

Media Failed to Run Their Function, Generating Wrong Policy


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YOGYAKARTA- Just like the media in some Western countries that support America and its Allies in Iraqi invasion, Japanese media failed to do one important task of making the Japanese government responsible for its citizens who give unconditional support to their government. The media let the Government of Japan involved in sending troops to Iraq.

These are the thoughts of Prof. Kenichi Asano in International Seminar on Media and Political Studies Program organized by the S-2 Communication Studies Faculty of Social Political Sciences UGM, Wednesday (23/3).

Asano added Japanese media is only a part of American propaganda tools since President Bush declared that Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda, was responsible for the attacks of 11 September 2001. The death of 24 Japanese citizens in the incident served as the basis of the full support of Prime Minister of Japan, Junichiro Koizumi, to the US-British military action against Osama bin Laden and Iraq. "Japanese media is still a U.S. propaganda tool and the policy is supported by the Government of Japan," said Asano.

Prof. Asano, who was a journalist and Representatives of *Kyodo* News Agency in Jakarta in 1989-1992, added *NHK* as a public broadcaster also failed to perform its function because it never seriously criticized the government's decision to send Japanese troops, even when the action was regarded as violating the constitution. "The failure of public service media to carry out their functions could be the success of governments in many developed countries in controlling the mass media for the benefit of government, as Bush did in the United States," the professor of journalism at Doshisha University, Kyoto Japan added.



Meanwhile, a member of faculty of Department of Communication Science of UGM, I Gusti Ngurah Putra, who is also a speaker at the seminar, said there are various ways and mechanisms used by governments in democratic countries to control the mass media so that public opinion supports the measures taken by the government. However, government policies may not represent the public interest. "It can be and often does not represent the actual government policy of public interests," Ngurah added.

On the other hand, Kuskridho Ambardi presented the results of research on media coverage of the presidential campaign of 2009. According to Kuskridho, the two print media which were examined, *Kompas* and *Tempo* dailies, have tried to do the elaboration and investigative reporting to provide adequate information to prospective voters. But unfortunately, the candidates in their campaign did not provide alternative policy choices to voters. "It is not the failure of the press to do their duty, but the candidates who failed to persuade voters with programs that have strong justification, at least as was observed from both media," Kuskridho explained.

Besides Prof. Kenichi Asano and I Gusti Ngurah Putra, also attended as speakers at the seminar were Hermin Indah Wahyuni, who highlighted media regulation to support democracy, and Luke Ispandriarno, who discussed political communication before the fall of Suharto in 1998 and the period thereafter.

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