



European Lecture Tour - Lisboa

Political and Geopolitical Dimensions of the Humanitarian Intervention in Aceh: A View from Jakarta

26th April 2005 – Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau

28th April 2005 – Institute for Political Studies, Portuguese Catholic University

Lt. Comm. H. Djuanda. SIP

Regional Secretary of the Indonesian Maritime Council

Councilor for Geostrategic Affairs

Office of the President of the Republic of Indonesia



The region of Aceh has been the focus of much attention both within Indonesia and internationally because of the movement within Aceh for independence from Indonesia. When the tsunami struck in December 2004, Aceh was once again catapulted to the centre of attention – but for different reasons.

In examining the reactions of the local authorities and the international community to the population in Aceh, **the lecturer analysed the humanitarian intervention that followed from the perspective of the local Acehnese community, the Indonesian government and the international actors that were involved in this effort.**

Beginning with a brief introduction on Aceh since the *Reformasi* of the 1980's, the lecturer positioned the situation in the context of the days leading up to the tsunami. What was the relationship between the Indonesian government and the major actors in Aceh? How did the international community view the conflict in Aceh?

The United States, Japan, Australia and the EU were among the biggest donors to react after the tsunami hit the region. Through their humanitarian intervention, these countries were able to gain access into Aceh for the first time in many years. How did the Indonesian government reconcile the need for aid with the conditions placed by donor countries? What implications does this have on the political situation in Aceh going forward? What linkages did aid create between the people of Aceh and institutions and organisations affiliated with the foreign actors? While some countries have spoken about this as an opportunity to promote stabilisation and democratisation in Aceh, how have the Acehnese reacted to the increased foreign – and largely western – presence in their region?

On the local front, the involvement of the Indonesian government in the humanitarian aid and reconstruction has come under increased scrutiny. Doubt has also been cast by some segments of the population on the true motivations of the armed forces in their efforts as well as whether they have taken advantage of the situation to further their own agenda. Trust has also been a major area of concern for foreign governments in relation to their aid, for example with most governments preferring to disburse the aid directly instead of going through the central government.

In concluding, the lecture discussed the steps that need to be taken in order for the Indonesian government to address some of these trust issues – both with the local population and internationally. In addition, the lecture spoke about the next steps in the humanitarian and reconstruction process. He analysed some of the major areas of European interest in Aceh, including the economic, political and security aspects tying this together with future prospect of EU involvement in the region.

SPONSORS:



Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR

