

## Within a Thick Mist: Conspiracy Theories and Counter Terrorism in Indonesia

*Shofwan Al Banna Choiruzzad \**

### ABSTRACT

*This paper discusses Indonesian 'radical groups' discourse on counter-terrorism policies by the government of Indonesia and why it is important to look at it closely to help us to understand the real dynamics surrounding Indonesia's war on terrorism. Until now, official information from the Indonesian authorities regarding terrorist groups and counter terrorism efforts had been the most important sources in shaping various analysis' both in academics and mass media on the issue of terrorism at the national and global level. Despite plenty of evidences that undermine the credibility of some official information, from indications of proof fabrication and witness manipulation to excessive violence and extrajudicial killings, they had never been adequately criticized and questioned. The information from the authorities was frequently taken as 'the (only) truth.' Of course, different stories on terrorism and counter terrorism policies in Indonesia did exist. Many of them came from the target of counter terrorism policies: Indonesian 'radical' Islamist organizations. Nevertheless, their versions were often taken for granted as false stories that must not be heard at all. This paper traces back how the Global War on Terror discourse had created a 'binary opposition of rationality' that build and strengthen the stereotype that radical Islamists are irrational actors who create and believe in conspiracy theories. This 'binary opposition of rationality' had been used to dismiss all criticisms to official information regarding the issue of terrorism and counter terrorism policies in Indonesia by labeling it as conspiracy theories. Looking closely at Indonesia's political history and current practices of counter terrorism, this paper argues that both official and alternative versions need to be heard and scrutinized critically.*

**Keywords:** Counter Terrorism, Indonesia, Thick Mist, Conspiracy Theories

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\* Ritsumeikan University, Shofwan Al Banna Choiruzzad Graduate School of International Relations

## INTRODUCTION

It was Sunday, 13 June 2011, when Untung Budi Santoso, nicknamed Khidir, was captured by Indonesia's infamous counter terrorism squad, Special Anti Terrorism Detachment 88 (Detasemen Khusus Anti Terrorism 88 or Densus 88) in Bandung. He and his wife were brought by the authorities using different cars. When the couple separated, Untung was in a healthy condition.

On that night, the Police secretly informed Untung's family that Untung passed away. Journalists who obtain the information from the family said that the Police offered to immediately give the corpse to the family with three requirements: (1) the corpse must not be opened, (2) the family must not report to lawyers, (3) the family must not report to the media.

When the information was leaked to journalists and known to public, inciting speculations that the reason for his death was torture by the Police apparatuses, the authority quickly released information that Untung was dead due to cardiac arrest. Of course, it is difficult to clarify the fact. A news Radio, El Shinta, interviewed Untung's father who testified that Untung had no history of heart disease.

Unfortunately, Untung's death was not the first, the last, or the worst in the counter terrorism efforts by the Indonesian government. A human rights monitoring NGO, Imparsial, reported that the most frequent mis-arrests happened in the issue of terrorism (Imparsial, 2010). Some of the mis-arrest victims were released with permanent disabilities as a result of physical violence. Most of them got no name rehabilitation or even an apology.

The phenomena of mis-arrests are worrying because many extrajudicial killings were happened. What if, like in the case of

mis-arrests, those 'alleged terrorists' were just 'mis-murdered'? Until 2010, the 'alleged terrorist' killed by the Densus 88 without any trial had reached 44 people. The number is still growing.

Amidst public criticisms to various high profile scandals of the Indonesian Police, from alleged corruption of its high rank officials or use of excessive violence in the land issue, to the speculation on case manipulations for political purposes, the institution put counter terrorism as its shining pride. In many occasions, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono praised the Police by mentioning the success of counter terrorism efforts (*Kompas Daily*, 17 January 2012).

In many other cases, the Police often criticized by the media and academics. But in the issue of terrorism, the media and experts frequently celebrated the 'successes' of the Police without adequately scrutinizing it. Incidents of extrajudicial killings by Densus 88 were shown as a reality show in the television and celebrated as the victory of humanity, despite the absence of solid proofs and fair legal process.

One of the reason behind the uncritical academics and media in the issue of terrorism is the 'binary opposition of rationality' brought by the Global War on Terror discourse. Using this frame, all criticisms to the official version were considered as conspiracy theories. Those criticizing the abuse of power by the state apparatuses were quickly labeled as the supporters of terrorists.

### **The Focus and the Organization of the Paper**

This paper attempts to break the monopoly of truth in the case of counter terrorism in Indonesia. It questions the claim that the official information were rock solid and must not be doubted while other sources, particularly from the 'targets' of counter

terrorism policies, must not be heard at all because those were simply 'conspiracy theories.'

To do so, this paper is organized in the following structure: First, this paper discusses how the Global War on Terror discourse created the 'binary opposition of rationality.' This binary opposition of rationality had built and strengthened the stereotype for radical Islamists as crazy irrationals who create and believe in conspiracy theories and thus must not be heard. Through this binary opposition, all criticisms to official information were framed as 'conspiracy theories.'

After discussing the 'binary opposition of rationality' and how it was used to frame criticisms toward counter terrorism policies (i.e. honest and solid official version vs. Conspiracy theories), it attempts to deconstruct the claim. If the binary opposition of rationality is the truth, the official information must be solid and reliable, while the 'conspiracy theories' must be crazy, irrational, and baseless. Thus, to question the claim, this paper tries to point the indications that the official information was doubtful and questionable. At the same time, it elaborates the discourses of radical Islamists without being trapped by the 'binary opposition of rationality' or its binary opposite (where the discourse of Islamists was considered as the 'truth' without criticism and the official version was considered false without any reservation). For this aim, this paper elaborates Indonesia's political history and practices of counter terrorism.

### **Global War on Terror in Indonesia**

The birth of Global War on Terrorism gave Indonesia a new significance. US documents and supporting scholars then started to consider Southeast Asia as "The Second Front" of the global war, where Al Qaeda-linked terrorists roam (for example, see The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004; Rabasa, 2003, pp. 59-66;

Abuza, 2003; Dillon, 2004; Gunaratna, 2003; Chalk, 2002, pp. 107-208). Despite many critics to this perspective (for example, see Gershman, 2002, pp. 60-74; Hamilton-Hart, 2005, pp. 303-325; Sidel, 2007), US put the war on terrorism as a priority in her foreign policy in the region. "With us or with terrorist" was asked to Southeast Asian countries, putting them "between the hegemon and the hard place" (Beeson, 2004, pp. 445-462).

While the Philippines is the Southeast Asian country where US involvement in the GWOT operations was the most extensive, Indonesia remains as the focal point of the GWOT discourse in Southeast Asia. In the early stage of GWOT, Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz stated that the United States would be "going after al-Qaeda in Indonesia" as the next target after Afghanistan (Christoffersen, 2002). Later, the US lower its voice to prevent further negative impacts for US-Indonesia relation, but the concern on Indonesia in the GWOT is not diminished.

Indonesia is indeed important in the GWOT discourse. The alleged 'Al-Qaeda's regional arm', *Jemaah Islamiyah*, was allegedly led by Indonesians (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004, p. 58). Its origins also could be tracked back to the *Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia* (DI/TII, The Nation of Islam/Islamic Indonesia Army) rebellion in the 1950s (ICG, 2002). Many of the key figures who were alleged to be the terrorist leaders are Indonesians, including Abu Bakar Ba'asyir (the alleged 'spiritual leader' of *Jemaah Islamiyah* whom the US and Australia had pressed Indonesia to detain), Hambali (Riduan Isamuddin), Muhammad Iqbal Rahman (Abu Jibril), Agus Dwikarna, and Faiz bin Abu Bakar Bafana. In the relation with Al-Qaeda, Hambali is an important key person. Based on intelligence resources, the 9/11 Commission Report claimed that Al-Qaeda was successful in fostering terrorism in Southeast Asia because of the significant role of Hambali (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004, p. 150). Apart from *Jemaah Islamiyah*, there are also other militant Muslim groups which

suspected to have links with Al-Qaeda, including *Laskar Jihad* and *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia* (MMI, the Indonesia Mujahidin Council), which were called by Dana R. Dillon as part of “the brotherhood of terrorism.” (Dillon, 2004).

Despite strong US pressure, Indonesia was initially reluctant to jump in the bandwagon. Before Bali Bombing in 12 October 2002, Indonesia’s President Megawati Sukarnoputri was indecisive in responding the global war on terrorism imposed by Washington. The indecisiveness was caused by some domestic restraints, including the resurgence of political Islam in the Post-Suharto Indonesia, the rise of ‘negative nationalism,’ Megawati’s weak and incoherent leadership, and the weakened state capability to patrol the borders of the vast archipelago (Hafidz, 2003, pp. 1-8).

However, within Megawati’s inner circle, some elites pushed for a scenario called ‘Musharraf Scenario.’ This scenario suggested that Megawati should follow Pakistan’s Prime Minister Musharraf’s path to be a strong supporter of the US global war on terrorism, arguing that this strategy would give political and economic benefits to her presidency. The scenario insisted that Megawati should act against radicals, who were insignificant of the largely moderate populations in Indonesia. In return, she would get debt relief to relieve the economic condition and would put an end the US arm embargo that could give the military better weapons to handle secessionist and internal security (Hafidz, 2003, 3-5). The main supporter of the scenario was AM Hendropriyono, the head of National Intelligence Agency and the person who led the bloody military operation against Muslim groups during the Suharto era (Hafidz, 2003, p. 4). Hendropriyono’s scenario did not get support from Megawati until the Bali Bombing, which forced Megawati to align herself with Washington on the war on terror or risked diplomatic repercussion and perhaps, financial cut off (Hafidz, 2003, p. 17).

An Anti-terrorism Law was soon issued in 2002. In the draft, it was proposed that a suspected terrorist does not have the rights to be accompanied by lawyer, to refuse to answer any questions from the investigator, or even to have the contact with any external parties, including his/her family. It was also proposed that an investigator has the rights to trespass private ground, building, house, transportation facility or state-owned vital objects. These controversial proposals were finally dropped, but the authorities still have the right to detain everyone based on any “intelligence sources” (Article 26). Based on this law, counter-terrorism operations are waged.

However, The US and government version on terrorism and terrorist network is not the only version. MMI published a press release strongly criticizing counter-terrorism operations as abuse of power from the government (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, 2007). They mentioned that arbitrary arrests, kidnapping, and other illegal unfair treatments were done under the rubric of counter-terrorism.

In books published as counter-version of the government’s version, MMI figures spoke of many indications of conspiracies. However, sometimes the theories are blurred and mixed each other, ranging from a theory of US involvement to the more realistic one on the intelligence conspiracy, proof fabrication, arbitrary arrests, false flagging, witness torturing, and other ‘untold stories.’ In *Awas! Operasi Intelejen!* (Beware! Intelligence Operations!), Fauzan Al-Anshary –former MMI speaker- tried to connect recent terror incidents and counter-terror operations with intelligence’s ‘sting operations’ during the New Order (Al-Anshary, 2006).

Another book was written by Muchtar Dg Lau, a member of KPPSI (Komite Persiapan Penegakan Syariat Islam, Shari’ah Enforcement Preparation Committee) which was arrested in Makassar Bomb Case. Makassar Bombing happened in 5

December 2002, in the *Ied Fithr* eve. Bombs exploded in two places: McDonald's in Ratu Indah Mall and NV H. Kalla Showroom. Police tried to link the Makassar Bomb with Bali Bombing and "international terrorism."

The book was a personal experience-based book which narrated the manipulation of the case by the apparatus through illegal conducts such as torture and document and proof fabrication (Lau, 2008). He argued that the police was linking innocent Muslim activists to the bombing even though they were not involved because they could add to the story of the US. By falsifying the proof and linking it to the story of global war on terror, the police will be highly rewarded (Lau, 2008, p. 57). Lau even mentioned a theory that the police had an obligation to use the 'war on terror' money from the US, including by fabricating stories of links to international terrorism (p. 20). Commenting on police attempt to link the bombing with Agus Dwikarna, he said that even Agus Dwikarna was a victim of a conspiracy between BIN (National Intelligence Body, Indonesia) and the government of the Philippines. In his version, the C3 explosive materials which were found in the belongings of Agus Dwikarna, Tamsil Linrung, and Jamal Balfas were 'planted' by the intelligence (p. 7).

Nevertheless, these alternative stories, and many other criticisms, were never have a place in the mainstream media or in the academics, because they are simply considered as false 'conspiracy theories' even before they were heard or scrutinized. This is how "the binary opposition of rationality" works.

### **The Binary Opposition of Rationality**

In the heart of the Global War on Terrorism operations, Neil Renwick argued in "Southeast Asia and the global war on terror discourse", lies a basic logic which directed counter-



terrorism policies all around the world - the "Global War on Terrorism" discourse (Renwick, 2002, pp. 249-265). Discourse is important, since it is giving a powerful narrative "frame" to define and explain political violence and terrorism, to identify - and even demonize- the alleged actors, and to legitimize and authorize counterterrorism operations (Renwick, 2002, pp. 249-250).

Central to GWOT discourse is the binary opposition of 'good vs. evil', as manifested in the frequent usage of the term 'freedom/repression', 'civilization/barbarism', or 'heroism/cowardice' (Renwick, 2002, p. 250). As an important part of the binary opposition, a vision of a divided Islam exists. Islam, and Muslims, are simply put into two categories: 'acceptable' Islam (which regarded as 'moderates') and 'unacceptable' Islam (referred as 'revivalist', 'fundamentalist', 'radical', 'extremist', or 'Islamist') (Renwick, 2002, p. 251). In other word, unless proven 'good' (ie. Cooperative to the West), all Muslims are presumed to be 'bad' (Pasha, 2008, p. 187).

In this context, good/moderate Muslims are associated with 'rationality' while the bad/radical Muslims are associated with 'irrationality' -uncritical fans of conspiracy theories. Based on this argument, one important part of the Global War on Terrorism is the 'war on ideas', including how to help 'rational moderates' win against 'the author of crazy conspiracy theories'. The 2006 United States' National Security Strategy mentioned that 'sub-culture of conspiracy and misinformation' is one important cause of terrorism (*The National Security Strategy of the United States, 2006, p. 10*). In order to fight the spread of 'conspiracy theory' which led to terrorism, the 911 Commission Report recommend that the government should support "promising initiatives in television and radio broadcasting to the Arab World, Iran, and Afghanistan" (p. 377).

In line with Reinwick's argument on the center of GWOT discourse, the binary opposition, the 'war on conspiracy theory'

goes. It is black and white: with us or against us, *our version of story (which is claimed to be the truth) or the conspiracy theory*. All alternative stories are part of the 'sub-culture of conspiracy and misinformation.'

When the US attacked Iraq, one of the first targets to be bombed is the building Al-Jazeera, an alternative to CNN which often criticizes US and Israel. To make sure that the media are broadcasting 'the true story of the war on terrorism', US applied the rule of 'embedded journalism' -which is much criticized for its impact to impartiality and objectivity of the journalists (For example of criticisms, see Hastie, 2007). To counter critical voices from Al-Jazeera, US established Iraqi News Network, which was not really successful.

It is an irony that when US is pointing the truth-claiming ideology which tolerates no difference as the root of global terrorism, the GWOT discourse working in an exactly same way. The binary opposition of good/evil, moderates/radicals, rational/conspiracy theory leads to a simplification and a monopoly of truth. In the light of binary opposition, alternative voices from the 'radicals' put together into the rubric of 'conspiracy theories.'

### **Breaking the Black and White Prison**

In the following parts, this paper scrutinizes the frame of "binary opposition of rationality." If the binary opposition of rationality is the truth, the official informations must be solid and reliable, while the 'conspiracy theories' must be crazy, irrational, and baseless. Thus, to break the monopoly of truth, this paper attempts to deconstruct the official claims, which most observers relied upon.

## Deconstructing the Official Claims

Are the official claims solid, undisputed and free from manipulations? While many observers unreservedly accept the claims, elaboration on the facts building the claims prove that the answer is no. Some incidents were recorded by Ridlwan, a journalist of the *Jawa Pos* daily who interviewed many terrorist suspects. Some of the interesting cases will be discussed below (based on personal interview with Ridlwan, March-April 2011).

On September 2010, Khairul Ghazali or Haedharoh, allegedly a JI terrorist, appeared on a television show telling the audience about spectacular plots planned by the terrorists. Later, Khairul Ghazali testified that the show was directed by the Police. He testified that he was forced to mention the claim that he was part of the plot to make Medan as a "Second Iraq." He was also forced to say that Abu Bakar Ba'asyir received 20 percent of robbery operation conducted by the group. He was also forced that Abu Bakar Ba'asyir issued a fatwa to kill police officers on the streets. All statements, he testified, were written by the police.

This was not the only case. Abu Dujana, who appeared on another television show, testified that the show was a fake. All of his words were crafted by the Police, which forced him to mention the claims in the show by threatening the safety of his wife and children.

On Ridlwan's interview with Luthfi Haedharoh or Ubaid, the alleged terrorist testified that his testimonies were manipulated by the police. Ubaid was forced to confess that he was involved in the Aceh terrorist cell. He was forced to confess as the money courier. He testified to Ridlwan that the money was not for terrorism but for humanitarian purposes for Palestine that will be distributed through the NGO Medical Emergency Rescue (MER-C, Indonesian NGO which build a hospital in

Gaza). Ubaid showed the actual receipt. Nevertheless, Ubaid was forced to follow the scenario drafted by the police. He was even unable to choose his lawyer, which was prepared by the police. Even though he finally testified that his former confessions were untrue and were made under threat, the new testimonies were unaccepted.

While we must not unreservedly accepted these alternative versions, claims of case manipulations by the state apparatuses must be taken into account as a warning. A closer scrutiny is needed.

Further warning indicators appeared due to excessive use of violence, including extrajudicial killings. Here are several lists of alleged misconduct and violence by the special anti terrorism detachment. Some of them were proven as mistakes, but many the victims did not receive rehabilitation. One of them was mis-arrested exactly in the day before his marriage. The capture ruined the plan and he was stigmatized as a terrorist. In some other cases, the victims were tortured to the point that they receive permanent disabilities. Of course, this paper does not argue that these are the “truth.” We also need to clarify these allegations.

**Table 1. Some Alleged Misconducts by the Police in the Counter Terrorism Efforts**

Category	Victims	Description	Information (Source, Date, etc.)
Mis-arrest/ Kidnapping	Sahal (religious teacher in Poso)	Arrested in Poso, alleged to have connection with terrorist	Sinar Harapan, 9 February 2003
	Joko Wibowo (activist)	Arrested without proper document	Suara Merdeka, 20 January 2008

	Syaifudin Umar (activist)	Kidnapped in 4 August 2004. Finally found in a very bad mental and physical condition because of torture (police said that he got an accident).	Republika, August 2004	31
	150 activists kidnapped	Alleged as terrorists. Arrested without legal documents.	Republika, August 2004	31
	Jejen Ahmad Jaelani and Fahrudin	Arrested because having similar face with Dr Azahari. Widely publicized in media as terrorist. Angry mass almost destroy their rental room. Finally, police released them, but with no compensation. There is still public stigma on them.	Liputan 6, November 2005	14
	Religious teacher in Poso	A religious teacher was arrested because alleged to be a terrorist. Released because it was a mistake. No compensation.	Densus Undercover book.	88
	Wahono	Captured when distributing wedding invitation. His mis-arrest ruined his life because the marriage was cancelled. No compensation or rehabilitation.	September 2010	
	Joko Daryono	Mis-arrested. Offered money as compensation. The offer was cancelled because he brought a lawyer.	18 November 2010	
<b>Violence by state apparatus</b>	Heri Sutopo (ordinary citizen)	Heri was captured and forced to give information. He claimed to be repeatedly beaten.	<a href="http://www.tempointeraktif.com">www.tempointeraktif.com</a>	
	Yusron Mahmu di	Alleged to be a terrorist. Shot in a close range, right in front his children by the Special Anti-Terrorist Force, Detachment 88. Still detained.		
	Abdul Rahman	Captured and interrogated. Now his feet are painful when he walks. His knees got internal damage.	May 2010	

	Abdul Hamid	Captured and tortured. Both knees were shrinking. Now have to use wheelchair.	May 2010
	Khairul Ghazali	Kicked while leading prayer. Two <i>ma'mums</i> of his prayer were shot dead. His wife protested. Instead of be heard, his wife was also captured with her one month old baby. According to his testimony to Ridlwan, Khairul was forced to appear on TV show with a scenario drafted by the police.	Medan, 19 September 2010
	Untung / Khidir	Captured in a healthy condition. Dead on the night. According to some journalists, the police threaten the family to shut up. To the media, the police claimed that Untung died of cardiac arrest.	13 June 2011
<b>Extrajudicial Killings</b>	15 Civilians (4 of them are children )	Special Anti-Terror Force, Detachment 88, attacked a village to hunt "terrorist"	22 January 2007
	Munajid	Out-of-procedurally killed.	Tempo Interaktif, 26 March 2007
	Azahari	Killed in a raid.	9 November 2005
	Ibrahim (Boim)	Killed in a 17-hours raid shown in television as a show.	8 August 2009
	Air Setiawan and Eko Joko Sarjono	Killed. In the scene, no guns were found. Police claimed that they resisted using pipe bomb.	8 August 2009
	Urwah, Susilo, Aji, Noordin M. Top	Killed. According to witness, no warning and order to surrender. The police directly barraged the scene with guns.	17 September 2009

	Hendro Yunanto, Sigit Qurdhowi, and an unlucky traditional vendor (Nur Iman)	Hendro and Sigit killed and labelled as "terrorist suspect." Nur Iman, the only witness of the killing, was killed too.	14 May 2011
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Source: Thamrin (2007) and personal interviews with Ridlwan (personal communication with Ridlwan, March-April 2011)

While we must not unreservedly accept these allegations as the truths, it is important for us to take these allegations as a warning that the facts that build the official claims were not undisputed and not unproblematic. Claims from both sides need to be critically assessed. Until now, the official claims were never questioned and the contending claims were never heard because the 'binary opposition of rationality' was employed.

### The Base for Conspiracy Theories: Historical Experience

Historically, the so-called 'conspiracy theories' were not entirely baseless. One point to consider is that the story of conspiracy was not a fiction in Indonesia's politics. During the New Order period, the notion of 'extreme left' (*ekstrim kiri, 'eki'*) and 'extreme right' (*ekstrim kanan, 'eka'*) were used by the regime to crush any political oppositions (Yunanto, et.al, 2003, p. 7). To show the threat of these latent dangers, many observers believed that some elements of the regime often conducted 'sting operations' to provoke extremist groups and even creating terror incidents to blame the so-called radicals (both from 'right' and 'left'). Thus, conspiracy and deceptions were something familiar to Indonesian politics.

A year after 1977 election, when Suharto started his campaign to consolidate his power, some series of terrorism allegedly done by 'extreme right' happened. In 1981, a year before another election, the military announced that they had uncovered "underground, clandestine networks" of 'extreme rights' (Yunanto, 2003). The infamous plane hijacking, the 'Woyla hijacking', was also happened and the success to crush the hijackers boosting the status of the military and further degrading the votes for the opposition. However, it was unclear who was behind this incident. Again, there was a strong indication that the regime's intelligence was playing in the shadow (Kingsbury, 2004, pp. 7-8).

In 1984, Tanjung Priok incident stroke the northern part of the capital. A provocation by a security officer led to a mass demonstration protesting Pancasilaization, Christianization, and Chinese economic domination. To stop the protest, military troops fired the crowd with automatic rifles. Benny Moerdani, the Commander of Security and Order Operations Command, said that the mass attacked and as a defensive measure the military killed nine persons and wounded 53 others (ELSAM). However, the 'white paper' from Petition Fifty who collected eyewitness report shows that many more civilians were killed and tortured ruthlessly.

Following Tanjung Priok incident, a series of bombing occurred. Investigation by authorities said that the bombings were retaliation for Tanjung Priok. The evidence presented by tortured witnesses was not strong enough, but the government sent three opposition figures (AM Fatwa, HM Sanusi, and Dharsono) to jail anyway (Van Bruinessen, 1996). A year after, the world's biggest Buddhist temple, Borobudur, was bombed. Government captured Husein Ali Al-Habsyi who was constantly denying involvement. Damien Kingsbury, an Indonesian military analyst, believed that military was involved (Kingsbury, 2004).



These series of events successfully silenced public opposition to the regime. However, some violent incidents still happened, such as Lampung Tragedy (executed by AM Hendropriyono) and Bima Incident in 1989 (Van Bruinessen, 1996).

The history of conspiracy is not the monopoly of Muslim groups. During 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, a bomb exploded in front of CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies). After investigations, the military announced that they have 'discovered' documents proving that the PRD (Democratic People's Party) as the culprit behind the incident and also claimed that PRD have links with CSIS and Wanandi brothers (Sidel, 2006, p. 113). Many believed that the documents were fake and fabricated.

### **Concluding Remarks**

While the Police and the Military were indeed had undergone significant reforms, many believe that some habits from the past, including the use of excessive violence and proof or witness manipulations, were still persistent. However, as a result of the 'binary opposition of rationality' frame in the case of terrorism, many observers scrutinized the official claims on the case involving the head of the Corruption Eradication Committee, Antasari Azhar or on the death of two boys in a police office in Sumatera, but not many observers scrutinize the same institution's official claims on terrorism.

Until now, official information from the Indonesian authorities regarding terrorist groups and counter terrorism efforts had been the most important sources in shaping various analysis' both in academics and mass media on the issue of terrorism at the national and global level. Despite plenty of evidences that undermine the credibility of some official information, they had

never been adequately criticized and questioned. The informations from the authorities were frequently taken as 'the (only) truth.' Alternative versions, particularly the ones coming from the so-called 'radical groups,' were taken for granted as false stories that must not be heard at all. This is the result of 'binary opposition of rationality' frame that build and strengthen the stereotype that radical Islamists are irrational actors who create and believe in conspiracy theories. This 'binary opposition of rationality' had been used to dismiss all criticisms to official information regarding the issue of terrorism and counter terrorism policies in Indonesia by labeling it as conspiracy theories.

After elaborating Indonesia's political history and current practices of counter terrorism, this paper concludes that both official and alternative versions need to be heard and scrutinized critically.

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