

New *Mandala*

Akademisi di seluruh dunia menunjukkan rasa solidaritas kepada pakar politik Indonesia dari SOAS, kinerjanya di dunia pendidikan dan juga pentingnya kebebasan di dunia pendidikan.

Sebagai akademisi Indonesia, akademisi asing yang meneliti Indonesia, dan para kolega di Jurusan Politik dan Hubungan Internasional, SOAS, University of London, kami menuliskan pernyataan dukungan untuk kebebasan akademik bagi profesi kami. Sungguh penting bagi kami untuk bisa meneliti dan mengalisis isu-isu sosial, politik dan ekonomi dalam sebuah lingkungan yang transparan, bebas, dan mendukung terciptanya debat dan diskusi.

Artikel Dr Michael Buehler di situs *New Mandala* telah memicu respon tajam dari pemerintah maupun media di Indonesia. Artikel tersebut mengangkat pertanyaan mengenai kemungkinan peran pelobi (lobbyist) dalam kunjungan kenegaraan Presiden Joko Widodo ke Amerika Serikat baru-baru ini. Artikel tersebut didasarkan pada dokumen open source (yang tersedia untuk publik) di situs Departemen Kehakiman Amerika Serikat yang menggambarkan jasa lobi yang disediakan oleh kontraktor swasta guna membantu beberapa aspek dalam kunjungan Presiden Widodo. Kontraktor dimaksud mengaku bertindak atas nama pemerintah Indonesia (pihak eksekutif).

Artikel Buehler ini menyoroti sumber pendanaan untuk jasa pelobi tersebut. Pertanyaan yang diangkatnya sesungguhnya berkaitan dengan isu-isu dasar seperti transparansi, aliran dana, dan bagaimana aktor-aktor swasta tertentu mencoba mencari celah ke dalam proses pembuatan kebijakan resmi. Mengangkat pertanyaan semacam ini di negara-negara yang memiliki masalah besar dalam hal transparansi dan akuntabilitas adalah tindakan penting dan bertanggung jawab, dengan tujuan mencari jawaban-jawaban yang masuk akal dan didukung bukti-bukti.

Sungguh sangat penting bagi awak media maupun para peneliti untuk bisa bekerja secara efektif. Hal ini mendukung transparansi, akuntabilitas, demokrasi dan supremasi hukum (rule of law). Dan yang tak kalah pentingnya, segala respon terhadap tulisan sebaiknya berfokus kepada fakta-fakta, substansi, dan pesan, bukan kepada si pembawa pesan. Sejumlah komentator di Indonesia, termasuk para akademisi di kampus-kampus besar di negara tersebut, telah membuat tuduhan-tuduhan terhadap Profesor Buehler dan karakternya. Dia telah dikatai agen pemerintah luar negeri, agen perusahaan tambang Freeport McMohan dan seterusnya. Sebagai kolega Profesor Buehler, kami tahu bahwa dia adalah seorang sarjana yang serius dan independen dan telah mendedikasikan dirinya untuk meneliti dan mengajar.

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