The United States of America and Decolonization in the South Pacific Region Countries

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is intended to reveal the background and influence of the United States in the South Pacific countries. The method used in this study is critical history. In analyzing data, the steps taken are steps according to Kuntowijoyo, topic selection, heuristics, verification (source criticism), interpretation, historiography. The results showed that the presence of the Soviet Union and China in the south Pacific moved the United States to pay more attention to this region, by further enhancing its role in the South Pacific Region. The role of the United States in the South Pacific Region covers the fields of economics, politics, and strategy. In the economic field, the United States provides assistance and improves their standard of living. In the political and strategic fields, the United States, together with Australia and New Zealand, which was bound by the ANZUS defense pact, tried to stem the influx of communist influence from the Soviet Union and China.

Keywords: The United States, Decolonization, and South Pacific Countries.

A. INTRODUCTION

Between the 1960s and 1970s, many South Pacific countries experienced a change in political status from colonies to independent island states. This change in political status is the result of a process of decolonization, especially on islands that have the potential to become nation-states in the Pacific. The process of decolonization in the region is in line with world decolonization since the United Nations adopted a declaration on decolonization in 1960 that demanded the abolition of world colonization.

Along with this decolonization process, the Pacific countries are trying to form a political unity for the Pacific people through nation integration. These independent countries have established regional organizations namely the South Pacific Commission and the South Pacific Forum. The South Pacific Commission was established under the Canberra agreement in 1947 by the Netherlands, the United States, France, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. While the South Pacific Forum was established on 5 August 1971 by Australia and New Zealand and several independent countries

(Indonesian Ministry of Information, 1985: 5).

The spirit of Regionalism seems very strong so that the people of the South Pacific have no difficulty in determining the identity of the region. However, it cannot be denied that these countries are still difficult to stand on their own, due to their limited abilities. The main problems are economic hardship, low standard of living, education left behind, population pressure, problems of urbanization and unemployment. Their disappointment arises that both human and material resources prevent them from fulfilling expectations due to contact with more sophisticated technology and culture (Ronald Nangoi, 1982: 729).

They potentially do have natural resources such as seabed minerals, fisheries and mining materials such as gold, nickel, and phosphate. Technological progress will facilitate the cultivation of the potential of these resources, but it turns out that the South Pacific countries have not been able to use them, even though developed countries cannot be avoided anymore their technological capabilities and they really need these natural resources.

In its development, the South Pacific region became an important area and cannot be ignored. Meanwhile, the limited ability of countries in the region to stand on their own, making them much dependent on the outside world. This has increasingly encouraged countries to get involved in the development of Pacific countries. The presence of other countries in the South Pacific region is proof that this region is an important region in the international world. The most important foreign countries in the region are the United States, France, Japan, the Soviet Union, China (Ronald Nangoi, 1982: 731).

The attention of the United States of America to the development of the countries of the South Pacific is not so true compared to the attention of other third world countries. However, this does not mean that the United States has absolutely no interest in the South Pacific region, as seen from its presence in the Micronesian Islands. For the United States these islands have strategic significance for their defense.

The Micronesian Islands are a large base of nuclear weapons and the American Navy. Micronesia is being used as a stepping stone to the United States' plan to wage a star war. The increasing presence of the US military in the region has led to an increase in the weaponry of the opposing parties, which has led to a level of confrontation (Merdeka, July 20, 1987). Based on the background of the problems that have been formulated above, then some problems can be formulated for this research as follows: what is the geographical position of the countries of the South Pacific region; why foreign countries are so ambitious to involve themselves in this region; in what form external countries involve themselves in the development of countries in the region; what is the background of the United States of America involved in the development of countries in the region; and what are the activities of the United States in South Pacific

countries.

According to Suryokusumo in Foreign Journal No. 4 organized and published by the State Department's Research and Developer Agency. Since the United Nations determined that regions in the South Pacific that were not self-governing were included in the UN decolonization program in 1960, the administrative authorities of those regions, such as Australia and New Zealand, began to be urged by Asian and African countries in particular to immediately determine the target of self-determination for them towards the attainment of national independence. Since then many regions have gained their independence or at least have their own governments, such as Western Samoa, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Cook Islands and Niue. More than that many of them have become members of the United Nations.

However, there are still many areas that have not yet gained independence or at least these areas are considered to still be the territories beyond, as is the French perception of Polynesia and New Caledonia. In addition, there are also areas that are still under the guardianship system, such as the Pacific Islands, which are mostly located in the Micronesian group of islands, which are declared as "strategic areas" placed under the supervision of large countries such as the United States and which are based on agreement alone.

Countries in the South Pacific, with the exception of Australia and New Zealand, comprise mostly thousands of thousands of small island nations which in their present development are still searching for their respective identities in forming political unity in this region which can be taken into account in the arena international politics. Although they are developing countries and are mostly already independent, they still have very close ties with the metropolitan countries of their former administrative rulers. This is reflected in their administrative patterns and government structures that still follow Australia and New Zealand. That is also why the countries in this region are still limiting themselves in joining other developing countries in the Non-Aligned Movement, except for Vanuatu.

According to historical experience in the second world war, the South Pacific region is indeed seen as a strategic area. Because it is not impossible that this region is now starting to be a place of competition and conflict of the sphere of influence in the framework of the global political Super Power. Economic conditions in the countries of this region are still very dependent on subsidies provided by the former administrative authorities in order to help prosperity and their economic development. To overcome the problems they face, countries in the region look forward to foreign aid, especially in carrying out increased economic and social development.

B. METHOD

The research method is derived from the word method in English which means way or method. In etymology, methods are problems that describe ways or ways, technical implementation instructions (Bagus, 1966: 635). Historical research is basically bound by the procedure of historical methods. The historical method itself is a systematic rule and principle in generating historical sources effectively and critically evaluating them in written form. The method used by researchers in writing this history is a research method according to Kuntowijoyo. The stages of historical research according to Kuntowijoyo have five stages namely topic selection, heuristics, verification, interpretation, and writing (Kuntowijoyo, 2005: 91).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The process of decolonization of the South Pacific States

The South Pacific includes several independent countries such as Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Western Samoa, Solomon, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Countries that are still under the supervision of New Zealand, namely: Cook Islands and Nieu, as well as colony countries such as American Samoa (United States), Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna (France), Tokelau (New Zealand) and Islands Pitcairn (United Kingdom) (J. Kusmanto Anggoro, 1987: 160). Since the 1960s, several European islands and islands in the South Pacific experienced a change in political status from being colonized to independent island states, and some of them have been accepted as members of the United Nations (UN). Previously, almost all regions in the region were colonized by Western countries, such as England, France, West Germany, Spain, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.

This change in political status is the result of a process of decolonization, especially on islands that have the potential to become nation-states in the South Pacific. In the 1960s Western Samoa gained independence from New Zealand (1 January 1962). But from the United Nations and Australia (30 January 1968), then in the 1970s Tonga gained independence from Britain (4 June 1970), Fiji from Britain (10 October 1979), Papua New Guinea from Australia (16 September 1975), Tuvalu from England (1 October 1978), Solomon Islands from England (7 July 1978) and the Caribbean from England (12 July 1979) (Ronald Nangoi, 1982: 727).

In the 1980s two regions gained independence, namely Vanuatu (formerly New Hebrides) from France and Britain (30 July 1980) and Belau (formerly Islands) from the United States (29 January 1982). Vanuatu's independence apparently affected the neighboring islands, especially New Caledonia, which was still a French colony. Today the Melanesian natives demand independence for New Caledonia before 1985. In 1979, the pro-independence group "Kanak Independence Front", called on the South Pacific Forum to urge the UN Commission on decolonization to register New Caledonia as a

non-autonomous region, so as to meet the requirements for decolonization. but France was not prepared to give it up because the independence of New Caledonia would be detrimental to its interests in the country and also in the South Pacific region.

Decolonization in the South Pacific took place in line with the process of decolonization in the world since the United Nations adopted a declaration on decolonization in 1960 that demanded the abolition of colonialism in the world. Several independent island states gave strong support to their neighboring archipelago which still gained independence through the United Nations. Their status as members of the UN allows them to fight for the fate of neighboring countries. Southern Pacific countries that have become UN members are Fiji (13 October 1979), Papua New Guinea (10 October 1975), Samoa (15 December 1976), Islands Solomon (September 19, 1978) and Vanuatu. Papua New Guinea seems to use its UN membership status to vote for the independence of the South Pacific islands.

The decolonization process in this region is going well because countries such as Britain, Australia and New Zealand (except France) are willing to let go of their colonies. They want to protect their image as democratic countries and besides this, the colonies are a burden to them, so they don't want to bind themselves any longer with these island countries.

However, some islands are still colonized or under the supervision of foreign countries, namely: Pitcairn Islands (England), Society Islands, Tuamotu (Australia), Gambur and the Marquesas Islands, Wallis, and Futuna and New Caledonia (France), Tokelan, Cook Islands (Cook Islands) Australia), Carolina Marshall Islands and Northern Mariana, Guan and American Samoa (United States). The status of these islands in the future is unclear. On the one hand, France is still trying to maintain the status of its colonies and on the other hand, some islands are still difficult to choose independence because they have not been able to become a nation-state due to their small territory and population.

Along with this decolonization process, the South Pacific countries are trying to form a political unity for the South Pacific people through the integration of the nation. These independent countries have established regional organizations: the South Pacific Commission and the South Pacific Form. The South Pacific Commission was established under the 1947 Canberra agreement by the Netherlands, Australia, and New Zealand, while the South Pacific Forum was established on 5 August 1971 by Australia, New Zealand and several independent states (Ronald Nangoi, 1982, p ...).

As newly independent countries, the socio-political and socio-economic conditions of each of these countries are not yet stable. They are very dependent on foreign aid. SM Koya stated that: in the Pacific region there are problems of low levels of education, population pressure, problems of urbanization and unemployment and malnutrition. The difficulties of these countries are inseparable from the limitations of

production results. They generally base their economy on the agricultural sector and primary industries. Exports are limited to agricultural production in the form of copra, sugar, bananas, palm oil and cocoa and mining products such as gold, copper, nickel, and phosphate.

Dependence on developed industrial countries can be seen in the field of foreign aid and trade. Since independence, they have received foreign aid from Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, as well as international bodies. Papua New Guinea received assistance from Australia, Kiribati from the United Kingdom, Solomon Islands from the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, Tonga from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the Asian Development Bank, Tuvalu from the United Kingdom, Western Samoa from New Zealand, Australia, United Nations, MEE and The IMF. Foreign trade, which is a source of state revenue, is still focused on certain industrial countries, especially Australia and New Zealand. They seem unable to let go of their ties with these two countries. Despite being aware of this dependence, the South Pacific countries did not want to be considered part of the Third World. Ratu Sir Kamisase Mara, Prime Minister of Fiji said: "This view of the African nation seems to be taken in the most modest and directed at all indigenous people. This does not apply to the South Pacific ".

In short, the South Pacific countries are not the same as countries like Ghana, Tanzania, or Malaysia. There is an opinion that the people of the Southern Pacific have a better standard of living than other third world countries. R.K. Fisk in his writings: "Economic, Social and Political Trends in the South Pacific in 1980", stated that according to general standards, almost all Pacific people are (well-off), one thing that is quite prominent in statistics. Compared to poor countries in Asia and Africa, Pacific countries are clearly outside the category of poor countries (Ronald Nangoi, 1982: 730).

Such life gives it a special color to the people of the South Pacific. They do potentially have natural resources such as seabed minerals, fisheries and mining materials such as gold, nickel, and phosphate. Advances in technology will facilitate the cultivation of potential natural resources in the future. The problem is whether the South Pacific countries are able to utilize the wealth of the sea. Thus the role of developed countries, especially in the field of technology can not be done, because they have the technology and also need these natural resources.

2. The role of the United States in the countries of the South Pacific Region.

After the end of World War II, the United States developed a foreign policy that brought America to national prosperity and world influence. There are several key elements of this foreign policy, including:

a. In the field of security, the United States follows the twin doctrines of anti-communism and politics that prevent one country from expanding and

influencing other countries.

b. Ideologically, the United States announced that the United States preferred liberal politics and supported democratic values (Yost, 1976: 14).

The Cold War is a conflict between Western countries spearheaded by the United States and Communist countries spearheaded by the Soviet Union in matters of ideology, economics, politics with limited military actions. The term Cold War is often used to describe the situation that occurred after World War II. After World War II, various disputes emerged. The first disputed areas were the Balkan countries. US-Soviet relations worsened when the United States in June 1947 proposed the Marshall Plan, a program aimed at helping Europe's economic recovery in the aftermath of the war. In line with the breakdown of the European economy, the communist party developed rapidly in Europe. Europe has split into two groups, namely Western Europe which is pro-United States and Eastern Europe under Soviet leadership. Both parties build strong alliances. The Cold War died down in the late 1980s when Gorbachev became the supreme Soviet leader. Under his leadership, he allowed Eastern European countries to become democracies and leave communism (Indonesian National Encyclopedia, 1990: 32).

Besides that, with the end of World War II, marked the emergence of a new war, namely the war of communist ideology against non-communist ideology. "Each winning country utilizes the world position gained after the war as a stepping stone in expanding its ideology (Emil Salim, 1986: 3). Thus the world political map is divided into two parts, namely one side of the communist-leaning countries grouping themselves, and on the other side, countries that have non-communist ideology have emerged. Therefore it is not surprising that the two groups clash with each other in fighting for influence in new countries.

It has been explained in advance that from the 1960s to the 1980s many Pacific countries were colonized as independent island states. This change in political status is the result of a process of decolonization, especially on islands that have the potential to become nation-states in the Pacific. The decolonization process in this region is in line with the decolonization of the elimination of colonialism in the world.

In the American view, this decolonization was carried out on the basis of political considerations, specifically the political status of the countries in the South Pacific. In the development of time, they (the countries in the South Pacific) caused a lot of problems, which would ultimately trouble the parent countries (Harold Jacobson, 1964: 509). Thus the main countries like Britain, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand are willing to let go of their colonies, to reduce the burden on the parent countries, and provide opportunities for independent countries to develop all their capabilities so that they no longer depend on yourself to the parent countries. Therefore the United States strongly supports the process of decolonization of countries in the

South Pacific.

In these newly independent countries, of course, the colonizers had left their colonies, as a result in these new countries experiencing a vacuum of outside power. In connection with this external reality, the communist bloc with the non-communist bloc scrambles to get followers and instill influence in other countries.

Disputes and animosity in its historical trajectory involved the new countries. So that unconsciously the new countries are dragged into the dispute. As a result, the new countries were dragged into war in a new form, namely Proxy War. Proxy War is a war between countries that represent a superpower in ideological contention (Emil Salim, 1986: 4).

The struggle between communist ideology and non-communist ideology after World War II turned out to have implications for the Southern Pacific. This can be seen by the existence of the Soviet Union and China to the countries in the South Pacific region. The presence of the Soviet Union and China in this region, although what appeared to be economic interests, but behind these economic interests, the two countries (the Soviet Union and China) tried to instill their ideological influence of communism slowly and very smooth. Seeing the signs carried out by the Soviet Union and China, the United States began to be wary of the influence of communism in the South Pacific region.

In fact, until the 1970s, American attention on the development of the South Pacific countries was not so great compared to American attention on other third world countries. This is because small countries in the South Pacific region are considered not so important for American interests. In addition, in this region, America has entrusted its two friends, namely Australia and New Zealand. The low level of American attention is intended to enable Australia and New Zealand to function for these small neighboring countries for their political, economic and social interests. However, the United States still has interests in this region, even if only on a small scale. The United States shows positive attention to the decolonization and development of new small states (Herr, 1978: 224). b. The role of the United States in the economic field.

It has been mentioned above that the US's attention in the South Pacific region has not been so great compared to American's attention to other third world countries. However, since the late 1970s, the United States began to pay great attention to the South Pacific region because this region was seen as having global prospects in the economic, political and strategic fields. Therefore the United States prioritizes the South Pacific region rather than Europe.

As seen from the presence of the United States in the Mariana Islands as the American Trust Territories located in the South Pacific Region which was controlled by the United States since the end of World War II (Raymond Dennet & Robert K Turner, 1949: 373). The presence of the Soviet Union with China in the South Pacific was

actually conditioned by the economic difficulties faced by countries in the region. As the newly independent countries, the economies of the countries in this region are reaching a stage of development. Western countries do not try to provide adequate assistance. In 1985, for example, the amount of official Western aid did not reach 2% of foreign aid received by the South Pacific countries. Therefore it seems that only large economic assistance should be chosen so that Western countries, especially the United States can maintain their influence. America's attention to island nations in the South Pacific is more focused on fishing contracts, especially tuna. For small countries in the South Pacific ocean, wealth is the main source of consumption.

For America, the tuna trade from South Pacific countries aims to help and improve their low standard of living. Moreover, their political and economic conditions are on average not yet stable, so this situation forces the Americans to pay attention and fight for their destiny. This American desire is aimed so that they do not fall into communist hands (Anggoro, 1987: 188).

In addition, the interests of the American global economy in the South Pacific are closely related to the dimensions of the national economy. American bilateral relations with Australia are more formulated in various forms that support both economies. The two governments agreed to provide trade protection between themselves, so this would facilitate the effectiveness of the market (Bill Heyden, 1987: 301). They (Americans and Australians) see this as an action that needs to be done by the US to import a lot of agricultural, livestock and mining products. For America, the most important imports from Australia are uranium, coal, and nickel. Of course, these mining products are used for nuclear power. Likewise, America's relations with New Zealand have been closely intertwined since World War II. American interests with New Zealand are more focused on imports of agricultural and livestock products. To meet domestic needs, many Americans import milk, meat, wool, fruits, and wheat.

Thus the fabric of cooperation between the United States, Australia and New Zealand in the economic field has existed for decades. It can even be seen from the export figures of the Australian and New Zealand economies since 1975 that tend to increase (Bill Heyden, 1987: 29). For Australia and New Zealand, America is a good partner in the economic, political and strategic fields. America also gives trust to Australia and New Zealand to be responsible for the island nations in the South Pacific.

History has recorded that Australia succeeded in intensifying its economic role in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean regions. Meanwhile, New Zealand has increased cooperation with countries in the South Pacific and monitored the activities of major powers in Antarctica (Australian Foreign Affairs Record, 1987: 295-297). Thus the global economy of the United States in the South Pacific region aims to improve regional economic conditions. Social stability and economic growth will be more dynamic so that countries in the region can be active in international trade.

As mentioned earlier, the United States showed positive attention to the decolonization and development of new small countries. Supporting the decolonization process in addition to reducing the political burden of the parent countries also intends to provide opportunities for countries in the South Pacific region to develop their capabilities so that they no longer depend on parent countries. America supports the decolonization process of countries in the South Pacific region, so America is willing to improve the free and independent countries.

As for America's improvement in the political field, America must guide the countries in the Pacific region to find and determine the system of government that will be held by them. Of course, the United States wants a democratic system in force in the countries of the South Pacific region. In World War II, Australia and America had established good relations, especially during the Japanese invasion into the South Pacific region, the United States was instrumental in overcoming this Japanese invasion which ended in Japanese defeat after Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed by the United States.

This good partnership continued after the end of World War II, where on September 1, 1951, the Pacific Defense Pact was formed in San Francisco. This Defense Pact is named ANZUS (Australia, New Zeeland and the United States of America). The purpose of the formation of ANZUS is the maintenance of regional peace and security in the Pacific. ANZUS members have agreed that they must help each other because of the danger, on the one hand, is their danger (Australian Foreign Record, 1984: 685-686). The presence of the Soviet Union and China in the South Pacific has inspired ANZUS to prove that ANZUS has responsibility for the regional security of the South Pacific.

These regional security responsibilities make ANZUS more active and more creative in dealing with regional developments. Therefore, ANZUS always has relations with countries in the South Pacific. In addition, it also strengthens the collective relations among members of the alliance. This collective relationship, strategically, facilitates ANZUS operations in regional security cooperation. Then this is because: In this framework contains direct communication between ANZUS members. This communication is manifested in the ANZUS Council annual meetings and visits by government officials. In addition, the ANZUS members share a common outlook on life, political traditions and cultural heritage which facilitates relations between them. The similarity is the main capital for ANZUS in carrying out its work program. This commonality facilitates the resolution of problems faced by ANZUS, particularly the problems of regional security and peace stability.

And indeed ANZUS has taken various strategies to stem the entry of communist influence in the South Pacific. The ANZUS strategy was adapted to the circumstances and needs of the South Pacific community. This adjustment can raise their assessment of the existence of ANZUS. This means that the position of ANZUS in the South Pacific is

enough to give meaning to countries in the South Pacific region.

In connection with the holding of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) in the city of Seattle in the Washington DC region of the United States in November 1993, Japanese Prime Minister Hosokawa in an interview with Kompas journalists said that: the presence of the United States military in the hemisphere plays a very important role for Asia Pacific stability. According to the statement of an American department, the official said that APEC was the most expected forum to carry out trade liberalization in the region (South Pacific) (Tempo, 20 November 1993: 46).

D. CONCLUSION

As a newly independent country, countries in the south pacific Asia region have not been able to stand on their own. Although these countries are very potential because of their natural and marine resources, they have not been able to develop all the potential they have. Therefore they expect assistance as well as guidance from outside countries. Because of this weakness, it is an opportunity for foreign countries to take advantage of its presence in the region. As for the foreign countries present in the region are: Japan is present with its economic assistance, China is also present with economic interests and at the same time for its political interests, the Soviet Union is present in this region with various economic reasons but clearly the Soviet Union will instill its communist influence in South Pacific region. The presence of the United States in the South Pacific is precisely a stronghold for the entry of external influences that are very dangerous to world peace. The role of the United States in the South Pacific region is in the economic and political fields. In the economic field, the United States provides assistance and improves their low standard of living.

In the field of politics and strategy, the United States together with Australia and New Zealand who are bound in the ANZUS Defense Pact seeks to stem the influx of communist influences coming from the Soviet Union or from China. Thus the actual role of America in the South Pacific is both in the economic and economic fields. in politics and strategy are closely interrelated namely for regional security and peace in the South Pacific.

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