years, from the Old Order government to the Reform government, viewed from the perspective of conflict resolution, show that the government continues to use the security approach, although this has not produced significant results. For this reason, the government is asked to implement a new approach to resolving the conflict in Papua. This approach must fulfill the wishes of all parties in Papua, so as to bring peace, justice and equality to the land of Papua. Taking into account past experiences, the Indonesian government is asked to resolve the protracted conflict in a way that maintains democratic principles and avoids repression. It is hoped that the conflict in Papua will be resolved through negotiations between the Government of Indonesia and the parties.

If a new, more democratic approach is seen in terms of the pattern, direction and success of political conflict resolution, the following five points can be considered: The government can persuasively reduce the extent, intensity and openness of political conflict in Papua. The Papuan government can resolve political conflicts institutionally through existing state institutions, such as local government, DPRD, MRP, and others. The government can sanction individuals who commit violations of human rights, laws, and other relevant laws and regulations through sanction mechanisms that are in accordance with the law. In imposing sanctions, the government must be fair and just. The government

should create consensual stability that upholds human rights, maintaining power that is subject to the law.

The Papuan People's Assembly is the official institution that serves as the representative of the land of Papua in the negotiation process. However, before becoming an official representative party, the Papuan People's Council must gain the support of the dominant political groups. This will provide strong political legitimacy. This support comes from a range of relevant political groups, including the central government, TNI, Polri, the Free Papua Organization, the Papuan People's Council, the Presidium of the Papuan Council, Council Adat Papua, NGOs and mass organizations in Papua, Papuan tribes, churches and religious institutions, and individuals in the community. In addition, this strategy aims to reduce the spread of conflict. For dialog to be successful, the Indonesian government can develop the conflict without foreign interference. Thus, the resolution of the political conflict is only the result of an agreement between the Indonesian government and the land of Papua.

The Indonesian government must handle the situation in Papua carefully and thoroughly. This means that the government should consider the situation in Papua, legal principles, and applicable standards when establishing conditions, particularly martial law. According to available information, conditions in Papua are unusual, but it appears that martial law has not been imposed there.

In this case, the government did not conduct military operations in Papua to combat the KKB. Mahfud stated that the use of firearms should only be done in situations where the authorities must act decisively to maintain public security and law enforcement. There are no military operations, and the firearms approach is not used in situations where the apparatus must act decisively to ensure community security and law enforcement. In dealing with the conflict in Papua, the government has not antagonized the Papuan population and culture. As a result, the security situation in Papua is not yet an emergency, although Papuan armed criminal groups (KKB) continue to act. No military operation areas have been designated to date, but the TNI Commander will meet with unit commanders to consider this.

Nonetheless, Jokowi has asked the TNI to use a humane approach in dealing with security issues in Papua, but in a humane approach he must be firm so that the KKB does not act again.

The government may also consider one option to conduct military operations in Intan Jaya, Papua. This will not only protect innocent civilians as well as TNI and Polri security personnel, but will also maintain the confidence of the Indonesian people in the existence of the NKRI in Papua. The Jokowi administration must take firm and measured action against groups that are considered intolerant. In Papua in particular, and across Indonesia, the government should also do the same. In Papua in particular, and across Indonesia, the government should do the same for the Armed Criminal Groups and their subordinate organizations.

Because if this is not resolved immediately, the KKB may grow and it is feared that it will be transformed into belligerents. A belligerent is an organized

armed group that has a leader similar to a sovereign government leader, controls part of the territory it claims, conducts sustained military operations that have the support of a sovereign government.

leaders of a sovereign government, controls part of the territory it claims, conducts sustained military operations that have the support of the people even when they are under threat. The government should therefore continue to investigate whether the conflict in Papua constitutes an urgent martial law. However, this will face significant challenges when confronted with human rights principles, the rule of law and the response of international states.

Key Findings

This research shows that terrorism in Southwest Papua is a complex form of asymmetric warfare, driven by historical roots and local discontent. The implications for national security are serious.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, strategic measures are needed to address terrorism in the region, including more comprehensive conflict resolution efforts and empowerment of local communities.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

In writing this article the researcher realizes that there are still many shortcomings in terms of language, writing, and form of presentation considering the limited knowledge and abilities of the researchers themselves. Therefore, for the perfection of the article, the researcher expects constructive criticism and suggestions from various parties.

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