Deradicalization of Former Terrorists through an Entrepreneurship Program

Jamal Wiwoho, Pujiyono, Triyanto

Abstract—Terrorism is a real enemy for all countries, including Indonesia. Bomb attacks in some parts of Indonesia are proof that Indonesia has serious problems with terrorism. Perpetrators of terror are arrested and imprisoned, and some of them were executed. However, this method did not succeed in stopping the terrorist attacks. Former terrorists continue to carry out bomb attacks. Therefore, this paper proposes a program towards deradicalization efforts of former terrorists through entrepreneurship. This is necessary because it is impossible to change their radical ideology. The program is also motivated by understanding that terrorists generally come from poor families. This program aims to occupy their time with business activities so there is no time to plan and carry out bomb attacks. This research is an empirical law study. Data were collected by literature study, observation, and in-depth interviews. Data were analyzed with the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The results show that the entrepreneurship program is effective to prevent terrorist attack. Former terrorists are busy with their business. Therefore, they have no time to carry out bomb attacks.

Keywords—Deradicalization, terrorists, entrepreneurship.

I. INTRODUCTION

TERRORISM has become a serious problem in Indonesia. The Bali Bombing in 2002, resulting in the death of 202 people, was an early warning of the appearance of terrorism in Indonesia. Since then, many attacks have occurred in many areas even until today. Terrorists attacks not only target civilians but also security apparatuses. Some measures have been taken to cope with terrorism, one of which is a government sponsored deradicalization program. A National Terrorism Coping Agency (*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme*, thereafter called BNPT) has been established as well. Many terrorists have been imprisoned and sentenced to death; however, bombing attacks continue to occur. The deradicalization program conducted by the BNPT has been protested by radical organizations. The radicalists suspect that BNPT was formed as foreign agenda to attenuate the spirit of Jihad, even against Islam.

Terrorist networks are increasing in number in the form of small groups. Bomb attacks extend more expansively targeting civilians to police officers, a fact that shows terrorists are becoming more dangerous. Some terrorists have been caught and have failed in carrying out their planned bomb attack;

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however, they are also learning from these failures and improving in the planning and implementing of attacks. Their resistance and resilience proves that they are not deterred by probable punishments of imprisonment or the death sentence. Terrorists have radical ideology. The death penalty is ineffective in preventing terrorism. Terrorists believe that their death in bomb attacks will bring them to heaven.

The government uses repressive measures to combat terrorists. However, this action is not effective for eliminating terrorists [1]. The threat of imprisonment and/or the death sentence fail to counter radical terrorist ideology; in fact, prison has become a medium of disseminate radical ideology and recruit fellow inmates. The imprisoned perpetrators of the Bali Bomb attack, Amrozi, Imam Samudra and Mukhlash were able to spread their radical understanding in the prison. They can add followers in the prison. In prison, convicted terrorist Aman Abdurrahman recruited three prisoners for terrorism action. It means that terrorism can spread anywhere. Therefore, it is clear that the root of terrorism is radicalization [2], and as such, deradicalization efforts are required [3].

This article discusses efforts for the deradicalization of former terrorists through entrepreneurship. This program is not intended to change the radical ideology of terrorists, as it is impossible to change; however, it is proposed to preoccupy them with business activities, and thereby leaving them no time to plan and carry out an attack.

The study of terrorism is important because terrorism poses a serious physical threat to the security of citizens and to the Open Society [12]. Indirectly, the induction of fear can have further deleterious effects increasing polarization along ethnic, religious and national lines, promoting conflict among different segments of society.

II. METHOD

This study was qualitative research adopted from [4]. Data were obtained directly from society. Data were collected through observation, interview, and document study. Informants consisted of former terrorists, the chairman of the BNPT and religious leaders. The data were analyzed by Miles and Huberman's interactive model [5].

III. DISCUSSION

In modern world, terrorism is a complex social phenomenon, which has long ago become a threat to security throughout the world. This is primarily associated with the fact that criminal activities, understood as "terrorism", are not only characterized by international public danger, but also

have transnational parameters. The tendency toward increase in the frequency and scale of terrorist acts, beginning from the 2000-ies, has also been noted in the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) [6].

Terrorism is spread through a variety of networks including *Mujahidin Indonesia Timur, Mujahidin Indonesia Barat, Laskar Jihad, Jamaah Anshaarut Tauhid,* and *Daulah Islamiyah Nusantara.* The networks are interconnected, and some are even connected globally to Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which is much more radical. The terrorist network is very strong. It is not easy to disconnect this network. Their belief in radical ideology is very strong. We must convince them that their actions are wrong. Building awareness for terrorists requires serious and sustained effort. This is the main challenge of deradicalization. This common way of defining deradicalization presents a logical paradox as the prefix "de" In "deradicalization" implies that it is a process that can only be applied to individuals or groups after radicalization has occurred. Many efforts have been done in many countries to reduce and overcome radicalism. To describe all of these programs together under the umbrella of deradicalization is a misnomer, and it can make tackling the problem even more complicated. Another limitation of using the term deradicalization is that it "gives the impression that there is an overarching single solution—in this case, most often assumed to be: change in beliefs, and we see a change in behavior," and as a consequence, "this linear approach does not allow for easy engagement with the problem at hand" [11]. Deradicalization is a process in which people reject the ideology they once embraced. This is one step further than disengagement, which is characterized by a change in behavior (stop using violence and leaving the radical group) without giving up one's radical beliefs [13].

Deradicalization programs have two other significant goals. One is to get intelligence on extremist organizations and the second is to discredit the radical ideology. Challenging the radical ideology with an alternative interpretation of Islam is not only likely to effect a more permanent change in the militant's worldview and to reduce the risk of former terrorists, but it also helps to weaken the appeal of radical Islamism. An important indicator of success is convincing rehabilitated militants to speak out against radical groups and ideology.

Terrorism in Indonesia was born because of radicalism in religion. Deradicalization is counter-radicalism. Deradicalization needs a special approach. The counter terrorism is done by breaking the process of radicalization [6].

Radicalization is the creation of thinking justifying violent action. Deradicalization should be done by considering the cause of the radical thinking; it means that deradicalization can be conducted differently in each country.

Deradicalization is manifested into motivation reorientation, reeducation, and re-socialization. Deradicalization should also be followed with the improvement in the welfare of former terrorists. Deradicalization should be able to remove held beliefs or to abolish the dissemination of that radical ideology. For that reason, deradicalization must be able to release the terrorist radical ideology or stop the spread of the ideology.

Therefore, deradicalisation needs to be done with the alignment of understanding of the deviant Islamic ideology. This alignment is the main key to re-understanding the ideology, so that terrorists are willing to return to the correct understanding of ideology teachings.

Deradicalization is the opposite of radicalization. Radicalization starts with recruitment, followed by self-identification that the adherents are less religious. The next process is done by indoctrination of understanding that their group is the only correct group in running the religion of Islam, while the other groups are considered wrong. The highest doctrine of terrorism is *Jihad*. Suicide bombs are believed by terrorists as *Jihad*. *Jihad* is one of the gates of heaven. This is wrong doctrine and not appropriate with religion. Therefore, the deradicalization process must be intact and complete; it should not be a piece. The process must begin with the identification and classification of former terrorists, followed by a true religious approach through trusted scholars. These conditions will make them more open and accept the truth of the soul and universal humanism. The next toughest process must be done with the break of terrorist networks that they merged. Former terrorists should be able to be separated from the network of terrorism by self-reliance through entrepreneurship.

The persuasive approach above avoids the approach of weapons, it is called soft approach. Deradicalization is a form of soft approach [7]. Soft approach is conducted with intelligence cooperation and community building. It cannot be conducted only with the rule approach, moreover with gun violence. The notion of deradicalization stems from an assumption that terrorism departs from radicalism, and therefore, the handling of terrorism is more effectively done by radicalization rather than repressive approach. The essence of deradicalization is to change their wrong ideology in Islam. Their misconception of religion must be straightened out.

Interviews with former terrorists show that changing their ideology is impossible. Their belief in radical ideology is very strong. We can only prevent them from doing terrorist acts. We cannot change their beliefs. Therefore, terrorist inmates must be directed to find the right path through their own search, mainly to break this terrorist network. The government acts as a facilitator. The path to this search is not directly with ideological indoctrination which the government considers to be true, gradually through a general economic view of the economy. This approach is important because based on interviews with ex terrorists, in general terrorist actors in Indonesia come from poor families. Poverty makes people vulnerable to radical ideology. Poverty makes terrorists commit crimes and violence including bomb attacks. Poor people are easily provoked to commit crimes. Terrorism is caused by a radical understanding of religion.

In many countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan and Indonesia, this assumption has been justified. In addition to the economic gap between Western countries and those with majority Muslim population results in resentment against Western country and stimulates the emergence of radicalism.

The spirit of terrorism and *jihad* thrives in an atmosphere of

poverty and injustice. Thus, economic-based deradicalization has shown to be more successful in coping with terrorism. For example, former Bali Bombing terrorist Abu Tholit successfully opened the restaurant after being jailed for 10 years. In the prison he received self-reliance training through entrepreneurship. With this entrepreneurial independence he is brave to live life apart from the network of terrorism [9].

In 2001, the BNPT introduced its deradicalization program, and cooperates with religious leaders, psychologists, society leaders, and academics. Unfortunately, however, the economic approach has not been maximal. In 2016, there were 530 former terrorists [10]. The work of deradicalization must be improved and strengthened. Therefore, the deradicalization program done by BNPT will not succeed. Deradicalization must be done involving all state institutions. Community participation and backing of all elements are also needed.

Coordination between relevant government ministries, as well as public and private institutions has resulted in the successful formulation of an action plan. Deradicalitation program must be followed with the national action involving the community leaders, religious leaders, education leaders, academicians, social leaders, youth leaders, and activists and peace lovers. Actually, all ministries and institutions can contribute to running deradicalization or building programs, both physically (infrastructure) and non-physically (mental and spiritual).

Prevention of terrorism needs to involve many parties. The Ministry of Religion needs to be more active in spreading moderate ideology. Through this institution, accommodative, contemporary and acculturative building and enlightenment of religious insight can be conducted by involving religious leaders *(imams)*, preachers (*khatibs*), the young community, and mosque administrators to ward off radical-anarchistic religious thought that can be disseminated easily through worship places. Actually, they have contributed in deradicalisme program but not synergy and focused yet as a big team on the warding-off attempt radicalism [9].

BNPT and Religious Ministry can be synergistic. BNPT provides location data and people that are suspected to be affiliated with terrorism, so it will bring alertness. The Religious Ministry can empower imams, khatibs and administrators to maximize the role of places of worship as a religious community-building center.

BNPT can also cooperate with the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises, BNPT provides the list and curriculum vitae of ex terrorists, and the ministry can contribute to deradicalization through an entrepreneurship program. This program can be in the form of providing loans to finance business activities of former terrorists. Counseling and guidance is also needed for ex-terrorists to run their business properly and well. Microfinance institutions, such as *koperasi* and small banking, play an important role in deradicalisation programs. Koperasi and small banking can organize education, training, and workshops for ex-terrorists.

BNPT through Deradicalization Directorate has initiated the building and facilitation model aforementioned. The constraints encountered are limited business capital prepared and human resource through facilitation and monitoring over the type of occupation done. Facilitation in conducting entrepreneurship building for the prisoners can be done as well by many koperasi and small banking throughout Indonesian areas; the appropriate way to do is to prepare rotating capital for the prisoners domiciling near the koperasi and small banking, they then become the members of koperasi to get business capital corresponding to the skill they have.

The core of the assistance done by cooperatives and small banking is to facilitate financing or capital and build courage to entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is not really just a way to earn money or profession form, but more than that entrepreneurship is a form of actualization to be able to sharpen and maximize the potential of self, and free yourself from dependence on other parties. The easiest business is coming from hobbies and daily activities. The former terrorists businesses consist of food court, mobile phone shop, clothing store, online business and others. This entrepreneurial independence will make former terrorists brave to escape from the terrorist network.

Entrepreneurship programs should eliminate discussion about terrorist ideology. This program focuses on training the business skills of former terrorists. They should be brought closer to economic activities and entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial activity keeps the former terrorists busy so they do not think to attack. With entrepreneurship, economic motivation will strengthen and business instincts will continue to grow. If the business becomes larger, it needs more time and human power. Therefore they will forget their struggle for radicalism. The key is persistence and creativity.

Entrepreneurship will create non-dependency. Interviews with former terrorists indicated that they have difficulty to get out of the terrorist network. They are very economically dependent on their networks. This dependence occurs because they feel that they have no friends outside the network. They also believe that if they leave the terrorist network, they will have difficulty. Therefore, former terrorists should be encouraged to be independent regardless of their old networks. The way to make them self-reliant is through entrepreneurship.

The BNPT organizes entrepreneurship programs aimed at deradicalization and assimilation of former terrorists. BNPT regularly holds meetings with ex terrorists; even visits are also conducted to monitor the progress of deradicalization programs through entrepreneurship. There are several deradicalization programs through entrepreneurship programs. The former terrorists in Indonesia are trained to organize entrepreneurship activity. Entrepreneurship programs for former terrorists include farms, fisheries, and restaurants. There are also former terrorists who open electronic repairs and workshops.

Entrepreneurship for terrorists must be measurable and sustainable. Entrepreneurship is not a war. This is a program to influence the hearts and minds of former terrorists. Coaching plays an important role in the deradicalization program through entrepreneurship.

IV. CONCLUSION

The conventional notion of deradicalization requiring former terrorists to replace their radical ideologies with new ideology indoctrination is shown to be out-of-date. Instead, an economic-based program is an effective approach to overcome terrorism because terrorists are generally from poor families. The proposed entrepreneurship program is not intended to remove radical ideologies; instead, it intends to engage former terrorism prisoners in establishing their own business activities, and thus, aims to distract them from the realization of such ideologies into radical action. BNPT should be able to cooperate with any ministries and society's elements in Indonesia to implement entrepreneurship program.

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