

“Discarding” the Non-interference Principle As an Effort To Restore Peace in Myanmar

Once again, Myanmar is being seized by its military power that leads hundreds or even millions of people to lose their voices, and on many occasions, some of them lost their lives. To handle the dangerous situation, Myanmar needs a little bit of interference and help from ASEAN countries without discarding the nation's sovereignty. However, the non-interference principle that appeared in 1976 as ASEAN's fundamental principle has thwarted the member of ASEAN to intervene in the international affair of one another (Alichsan, 2019). This condition makes Myanmar's democracy threatened to the lowest point. It is ASEAN's job to restore the peace and democracy in Myanmar by discarding the non-interference principle to enhance the possibility for the democracy in Myanmar to be recalled to live once more without disrespecting Myanmar's sovereignty.

The dire element in saving a country's democracy is to ensure its regional security. In Eastern Europe, democracy serves as a pillar of regional security (Widjojo, 2005). However, the non-interference principle has thwarted the member of ASEAN to guarantee the security of a conflicted Southeast Asia country. The non-interference principle itself is aimed to prevent interference in domestic conflicts that is caused by foreign factors (Corthay, 2016). However, in Myanmar, the conflicts are being pioneered by its internal elements which is the military. Such a principle limited the chances that the Association can give to ensure the security of the people in Myanmar. Considering the urge to prevent further casualties, the ASEAN needs to “disable” or even neglect the principle for a moment, for a good cause only which is to provide security that people in Myanmar need in a time when even no government officials can guarantee their society's safety.

The action to neglect the principle can be considered acceptable since it had been done before. In 1997, ASEAN sent a delegation to help to solve the two prime minister government system in Cambodia and its membership acceptance status was delayed due to its internal affairs. This action neglected the non-interference principle of accepting any Southeast Asia country as a member of ASEAN despite the country's internal affair. In Myanmar, ASEAN demanded a political reform be conducted and demanding Aung Suu Kyi be released from

house arrest in 2003 (Nguyen, 2016). The examples show us a tangible fact that the ASEAN's role in helping to solve regional conflicts in Southeast Asia countries is dire and absolute.

If the non-interference principle can be disregarded for a moment, many things can be done by ASEAN members to resolve the regional problem that happens in Myanmar. For example, the establishment of the "ASEAN Peacekeeping force" that was once suggested by Indonesia and being rejected because it violated the non-interference principle (Borchers, 2014). The peacekeeping force can at least guarantee the safety of people in Myanmar and protect them from harm that they do not want. Not only that, the member of the ASEAN can conduct a humanitarian mission with provisions and rules to ensure that the other countries will not disturb Myanmar's sovereignty. If being done and executed correctly, the mission of humanitarian can save a lot of life and help to restore the peace that once being neglected.

No civilians would wish such instability practice of democracy will ever occur in their country. However, the saddening fact shows us that such instability happens in Myanmar. Many people have lost their faith due to the exhaustion of facing each day with the uncertain condition. No one knows how long they would bear the pain and pressure since no one knows when this condition will end. Once more, the Myanmar people need every help they can get from the ASEAN to help them escape from the pain. They need "interference" to make them feel safe in their homeland and they need it immediately.

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