

Reflection of Heroic and Gripping August: 60th Indonesia – Japan Relations

I Ketut Surajaya
Professor of History

Japanese Studies Program Faculty of Humanities Universitas Indonesia
Depok, Indonesia

Abstract:- The destruction of atomic bombs was commemorated every year in Hiroshima in an atmosphere of grief, emotion, and anger and also imagined the death of atomic bomb victim. In Indonesia, there is a different atmosphere in every month of August; there is a celebration with an atmosphere of victory, heroism, joyfulness, as well as remembering the struggle of national heroes who had sacrificed their life for the independence of their nation. The diplomatic relation established in January 1958, was important for the two countries that had not yet recovered in term of economic and politic at that time. In early cold war diplomatic bilateral relation between Indonesia and Japan was not at top priority. During 1960-1990 the relationship of the two countries were characterized by asymmetrical domination in the economic field, and moved on into interdependence during 2000th. This article based on historical approach and individual reflections

Keyword:- Atomic Bomb, Independent, Cold War, San Francisco Peace Conference, Kishi Nobusuke, Sukarno.

I. INTRODUCTION

On the 6th and 9th of August 1945 Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed by United States of America using atomic bombs, which determined Japan's defeat and surrender to the Allied forces in World War II and Pacific War theatre. The destruction of atomic bombs was so vast which devastated buildings, human and any other living things due to the heat of bombs and undetected radiation. The atomic bomb was the product of human civilization in field of advanced technology that annihilated civilization itself due to uncontrolled use of the technology. This event was commemorated every year in Hiroshima in an atmosphere of grief, emotion, and anger and also imagined the death of atomic bomb victim.

In Indonesia, there is a different atmosphere in every month of August compare to Japan. In Indonesia, there is an “*Agustus*” celebration every year with an atmosphere of victory, heroism, joyfulness, as well as remembering the struggle of national heroes who had sacrificed their life for the independence of their nation. These both opposite events were remained in the historical record and collective memory of the two nations. It was also natural that these collective memories are not lamented but reflected as lessons of what human could do in the past and plan for a better, peaceful, just and civilized future of the two nations.

The hope of a better future is the responsibility of the younger generation. In other words, the two nations must challenge themselves to correct the bleak history of August 1945 period with a new history that elevates human dignity to create a better civilization and avoid a savagery.

The year 2018 marked the 60th anniversary of Indonesia – Japan relation, a milestone in official diplomatic relations between the two countries. The diplomatic relation established in January 1958, 13 years after the Proclamation of Independence and five years after the end of Occupation of United States over Japan in April 1952, was important for the two countries that had not yet recovered in term of economic and politic at that time. The period between 1945 and 1958 was a difficult period for Japan related to the restructuring of the State system, with the replacement process of autocratic and militaristic Meiji Constitution. The Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) supervised this activity. A peaceful democratic constitution, known as the 1946 or 1947 Constitution was formed in the period filled with an atmosphere of political, ideological and economic turmoil that greatly shook the whole layer of Japanese society. Reforming State’s politic or *Kokutai* (State Administration System) and *Tennōsei* ideology (Imperial Ideology) was then followed by democratization in politic, education, economics and labor rights, land reform and civil law. These are major changes known as *Godai Kakumei* (big five revolutions) in Japanese History. Historians noted that the major fundamental change was made during US Occupation under General Douglas MacArthur as the Supreme Commander of the Allied GHQ (General Head Quarter), which changed the face of a previously militaristic Japan into a democratic Japan nation. In my opinion, sensitive and complicated land reform policy could not be implemented without the support of the armed forces. However, in Japan history, this was a radical land reform process that could only be done after the Meiji Period.

On the other hand, Indonesia also faced difficult times after the Proclamation of August 17, 1945. The Dutch did not acknowledge Indonesia independence, because allied forces considered countries occupied by Japan before the war must be restored to its original status, before being occupied by Japan, and this ultimatum had to be obeyed. The reason for this status was used by the Dutch to re-occupied Indonesia and rejected the independence of Indonesia. The Dutch hitched Allied Forces when returning to Indonesia where Allied Forces still considered Indonesia as Dutch colony. The battle of Surabaya between “*arek-*

arek Suroboyo” against the combination of Dutch and Allied forces, there was British troops in Allied forces, was a severe test for an independent of Indonesia. This heroic event is commemorated every year. However, the Dutch never admitted that they carried out an invasion against Indonesia because they did not recognize Indonesia independence, until the recognition of sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia in December 1949. Difficult conditions faced by both countries, (independent) Indonesia and Japan (under Allied Occupation) made diplomatic communication difficult between two countries. Japan's difficulty, especially, was on crucial matter related to the controlled country's foreign relations under the supervision of GHQ.

II. REFLECTION ON HISTORY

The above description was a reflection of the history of Indonesia's independence and US occupation of Japan. There was still a reflection of history on the conditions of 1940s at the time. Among other important questions such as: What was the reason of Japan expansion to the South? This was a classic question that is still relevant today. Japan policy expanding to Southeast Asia, known as *Nanpō* or *Nanyō Seisaku*, could be elaborated from interrelated dimensions. First, from the international dimension, Japan's policy to the South was centralized on the conflict among Western imperialist countries in competing for colonial territory and markets for their industries in Southeast Asia. Second, from regional dimensions, the interest of Japan was tested into China-Japan war and independence movements in Korea and China. This dimension had a very strong connection in both international and regional dimensions¹.

Question from the Japanese side: Why did U.S.A choose Hiroshima to be bombed? Even this question was very cliché but relevant. Discussion among scientists, especially historical scientists, politics, international relations and economics, always led to two answers; first, the bombing was needed to end the war and end ideological conflict between liberalism and fascist militarism on one hand and maintaining liberal political and economic domination of Western imperialism countries on the other hand. The US and Allied Forces have realized high number of casualties in World War II and the Pacific War theatre, as well as Japanese resistance that did not give up the war, need a destructive weapon to end the war fast, which was the atomic bomb. In the bombing plan, there were five cities targeted: (1) Kokura City as Japan's largest ammunition factory; (2) Hiroshima City as large military headquarters, army departure site, military logistics center

and industrial center; (3) Yokohama city as center for production of war planes, ships, machines, electrical devices and oil refineries; (4) Niigata City, a military port city with large storage and oil refineries including potential area for Japan industrial development center; (5) Kyoto City as a large industrial center. Kyoto was the main target and Hiroshima became the second target, but Kyoto was then excluded from the target list by reason of cultural considerations².

In his diary, US President Harry S. Truman wrote that, an atomic bomb would be dropped on Kyoto, but then Truman who was also the leader of the world decided not to drop atomic bomb in Kyoto or Tokyo. The choice of the target for atomic bomb was definitely purely from military perspective³.

A. Southward Policy

Historian Ienaga Saburo in his book *Taiheiyō Sensō* (The Pacific War, 1931-1945) quoted the decision of the Cabinet Meeting of Coordinating Ministers (*Gozen Kaigi*) on March 14, 1942, wrote that, the purpose of Japan with a policy of the South was conveyed by the Cabinet Secretary Hoshino Naoki as follow:

There is no limitation for us . . . we can seize them and do whatever we want . . . Areas in the South are currently to be made raw material resources and market to our industry. We must find some efforts to prevent industrial development in those areas. Wage for labor has to be made as low as possible in those areas...The economy in the areas in, should be control to be made raw material resources and market to Japanese industry in an effort to make it easier and support battle equipment which was very

² Mariko Oi, BBC News, The man who saved Kyoto from the atomic bomb. (was US Secretary for War Henry Stimson had a personal reason for sparing Kyoto, pen.). Early June 1945, Secretary of War Henry Stimson asked Kyoto to be removed from bomb target, because Kyoto was center of culture not military target...After long discussion with President Truman, President approved Stimson idea (wrote by Stimson in his diary, 24 July 1945), accessed on 21 November 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-33755182>

³ Actually, Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War of the United States proposed Harry S. Truman not to bomb Kyoto with atomic bomb. (Harry S. Truman Library and Museum). Prof. Wellerstein stated that Stimson had visited Kyoto several times in 1920s when he was still Governor of the Philippines. Prof. Wellerstein also stated that based on Historian researches Stimson had a honeymoon in Kyoto and it made Stimson to consider Kyoto as Japan's city with traditional heritage (BBC 2015). See also, <https://www.history.com/news/the-inside-story-of-harry-truman-and-hiroshima> ; <https://allthatsinteresting.com/hiroshima-aftermath-pictures>

¹ I Ketut Surajaya, "Radicalization of Indonesian Independence Movement during Japanese Military Occupation 1942 - 1945", International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR), <https://www.ijsr.net/archive/v6i10/v6i10.php>, Volume 6 Issue 10, October 2017, 1321 - 1327, DOI: 10.21275/ART20164155

crucial... independence movement by the locals should not be allowed⁴

On the other hand, Indonesia's perception of Japan expansion to the South was based on three dimensions: the war of Allied forces against Japan that gave opportunity for Indonesia independence movement. Indonesia took advantage of that momentum to develop national forces towards liberty of Indonesia. Japan, on regional dimension, pledged to countries of East Asia and Southeast Asia to participate in liberating these countries from occupation of Western colonialist. On the national dimension, there were differences in perceptions, among leaders of the movement, who one group interpreted Japan's promises as propaganda to embrace the colonized country against its invaders (Western colonialist) and win the war faced by Japan. There was also interpretation from other group in form of suspicion that Japan would colonize Indonesia, after Japan won the war, replacing the previous invader. Disagreements between group who support with Japan's promises and group that did not believe in Japan's promises depleted the energy of the independence warrior leaders but raise their radicalization in the struggle⁵.

B. Post Independence and US Occupation Period

The Dutch recognized Indonesia's independence in December 1949, while US occupation in Japan ended in April 1952. The post-World War II period was followed by the Cold War between the Eastern block countries (Communist) against the western Block countries (Capitalists). Post-independence Indonesia was immediately undermined from two sides, the West and East, which had established their ideology earlier in Indonesia. Indonesia actually has determined *Pancasila* as the State ideology and expressed the state neutral policy not to involve in the cold war. The ideology of *Pancasila* was implemented with Free Active Foreign Policy, known as the Non-Aligned Political policy. In early cold war, Indonesia continued to build political and economic consolidation including nationalization of Dutch companies in the country. It can be imagined that in very limited condition of human resources, especially skilled people in developing the national economy and unstable political conditions as a result of the Cold War, diplomatic bilateral relation between Indonesia and Japan was not at top priority, because Indonesia considered Japan as 'US stooge' and Indonesia welcome supports from any foreign countries regardless of the block, in effort to build the country. Technology or moral assistance was also received from

outside countries. This indicated that Indonesia was also ready to work together in an international context.

The Indonesian representative office in Tokyo opened in 1951, but the role of this office was just channel negotiation and communication between Indonesia and GHQ because Japan was still occupied by USA. Various Indonesian affairs with Japan had to pass or under supervision of GHQ. Peace efforts and resolving issues related to War were previously discussed at the San Francisco Peace Conference initiated by USA. However, communist block countries like Soviet Union, People's Republic of China, North Korea and North Vietnam were not invited to the conference. Indonesia was invited in its capacity as former Dutch colony and ever being occupied by Japan.

Indonesia attended the Conference in September 1951, as a non-block country. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Achmad Soebardjo and his entourage, attended the conference even though in the country there was an uncertainty whether the conference was beneficial or not for Indonesia. Indonesia stated firmly at the conference that Japan was required to pay war reparation for physical destruction caused by the war, although moral and suffering reparation suffered by victim of *Roumusha* and *Jyugun Ianfu*⁶ were not highlighted. Indonesia also expressed sympathy for the destruction of Japan, which was necessary for Japan to be rehabilitated in accordance with the spirit of the UN declaration and Indonesia argued that the problem of rehabilitation was also included in the Treaty of Peace, in order to build world peace.

C. Cold War Period

In the context of Cold War⁷, article 14 of the San Francisco Agreement stated that 'Japan must pay reparation to Southeast Asian countries by prioritizing facilities for industrial products, compared to payments with cash. This reason was also related to the need to help Japan in its economic development, so that Japan could become Asian

⁶ *Roumusha* was term for forced labors mobilized by Japan imperial army from local occupied regions, *Jyugun Ianfu* was term for local female who was forced to serve sexual passion of Japan's army in battlefield.

⁷ Cold war was far started after the beginning of Bolshevik revolution, the constellation of World War and various hidden conflicts in the form of ideological conflicts between Communism and capitalism in a holistic manner are discussed among others in the book John Lewis Gaddis in his book *Cold War: A New History*, explaining not only what happened, but why in the months of 1945 the Union The Soviets and the United States split from the alliance into a mortal enemy, over a long period of time, through Cuba's missile crisis until the maneuvers of Nixon and Mao, Reagan and Gorbachev were images of the Cold War described by John Lewis in his book. Pinguins Book, London: 2005

⁴ Ienaga Saburo, *Taiheyō Sensō* (The Pacific War, 1931-1945), New York: Pantheon Books, 1978 p. 55

⁵I Ketut Surajaya, "Radicalization of Indonesian Independence Movement during Japanese Military Occupation 1942 - 1945", *International Journal of Science and Research* (IJSR), <https://www.ijsr.net/archive/v6i10/v6i10.php>, Volume 6 Issue 10, October 2017, 1321 - 1327, DOI: 10.21275/ART20164155

regional economic power that will be able to influence Southeast Asia in the context of the Cold War⁸.

Talks between Foreign Minister Subardjo and Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru in San Francisco resulted that Japan would be willing to pay war reparation. Even though Japan was in difficult position, as Tozawa noted, the crucial issue faced by Prime Minister Yoshida was whether Japan should ratify the San Francisco Agreement and Security Pact of Japan and the United States? The main difference was whether Japan would negotiate to all war-winning countries or with each country individually⁹. Indonesia did not ratify the San Francisco Treaty due to disagreement at home in the Wilopo Cabinet Administration, but bilateral agreements between Indonesia and Japan regarding war reparation was signed in January 1958. Thus official diplomatic relation between Indonesia Japan began in January 1958. The total official war reparation approved by the two Governments amounted to US \$ 400,000,000, which included economic grants of US \$ 176,910,000. US \$ 223,390,000 was the original war reparations, which must be repaid for 12 years (US \$ 20,000,000) each year, from 1958 to 1970.

During President Sukarno's reign, the implementation of War reparation in politic and economic fields was focused on economic and industry development. After the nationalization of Dutch companies in Indonesia, Indonesia did not have enough transportation facilities both land and sea, because Dutch merchant ships had already fled from Indonesian waters. In this case, Japan provided used vessels even though it was still in the context of war reparations that assisted in the distribution of Indonesian domestic commodity.

Vehicles and large trucks that were useful for road and bridge construction projects supported the construction of infrastructures in early Indonesia. It was during this period that inter-governmental intermediary groups were born, known as lobbyists, who played roles in Indonesia's development in form of investment. The relationship between the two Governments, especially the relationship

⁸ A. Suehiro The road to economic reentry: Japan's policy toward Southeast Asian development in the 1950s and 1960s *Social Science Japan Journal*, 2 (1) (1999), .hal. 85-105

⁹ Tozawa, Kenji, 'Yoshida's Party-political Difficulties over the Question of the San Francisco Peace Treaty' *SAN FRANCISCO: 50 YEARS ON*, Part One, Discussion Paper No. IS/01/425 September 2001, The Suntory Centre, Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines London School of Economics and Political Science Houghton Street London WC2A 2AE Tel.: 020-7955 6698, diakses tanggal 22 November 2018 dari, <http://webdoc.sub.gwdg.de/ebook/p/2004/sticerd/is425.pdf>

between President Sukarno and Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke, was very good. During that time, the realization of war reparations in form of education and student exchanges became intense. The development of Indonesian Japan relations in field of Education is detailed in my other writings¹⁰.

During President Suharto's reign – which ended Indonesia's domestic ideological conflict as a result of the Cold War – Indonesia's relations with Japan were characterized by asymmetrical domination in the economic field in Indonesia. The anti-Japan investment movement in Indonesia culminated in a political movement that was pioneered by students as the Fifteen January 1974 Movement (*Malari*). After *Malari* tragedy, economic relation including technological assistance through JICA was further strengthened the relations between Indonesia Japan and almost no anti-Japanese movement until now.

D. *Imagining a Hopeful Future*

A new period of Indonesia – Japan relation should be woven with formation of a new history based on real ideas and implementation in synergistic and symmetrical interactions. The President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, in his speech during the Commemoration of Proclamation at August 17th, 2018, emphasized that independence means living together in a state of peace and harmony in accordance with Unity in Diversity slogan. Political stability is the backbone of economic development, peace and social justice. Development and economic development shall progress for the prosperity and welfare of mankind.

On one side, Prime Minister Shinzō Abe at Hiroshima Peace Park, during the commemoration of 70th year of the atomic bomb tragedy on Hiroshima, in front of 40,000 people who attended the event called on the world to stop nuclear weapons (nuclear disarmament). Abe stated that the atomic bomb not only killed thousands of people in Hiroshima but also harbored unspoken deep sadness for those who survived and were still alive. Abe also called the atomic bomb frowning around 140,000 inhabitants of the city of Hiroshima. Today, Abe continued that Hiroshima has now risen and become a prosperous cultural city. The statement of the two leaders of the country is great ideas that are difficult to be implemented in real world and in immediate terms, but big ideas will generate great enthusiasm towards implementation.

In this case, I would like to propose the relationship between the two nations, starting from honest history lessons through the history textbooks of school students. Prolonged conflict between China and Japan, as well as

¹⁰ I Ketut Surajaya, (1987). 'Japanese Studies in The Republic of Indonesia.' November. Tokyo: *The Japan Foundation*. Also, I Ketut Surajaya, (2010). 'Japanese Studies in Indonesia.' In *Japanese Studies Changing Global Profile*, G.P. Georege (ed.). New Delhi: Northern Book Centre.

South Korea and Japan since 1972 because of the text of the book History of Japanese junior and senior high school students who are considered dishonest is even misleading by the Chinese and Korean parties. Regarding this issue, I was invited to attend a symposium about a book on Japanese History Texts in South Korea, and I have written it in an international journal¹¹. I have also researched the contents of Japanese History textbooks and Historical textbooks for middle and high school students in both countries, the results are quite surprising because the Japanese Occupation period in Indonesia is reviewed in only one paragraph, or approximately five sentences, while in Indonesian History textbooks are reviewed in one Chapter or 14 pages. In the second case the textbook discusses implicitly the identification and formation of the identity of each nation¹².

III. CONCLUSION

Fostering relations between the two nations can be done in various ways, including understanding the history of relations between the two nations, creating history as a correction of past dark history, concrete actions such as ideas delivered by President Joko Widodo and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. However, my perspective may seem too philosophical and normative.

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¹¹ I Ketut Surajaya, "Scientific History or History for Education?", *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, <https://www.ijsr.net/archive/v6i11/v6i11.php>, Volume 6 Issue 11, November 2017, 1300 - 1305

¹² I Ketut Surajaya, "Is Nationalism Still Alive? Learn from Indonesia and Japan Junior High School History Textbook", *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, <https://www.ijsr.net/archive/v7i3/ART20181136.pdf>, Volume 7 Issue 3, March 2018, 1651 -