

## US Moving Closer to ASEAN and the Risk of Social Disaster in Muslim Lands

### News:

For the very first time in history, the President of the United States invited 10 leaders of ASEAN member countries in the US-ASEAN Summit on 15-16<sup>th</sup> February 2016 to discuss important issues in Sunnylands, California. In his remarks at the opening session of the summit, Obama said the US will play a larger and more-important role in the Asia Pacific region, including in Southeast Asia which holds one-third of the world's economy, fourth largest goods trading partner with the US, including U.S. exports that support more than 500,000 American jobs. He also stated US companies have been the largest source of foreign investment in ASEAN.

### Comment:

This US move cannot be separated from the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community which is only two months old. Clearly, the US motives are looking for markets and restoring its economic slowdown. As Obama's statement, it is ASEAN that provides employment for 500,000 US citizens. Various ways have actually been done by the US to approach the ASEAN member countries; one of them is the TPP agreement scheme where only four of the ASEAN countries have officially joined it, i.e. of Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam. Three countries are still in the process of joining: Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand.

However, it is not an economic problem that will be discussed here. The US hegemony and the shackle of free trade regimes in the Southeast Asian region are NOT ONLY lead to the risk of widespread poverty and exploitation of the Ummah's wealth, BUT ALSO will destroy the society and institution of Muslim families in Southeast Asia.

As fears of Zulkifli Hasan –the chairman of the Assembly in Indonesia— who stated to the media last week that the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) will bring a very broad impact for Indonesia. It is not only in the economic sector, but also in the political, social, and cultural sectors. *"Therefore, the Indonesian people should be very careful against the possibility of the entry of foreign values, which will also invade Indonesia, simultaneously along with free economic factors entering Indonesia,"* he said. This concern is reasonable because ASEAN free trade regime is an economic-growth-obsessed regime which will treat Muslim societies, i.e. as markets and cheap labors, are not more than just economic engines producing money. Meanwhile, the matters of religion, morality, dignity, and social harmony will obviously be ignored.

On the other hand, the US moving closer to ASEAN will further aggravate the situation, where hundreds of millions of Muslims in Southeast Asia will become the target of many US companies and non-state actors, as well as destructive value order imported from this world's number one state capitalist state. It is including destructive behavior and disease such as LGBT that continues to force intruding into the Muslim lands and had supported by the strength of many US corporate giants like Facebook, Google, Instagram, Apple, Starbucks, Microsoft, Nike, and a row of other capitalist corporations. The promotion of LGBT is obviously very dangerous for the Muslim society because it will lead the generations of mankind on the brink of ruin, spread diseases, and cause human depopulation.

Let's learn from the damage traces that have been carved in the US alone, where this state has achieved economic progress but run through the declining morals and civilization. Rapid development in the US is usually accompanied by a social crisis, the collapse of the family institution, widespread criminality, violence against women and children, high suicide rates, until the falling rates of birth and wedding due to the massive inclusion of women in the labor force.

The United States being a superpower and its wealth can make Muslim rulers become dazzled and amazed that has the Muslims swayed. Eventually they keep parroting the Western secular civilization and prioritizing material values above all other values. Remember the words of Allah (swt):

﴿فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَرْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ﴾

***"So let not their wealth or their children impress you. Allah only intends to punish them through them in worldly life and that their souls should depart [at death] while they are disbelievers."*** [TMQ. At-Tawba 9:55]

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