

Foreign Aid for Alliance: Indonesia's Effort to Find Support in the South Pacific Region

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Abstract

United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) has been actively seeking for independence since its inception in 1969. ULMWP founding fathers, as well as leaders, stated that this movement aims at achieving West Papua independence and freedom, while at the same time, is being regarded in Indonesia as a separatist movement, representing only a small portion of Papuans abroad. In order to achieve this goal, the ULMWP has been trying to gain international recognition and support, mainly from its neighboring countries and region. One of ULMWP constant supporter is Vanuatu, who has been declaring its support for the ULMWP since the time of its first Prime Minister Walter Hadye Lini in 1980. Vanuatu often calls for Papuan Independence in various international arena, such as the UN Assembly and the Melanesian Spearhead Groups (MSG) High Commissioner Meetings. To ward off Vanuatu's influence in the South Pacific region, Indonesia has been actively providing and offering aids for South Pacific countries, as a token of appreciation for their support for acknowledging Indonesia's sovereignty. This paper thus aimed at answering and explaining how Indonesia is using foreign aid as a mean to build alliance in the South Pacific and in the MSG. Foreign aid almost always contains political interest, in this particular case, Indonesian aids to the South Pacific are aimed at maintaining relations and supports from the South Pacific countries for its sovereignty. As a result, prominent South Pacific countries have expressed their support for Indonesia's sovereignty.

Keywords: *ULMWP, Foreign Aid, Alliance, South Pacific, Indonesia's Sovereignty*

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1. INTRODUCTION

United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP), is an independence movement to free West Papua (or West New Guinea) which was officially incorporated into Indonesia in 1969 through the Act of Free Choice [1]. This movement's aim is to free West Papua from Indonesia's administration and territory, where it is now serving as one of Indonesia's provinces. The roots of the ULMWP was evoked during a period where West Papua was transferred from the Netherlands to Indonesia, while the Papuan . United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP), is an independence movement to free West Papua (or West New

Guinea) which was officially incorporated into Indonesia in 1969 through the Act of Free Choice [1]. This movement's aim is to free West Papua from Indonesia's administration and territory, where it is now serving as one of Indonesia's provinces. The roots of the ULMWP was evoked during a period where West Papua was transferred from the Netherlands to Indonesia, while the Papuan for a few exceptions of the neighboring South Pacific countries.



Figure 2. ULMWP Leader, Benny Wenda, Campaigning with Vivienne Westwood A few South Pacific countries have been constant in showing support for the ULMWP. Those countries are Cook Islands, Nauru, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands [4]. Vanuatu is the country that has been most persistent in expressing its support towards West Papua independence while Marshall Islands, Tonga and Palau have been mostly concern about human rights violation experienced by West Papuan. Vanuatu has been declaring its support for West Papua independence for years, dated back to its own independence. Vanuatu's First Prime Minister, Walter Hadye Lini has stated that Vanuatu's independence is not complete until every nations in the Melanesian territories are free from colonialism [5]. With this being said, by being under Indonesia administration, West Papua is regarded by Vanuatu as being under colonialism. Vanuatu's support towards West Papua independence was often pronounced on various international arenas, such as the United Nations General Assemblies as well as Melanesian Spearhead Group's High Commisioner Meetings. The prolonged support for West Papua independence could potentially threatens Indonesia's sovereignty.

To secure its sovereignty, Indonesia has to be able to prevent further support for West Papua independence. Mainly support from the South Pacific countries which shares neighboring territories. A lot has been done to secure support towards Indonesia's sovereignty from the South Pacific countries and Indonesia's primary instruments to do so is diplomacy. Earlier research mainly focuses on Indonesia's soft power diplomacy in the Melanesian Spearhead Groups (MSG) to block ULMWP [6], foreign aid diplomacy towards the Pacific countries through Pacific Island Development Forum (PIDF) [7], and public diplomacy towards Vanuatu to alter its support for ULMWP [8][9]. Indonesia's soft power diplomacy to block ULMWP in the MSG, is using three instruments of soft power, namely culture, domestic values and foreign policy. By pleading to the similarity of culture and the value of democracy that is projected

through Indonesian foreign policy, Indonesia could maintain support to block ULMWP's membership application in the MSG. In the article of Indonesian foreign aid diplomacy, it is stated that the foreign aid given to the South Pacific countries is intended to turn Indonesia's negative image in the South Pacific region. Back in the 1970s and 1980s, Indonesia often treat South Pacific region as "the neglected backyards" while in the late 1990s and early 2000s realize the importance of the region. On the article of Indonesia's public diplomacy to alter Vanuatu's support for ULMWP, Indonesia is using three action measures to counter Vanuatu's propaganda in the MSG. Those three actions are strengthening military exercise in Papua, countering ULMWP's propaganda using informational and technological advancement, and lastly, applying total diplomacy towards the MSG. The last article on Indonesia's public diplomacy is pointing out its public diplomacy's weaknesses on the news management dimension, strategic communication and relationship building.

Researches on Indonesia's diplomacy towards blocking the ULMWP efforts in the South Pacific region are vast, but not researches emphasizing on the use of foreign aid as the instruments of alliance. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to offer alternative to analyze Indonesia's instruments to gain support from the South Pacific region. This paper is going to analyze how Indonesia is using foreign aid as an instrument to build alliance to maintain the status quo, which is to prevent further support for the ULMWP and to recognize West Papua as part of Indonesian sovereignty. Before further explained in the methodology section, foreign aid has always been political in nature and its political nature rests on the assumption that the donor country might intend such aid to change the status quo or to maintain the status quo [10]. To maintain the status quo, especially in case of gaining support, state must form alliance. Therefore, foreign aid can be used to form alliance to maintain the status quo according to the need of the donor's interest. This paper is going to analyze the impact of Indonesia's foreign aid to form alliance with South Pacific countries to block supports for ULMWP from 2013 to 2020. This paper is going to be using qualitative approach with study literature as a form of data collection. Data will be collected from secondary resources, such as books, journal articles, news articles from both online and offline sources. The remainder of this paper is thus divided into three section. The first section is the conceptual framework where authors define how foreign aid can be used as a form of alliance to maintenance status quo. The second section is results and discussions to elaborate findings on foreign aids provided by Indonesian government to various countries in the South Pacific and the increase of support caused. Last section will be conclusion and suggestion for further research.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: FOREIGN AID FOR ALLIANCE

Correlation between foreign aid as an instrument of foreign policy is a classic, dating back to the 1960s with the famous article by Hans J. Morgenthau titled A Political Theory of Foreign Aid [11]. Morgenthau mentioned six types of foreign aid, which are (1) humanitarian foreign aid, (2) subsistence foreign aid, (3) military foreign aid, (4) bribery, (5) prestige foreign aid, and (6) foreign aid for economic development. Morgenthau stated that these six types of aid had one thing in common, which is the transfer of money, goods and services from one country (the donor country) to the other (the recipient). Out of this six types of aid, humanitarian foreign aid is non-political, but this does not mean that humanitarian foreign aid could not perform a political function if used within a political context. Therefore, it is safe to say that even the most non-political aid can be the instrument of foreign policy as long as it performs a political function, which operates within a political context. In order to analyze the political function of the aid given, and the political context expected by the donors, one must carefully take into account the political policy and the political orientation that underline the donor's motives.

Leonard Dudley and Claude Montmarquette wrote another classic literature on the motives of the foreign aid titled A Model of the Supply of Bilateral Foreign Aid [12]. Dudley and Montmarquette specifically conduct their research on bilateral foreign aid, which make it easier to analyze the motives that drives the donor to give and the motives of the recipient to accept. Small countries, with the higher degree of openness, tends to be the recipient of these bilateral foreign aids. Dudley and Montmarquette conducted their research based on the assumption that people who gives, expected to get something in return. That is why, it is often called transfer rather than gift because very rarely that the bilateral foreign aid given are of unilateral in motive with no "in return favors". Dudley and Montmarquette classified expectations expected by the donors as follows: (1) donors expect recipients to favor donor's country and to support donor's national political interest, (2) donors expect recipients to bargain for donor's economic benefits, and (3) donors expect residents of recipients to lead a better, more welfare life. Expectations made by the donor, especially the two expectations, requires interactions from both the donors and the recipients. There has to be willingness shown by donors to offer good gestures and there has to be willingness shown by recipients to return the good gestures. It is the reason why it is easier to analyze the motives of bilateral foreign aid instead of other multilateral or global foreign aid frameworks.

Continuing Dudley and Montmarquette's research on the motives of foreign aid, Dudley further stipulates that foreign aid can be used as an instrument to form an alliance [13]. These research is based on previous research by Mancur Olson and Richard Zeckhauser which linked

the theory of alliances to the foreign aid giving phenomenon in the 1960s. There was a vehement debate during the 1960s over the allocations of defense expenditures of Western countries, were these expenditures interrelated with their foreign aid? It was found that small recipient countries tend to act as a free rider, profiting from the larger donor countries expenditures to achieve some degree of security. Larger donor countries have the abilities to allocate more aids, and smaller donor countries can only provide less aids, thus larger donor countries gain more benefits. This showed that there were competition to gain more benefits and influence by giving more aids. Alliances were made where donor attempted to gain more influence from certain recipient. Dudley thus offered a more thorough point of view in assessing how alliances formed between smaller groups of state, since it is different for the residents of the donors and recipients where aid is given bilaterally and multilaterally. Effects of foreign aid for residents of donors and recipients vary, thus affecting the formation of alliance between donors and recipients. Dudley expressed that foreign aid functions as an instrument of a country to attain political recognition and influence, thus forming an alliance, among donors and recipients. The form of aids, multilateral or bilateral, would indicate different impact for the allegiance. It is much more complex to identify the original source of a multilateral aid. Making it harder for recipients to recognize the donor to pay its tribute and alliance accordingly. On the positive note, multilateral aids would have greater impact on the interaction effect obtained by the collective donors and recipients alliance.

On the article, titled Donor Motives for Foreign Aid, Subhayu Bandyopadhyay and E. Katarina Vermann further elaborates that donor's motives for providing aids evolve with the time [14]. The changing nature of the motive is based on the dual goals of foreign aid, which are humanitarian goal and strategic goal. Strategic goal of foreign aid is heavily influenced by international political factors, as well as domestic politics. Strategic interest have always been relevant and will always be relevant to analyze the motives that donors provide or recipients accept the aids, other than simple altruistic motives. In relation with security issues, foreign aid has always been used as an instrument to gain allegiance since the era of Cold War. For security concern, alliance has often needed as a tool to support status quo.

Specifically, Markovits, Strange, and Tingley exemplified the importance of foreign aid to the status quo in world politics [10]. It was extensively discussed in their paper, using comparative methods throughout diverse regions, historical periods and international systems, that foreign aid and any forms of concessional assistance have certain international political intention. The main argument of their paper is that all through history, foreign aid has mostly been connected to the systemic political status quo, notably in the earlier stage where the aid is given. Foreign aid thus further classified into three categories, (1) aid to restore political status

quo, (2) aid to maintain political status quo, and (3) aid to disrupt political status quo. To restore status quo, aid is given as a response to prevent drastic systemic change before it happens and is reactive in nature. To maintain status quo, aid is given to preserve existing international status quo to establish alliance against competing actors and is preventive in nature. To disrupt status quo, aid is given to undermine existing status quo, rapidly or gradually, and proactive in nature. The donor of the restorative aid is usually interested in a particular region and have the capability to respond quickly. The donor of the maintenance aid is usually politically stable but with complex bureaucratic system. Lastly, the donor of the disruptive aid is usually aggressive and has a great deal of displeasure with the status quo.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS: INDONESIA'S FOREIGN AID AND SUPPORT FROM THE SOUTH PACIFIC

The South Pacific are known as one of the most aid-dependent regions in the world [15]. The leading donor for South Pacific region is Australia, and then followed by China, New Zealand, and other traditional donor countries. In its development, along with the significant economic growth and its success in becoming a member of the G20, the Indonesian government under Jokowi's presidency started on implementing foreign aid or to be known as "tangan di atas" diplomacy as one of his policy. In its implementation, the Indonesian government will give foreign aid for several neighbor-developing countries in ASEAN and South Pacific regions and officially become a donor country. Through this policy, the Indonesian government want to reinforce its position in the world. Indonesian

Foreign Minister, Mrs. Retno Marsudi states that Indonesian Aid as diplomatic tools to strengthens Indonesia's roles and contribution on international stage [16].

The Indonesian government have been implementing foreign aid diplomacy towards South Pacific region since 2019. The Indonesian government launched Indonesian Agency for International Development Aid or to be known as Indonesian Aid, on October, 18th 2019. Indonesian Aid program managed by four ministries, namely Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of State Secretariat and Ministry of National Development Planning Indonesia[17]. In the same year, Indonesian Aid give Rp.3 trillion (equivalent to \$212 million) as initial budget for several countries in South Pacific, including Solomon Island, Nauru, Tuvalu, Fiji, and Kiribati[18]. The Indonesian government states that she wants to increase its foreign aid to reach Rp.10 trillion by 2021[17]. This is the commitment of the Indonesian government as a donor country.

Basically, the Indonesian government has provided foreign aid to the South Pasific region even before Indonesian Aid was launched. Previously, the Indonesian government signed an agreement to provide an assistance for Nauru in the form of 1 barge and 1 tug boat \$2.5 million

worth, to help them export their natural resources; grants for the construction of school affected by the earthquake in Fiji; and grants for Tuvalu to build a conference hall that used as Pacific Island Forum meeting[19]. After that, at the last Pacific Island Forum meeting that held on August 2019, the leaders of the South Pacific region who attended the forum, agreed to recognize Papua as part of Indonesia sovereignty[17]. Not only that, the Indonesian government had previously succeeded in gaining its status in Melanesian Spearhead Group, from an observer to associate member. Moreover, during the 50th anniversary of Nauru's independence, Baron Waqa as the President of Nauru states that "my country will support every step and decision taken by the Indonesian government, thus for the prosperity of the people of Papua and West Papua"[20]. The Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Enele Sopoaga also states that "We don't have an intention to interfere with the Indonesian policy, We highly value human rights as well as cultures, but Tuvalu is in no position to interfere in that issue"[20]. the Fiji's government also unwilling to question Indonesia over West Papua and doesn't want the self- determination issue to be discussed[21]. Thus statement is evidence of support provided by the South Pacific leaders for the Indonesian government.

Therefore, many people think that the foreign aid provided by the Indonesian government as an effort made to influence the South Pacific countries. Thus the Indonesian government succeeded in influencing the South Pacific countries to become its allies, especially regarding Papua and West Papua issues. However, other Pacific countries remains and continue supporting ULMWP, one of them is Vanuatu. The Vanuatu government still insists on rejecting Indonesian membership and said that ULMWP should be the one who become the member of MSG rather than Indonesia[7]. The Indonesian government must be able to convince other South Pacific countries. This is an important thing to do, to secure its national interest and sovereignty.

"It is difficult not to conclude that the aid is more a political tool, to win a favor from those countries" (Andreas Harsono, a senior researcher of HRW) [22]

"The aid should strengthen Indonesia's diplomacy beyond its usual allies. Including on Papua issue, anything related to small countries, one of the most effective instruments is to provide aid" (Yose Rizal Damuri, the head of the economic department of CSIS) [22]

Hence, even during the pandemic covid-19, the Indonesian government, which was experiencing an economic downturn, increased its commitment to become a donor country. On December, 16th 2020, the Indonesian government signed grants for three countries, two of them are South Pacific countries, Fiji and Solomon Island[23]. This policy implemented by the Indonesian government to secure its national interest in South Pacific region. This was done by the Indonesian government even though its foreign debt increased during the pandemic. It

should also be borne in mind that currently Indonesia is still a recipient country that receives hundreds of millions dollars foreign aid from traditional donor countries, including US, Japan, China and Australia[24], as well as international organization such as World Bank and Asian Development Bank [25]. Therefore, the Indonesian Aid has received strong criticism from some media and expert in Australia, whose states that the Indonesian government should focus on dealing with its economic and national development to welfare her own people [17], rather than helping the South Pacific countries.

The main argument and finding of this paper is as drawn on the illustration beneath. Indonesia is using foreign aid as an instrument to form an alliance.



Figure 2. Illustration of Indonesia's Foreign Aid for Alliance in the South Pacific

Foreign aid, which has been given by Indonesia to the South Pacific regions throughout the years, seemed effective in the end. It was reported that some of the South Pacific countries, that was formerly supportive of the ULMWP, had started to withdraw their support to ULMWP and shifted their support towards Indonesia's sovereignty. Support for Indonesia's sovereignty from the South Pacific came from individual countries, as well as from the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) [7]. It is important to gain support, both from the individual countries of the South Pacific regions, as well as from the MSG since MSG is one of the, if not the only, prominent international organization in the region because this is also the strategy that is used by the ULMWP. ULMWP focuses on gaining support from the South Pacific by pleading with their similar culture and colonial background. In addition, geopolitically, South Pacific is the region where West Papua resides. It is considered logical and advantageous for the ULMWP to start gaining support from entities closer to home, rather than farther. It was proven that over the years, ULMWP's effort to gain support from the western countries has been unsuccessful. As for Indonesia, South Pacific as neighboring region is significant for the maintenance of Indonesia's and the Southeast Asia's security and stability.

Indonesia's foreign aid is proven to be effective to influence several South Pacific countries that was formerly supportive of the ULMWP. Countries that has shifted to support Indonesia's sovereignty are Tuvalu, Kiribati, and Nauru. Not just from individual countries,

Indonesia's support in the MSG also strengthened. Fiji and Papua New Guinea has been very supporting towards Indonesia's involvement in the organization. Indonesia's influence from its foreign aid, has proven to be very beneficial to gain alliance from the MSG. In 2011, Indonesia was granted a position as an observer in the MSG and in 2015, Indonesia has been welcomed as an associate member, while at the same time, the ULMWP's status in the MSG has been constant. The ULMWP's former organization, the West Papua National Coalition for Liberation (WPNCL) has tried to apply for a membership in 2011, but has been denied ever since, eventhough it is clear that West Papua is a part of Melanesian culture. As of 2015, ULMWP's status in the MSG is an observer, while at the same time, Indonesia's status has risen to associate member.

Although Indonesia does not claim the foreign aid to be of political nature, it is obvious that Indonesia's aid to the South Pacific has political function. That political function is based on the political context to maintain Indonesia's sovereignty over its territory, where West Papua stands as one of its provinces. This political context underlining Indonesian foreign aid to the South Pacific has been proven to effectively increase Indonesia's influence. Indonesia was seen before as a big, powerful and intimidating neighbor to relatively small countries of the Pacific. With the foreign aid, Indonesia is now perceived as a more caring and concern neighbor towards problems that is shared among the region. The rising influence, in turn, strengthening Indonesia's alliance in the region, individually and collectively through the MSG. Alliances with individual countries of the South

Pacific regions, as well as with the MSG, is important to maintain the status quo of Indonesia's sovereignty over West Papua independence. This is a clear evidence that Indonesia's efforts to use foreign aid as an instrument to influence others and to form an alliance is successful in maintaining the status quo, which is Indonesia's sovereignty prevails over ULMWP's independence.

4. CONCLUSION

Indonesia's main aim has been very clear since the beginning, which is to uphold its sovereignty over its territory. West Papua is a part of Indonesian territory based on the referendum, the "Act of Free Choice" held in 1969. As a sovereign nation, it is impertinent for Indonesia to uphold its territorial sovereignty, and this is the main political context of this paper. The United Liberation Movement has challenged this sovereignty for West Papua (ULMWP), claiming that the 1969 referendum was invalid, and still to this day, assume Indonesia as a colonial power controlling over a West Papua nation. ULMWP has employ many strategies to gain recognition, especially internationally and regionally. In the South Pacific region, ULMWP is actively seeking support by appealing to countries and organization with cultural similarity

and colonized past. In the international arena, ULMWP is actively gaining recognition by appealing to the West about its human right abuse experienced under Indonesian administration. In order to block support for the ULMWP, Indonesia has been using foreign aid as an instrument to gain alliance, especially from the South Pacific countries and from the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) organization. Aids given by Indonesia over the years, although non-political in nature, has political function under the political context to maintain its sovereignty. It has been proven that Indonesian foreign aid is beneficial to spread influence in the South Pacific region and to gain support for its political goals. Indonesia's aid has improved Indonesian influence in the region that in the end, further strengthened Indonesia's alliances. With the alliance strengthening, Indonesia is able to maintain the status quo in the region, which to acknowledge and further support Indonesia's sovereignty over West Papua's independence.

5. SUGGESTION

Further research is needed to confirm the compliance of the South Pacific countries towards Indonesia's request to support its sovereignty and to block the ULMWP through the administration of Indonesia's foreign aid. Researches are done mainly from the perspective of Indonesia, as the donor, or as the active subject of diplomacy, seeking to gain support from the South Pacific countries, but little is done to seek what is the motives of those South Pacific countries in giving support to Indonesia. Information gain both from Indonesian perspective and from South Pacific perspectives will enrich the understanding on the relation between the two entities. This may also provide additional knowledge on the dynamics of the South Pacific region and the neighboring Southeast Asian region. The dynamics between the two region has been poorly researched but has a great potential as the growing cooperation and relation in the Indo-Pacific region..

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