

Government is Serious to Manage Conflict in Border Areas

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Yogyakarta-The government admitted that the Indonesia's border with some neighboring countries, such as Malaysia, has not been managed properly. Development policy in the border region so far is still sectorally done, and even sometimes is fully loaded with specific interests.

Therefore, currently the government continues to give more attention to the border regions with reference to Wawasan Nusantara (Archipelago Concept) and promote the development of security and prosperity. "It is not only security issues, but also accompanied by an increase in the economy, welfare, and community environment," Minister of Defense, Purnomo Yusgiantoro said, in a speech read by the Head of Education and Training Agency, Ministry of Defense and Security, May. Gen. Suwarno, S.I.P, M.Sc., at the opening of the National Workshop on Indonesia's Border Regions Defense, which was held at UGM Graduate School, Tuesday (1/11).

The Minister said that the strengthening of border security becomes priority for the government to safeguard state sovereignty. He acknowledged a number of issues related to border areas are still found, such as illegal logging or illegal border-crossing. On the occasion, the Minister also stressed that the issue of border areas conflict not only becomes the responsibility of the military, but everyone. "Not only the safety and welfare, strengthening the border regions is also the responsibility of TNI and everyone," he added.

Meanwhile, the Rector of Indonesia Defense University, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Dr. Syarifudin Tippe, M.Si., said after the reform era, border management has not been performed optimally so that there are still many complaints from the public saying that their regions are underdeveloped or isolated.

In view of Syarifudin, the area problem between Indonesia and Malaysia is the most crucial than Indonesia's borders with other countries. At least this can be seen from the emergence of tensions between both sides in the case of Sipadan and Ligitan, Ambalat, and the recent Camar Bulan and Tanjung Datu. Currently, there are 10 OBP (Outstanding Boundary Problems) under discussions and



negotiations between Indonesia and Malaysia. "Even Ambalat case, for example, no longer becomes a national issue, but has become a regional or global problems," the former Director General of Defense Strategy explained.

Syarifudin expected that all the issues and conflicts related to the border regions can be solved by using robust diplomacy that could raise the dignity of the nation. In front of the workshop participants, Syarifudin offered the concept/ model of Sebatik Island (northwest Borneo) being made into an integrated township that is expected to be applied also in the islands or other remote areas.

Previously, Vice Rector of Alumni and Business Development, Prof. Ir. Atyanto Dharoko, M. Phil., Ph.D., mentioned a number of problems in border areas that are not only limited to security issues, but also economic, health, and education. "For example, in Sarawak, of about 50 thousand children of Indonesian workers who are working, there are only 10 thousand children could attend school. The rest has not been able to access education," Atyanto said.

The workshop which lasted for two days, 1-2 November 2011, is a collaboration among nine universities in Indonesia, which joined in the Border Manager Observers of University Community Forum (MP4), namely UGM, Indonesia Defense University, Padjajaran University, ITB, Cendrawasih University, Nusa Cendana University, Mulawarman University, Tanjungpura University, and ITS. The event is supported by the National Agency for Border Management (BNPP).

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