

## **INDONESIAN DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES**

**INTERPRETING INDONESIAN DOMESTIC  
AND FOREIGN POLICIES:  
NEW PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRATIZATION  
IN THE 1990s?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

As the world approached the end of the 1980s, human rights and democracy became major issues not only within the Third World countries, but also in international relations. It was in this newly emerging environment that Indonesians found themselves at the centre of a prolonged debate about, on the one hand, the need to maintain strict political control to enable the country to catch up with the more developed countries and, on the other hand, the need to democratize the existing political system to accommodate increasing national and international pressures for more democratic governance.

This thesis is of the opinion that, contrary to the pessimistic views held by some scholars, Indonesia will inevitably democratize in the future, although the process of democratization will proceed only gradually and cautiously, under Indonesia's own terms, and towards Indonesia's own form of democracy that blends some basic values and norms of Western democracy with indigenous values and norms.

This thesis focuses on the four, most commonly discussed factors influencing democratization--socioeconomic development, international factors, the role of the elite, and political culture. However, since domestic politics does not take place in an international vacuum, and because international interference in domestic politics of the Third World countries is not always welcomed by the latter, this thesis also gives special attention to the realm of Indonesian foreign policy and relates it to the issues of democratization.

A central feature of this thesis is to understand Indonesian political culture and the elites of the Suharto government. It will be contended that, while socioeconomic and international factors make it increasingly difficult for the present government to maintain its strict political control over the population, Indonesian political culture and the persistence of elites' interests leave little room for revolutionary, large-scale, foreign-influenced democratization to take place.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background Information

Since the 1980s, democracy and human rights have become major issues in day-to-day politics. Domestically, strong demands for democratic governance and respect for human rights have prompted many authoritarian regimes to initiate a process of liberalization or to tinker with the rules and procedures.<sup>1</sup> Internationally, pressures from the Western democracies on the Third World countries to meet higher standards regarding human rights and democracy have forced the latter to adjust their foreign policy. It was in such a situation that the New Order (as Indonesians call the Suharto government of Indonesia) adopted new policies: allowing some political openings at home, and employing a more assertive foreign policy abroad. With these facts in mind, many observers and analysts believe that Indonesia is facing an uncertain future with regard to its political life.<sup>1</sup> This thesis will argue, however, that Indonesia will inevitably move towards a more democratic society. But, the unique Indonesian political culture and the persistence of elites' interests dictate that the process of democratization will proceed gradually and

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<sup>1</sup> See Andrew MacIntyre, "Indonesia in 1993: Increasing Political Movement?" Asian Survey, Vol. 34, No. 2, February 1994, p. 114; Harold Crouch, "Indonesia: An Uncertain Outlook," in Daljit Singh (ed.), Southeast Asian Affairs 1994 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), p. 145; Michael R.J. Vatikiotis, Indonesian Politics under Suharto: Order, Development, and Pressure for Change (New York: Routledge, 1994), rev. ed., especially Chapter 9; and J. Soedjati Djiwandono, "Indonesia in 1994," Asian Survey, Vol. 35, No. 2, February 1995, pp. 226-33.

cautiously, and on Indonesia's own terms, not on Western terms.

Indonesia is of considerable importance when it is recognized that the country's huge market, geographic location, and political role in the region mean that any drastic change in Indonesian domestic and foreign policies could have a significant impact not only on its society, but also on the economy and politics of Southeast Asia. Moreover, it should be noted that the current literature on Indonesia tends to focus on either the country's domestic politics or foreign policy; virtually no literature has tried to draw a clear link between the two. These are the main reasons why this thesis will attempt to explain current developments in Indonesian domestic and foreign policies, and relate these developments to the issue of democratization. To be sure, the primary focus of this thesis will be on Indonesian domestic politics and the issues of democratization. But, since national politics do not take place in an international or regional vacuum, understanding Indonesian foreign policy may help us to better explain the politics and democratic prospects of the country. Before we proceed with a discussion of an analytical framework by which the argument of this thesis will be tested, it is important to look first at the background of the problems under scrutiny.

To begin with, Indonesia, as it is known today, was founded only fifty years ago. With about 14,000 islands, more than 250 ethnic groups and local languages, diverse religions, a fragile economy, and an unevenly scattered population of about 180 million, Indonesia is not an easy country to govern. Moreover, before the emergence of Suharto—the current president—in national politics in the mid-1960s, Indonesia had no prior record of political stability and

high economic growth. Yet, what Suharto has achieved after presiding over the country since 1966 is "remarkable."<sup>2</sup>

When he assumed the national leadership in 1966, Suharto inherited acute economic and political problems from his predecessor, Sukarno. The economy was experiencing negative growth, with inflation spiralling to more than 400 percent in 1965.<sup>3</sup> The country was still in a great shock after the abortive coup attempt inspired by the Indonesian Communist Party in 30 September 1965, which was followed by six months of mass slaughter of hundreds of thousands of alleged or real communists. It appeared that virtually no one, including then President Sukarno, could step in and restore order except General Suharto and his supporters in the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI). As soon as Suharto was appointed acting president in 1967, he decided to simultaneously consolidate the authority of the central government and to focus efforts on economic rehabilitation. This, in turn, required Suharto to establish firm political control over the population at home, and abandon Sukarno's confrontational foreign policy towards the West from which foreign aid and investment were expected to come. Hence, Western observers and analysts began to label the New Order an authoritarian regime but, at the same time, valued Indonesia's moderating influence in regional politics.

It can be said, then, that since the late 1960s Indonesia under the leadership of Suharto had become an inward-looking country, with active

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<sup>2</sup>Leonard C. Sebastian, "What the West needs to understand about Indonesia," Business Times, August 26-27, 1995, Weekend Edition, p. III.

<sup>3</sup>Jamie Mackie, 'Indonesia: Economic Growth and Depoliticization,' in James W. Morley (ed.), Driven by Growth: Political Change in the Asia-Pacific Region (Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 74.

participation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) forum as Indonesia's only important action in foreign policy until the mid-1980s. The attention of the nation was focused primarily on two internal realms: politics and economics. In the political life, Suharto's New Order regime sought to establish a strong central government. This was achieved by, among other things, allowing ABRI's officers to hold key posts in central and regional bureaucracies, limiting popular participation in politics, reducing the number of political parties and then putting them under the government control, elevating the Sukarno-invented ideology of "Pancasila" as the national ideology to which all mass organizations and political parties must subscribe, and manipulating the political process through constitutional arrangements.

For better or worse, the way Suharto handled politics has allowed Indonesia to become one of the world's most populous countries with an almost unbroken record of economic growth, albeit unevenly distributed. In part, this was made possible by Jakarta's ability to maintain relative order and political stability at home, and the adoption of a friendly foreign policy towards the West, including Japan, which poured foreign aid and investment into Indonesia in return for the latter's role as a staunch anti-Communist bulwark in the region. However, as in other cases in which democracy have been suspended for economic development and the establishment of sociopolitical order, the demand for the former returns once political order is observable and economic growth on track. Issues of democratization have been raised in Indonesia since the mid-1980s. Student and pro-democracy activists began to strongly demand more political openness as well as less military intervention in politics. Coincidentally, the West in general and the US in particular also began to put

more emphasis on the issues of democratization and human rights observance in their foreign policies.

Responding to these pressures, since the late 1980s Suharto has presided over a process of liberalization in several areas while keeping firm political control in the others. He, for example, allowed more civilians to replace military officers in many politically and economically strategic positions, and the president has relied more on civilian aides for advice.<sup>4</sup> Suharto also promoted openness by allowing the press to carry items that would not have been tolerated a decade previously, and allowing students to demonstrate and factory workers to go on strike. Such political openings were accompanied by the adoption of a much more active foreign policy, although it meant inviting more and more international attention to Indonesian domestic affairs and making the New Order much more vulnerable to criticism.

Since 1994 there have been puzzling developments in Indonesian politics as the liberalization initiated in the late 1980s ebbed and flowed. The government's ban on three popular news publications in June 1994, and the arrests of pro-democracy activists and journalist between mid-1994 and mid-1995, for example, indicate that the prospects for democratization may not be as bright as once thought. Yet, there is hope that the country may eventually democratize. The ratification of a bill in May 1995 to reduce the number of military representatives in the parliament, and splits between the government-sanctioned party, factions in the ABRI, and key civilian figures in the bureaucracy are two unprecedented developments in the history of Suharto

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<sup>4</sup> Crouch, "An Uncertain Outlook...", p. 144; and "Father knows best," Far Eastern Economic Review, November 25, 1993, p. 25.

regime. Accordingly, the verdict of Jakarta's administrative court in May 1995 that ruled against the banning of the publications mentioned above, and the steady rise in the number of nongovernmental organizations, former New Order supporters and intelligentsia publicly demanding political relaxation amid the arrests of some activists, all contribute to the new climate in Indonesian politics that may pave the way for gradual democratization.

The above information leaves some intriguing questions that merit an in-depth study. These include:

- what are the most important factors that have influenced Indonesian politics, especially since the inception of the New Order, and how far will these factors facilitate or impede the evolution of Indonesian political system towards democracy?
- what are the prospects for democracy in Indonesia?
- will Indonesia follow its own path and install a form of democracy that differs from the Western conception of democracy?
- and, what are the underlying factors that have influenced the Suharto government to adopt a high profile foreign policy knowing that such a decision would invite international attention to the problems of democracy and human rights in Indonesia?

## **B. Framework of Analysis**

Huntington has noted that the causes of democratization are varied and their significance over time varies considerably.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, in order to

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<sup>5</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp. 37-9.

understand the current changes in Indonesian politics as well as to assess the prospects for democracy in Indonesia, we need to develop a framework of analysis which draws on several theories so as to fit the Indonesian setting. But before we proceed, it is important to establish an understanding of two key concepts that will be used frequently in this thesis: democracy and democratization.

In the Western literature, the term "democracy" signifies the principle of popular sovereignty, which holds that government can be legitimated only by the will of those whom it governs. A political system can be regarded as democratic if "its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote."<sup>6</sup> So defined, it implies that such a system meets three essential conditions. First, there exists a periodic, meaningful and extensive contestation or competition among individuals and organized groups for all effective government offices. Second, there exists a high level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies through regular and fair elections. Third, there exist civil and political liberties by which common problems and interests of the population can be discussed freely.<sup>7</sup>

We need, however, to be careful in applying such a concept of democracy to non-Western countries. It would be better if we leave the term

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> See Robert A. Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 1-16; J. Roland Pennock, Democratic Political Theory (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 3-15; and Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is...and Is Not," Journal of Democracy, Vol. 2, No. 3, Summer 1991.

"democracy" open to different interpretations as to what degree the three essential conditions mentioned above have been met. In this regard, it is important to pay attention to Emmerson's conclusion that the concepts of democracy in Southeast Asia tend to evolve continuously as "the balance between individuals and communities, rights and responsibilities, freedom and order,...[varies] in space and [changes] over time in response to varied and changing conditions."<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, Huntington argues that there are democratic countries in Asia—such as Japan and India—that "meet the formal requisites of democracy, but...differ significantly from the democratic systems prevalent in the West."<sup>9</sup> All this points to the fact that, at least in East Asia, there is a strong tendency to blend the Western concepts of democracy with local values, norms, and conditions more generally, so that one needs to be careful not to judge political systems in the region by purely Western understandings of what democracy should mean.<sup>10</sup>

We also need to clarify the term "democratization." Basically, democratization is a process that goes beyond liberalization—the loosening of economic, social, and political control of a government over its population. Democratization undoubtedly includes liberalization, but it also includes the

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<sup>8</sup> Donald K. Emmerson, "Region and Recalcitrance: Rethinking Democracy through Southeast Asia," The Pacific Review, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1995, p. 238.

<sup>9</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "American Democracy in Relation to Asia" (paper presented at the Conference on Asian and American Perspectives on Capitalism and Democracy, Singapore, January 28-30, 1993), p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> Briefly put, democracy in East Asia tends to blend basic concepts of Western democracy with local political values such as patron-client communitarianism, personalism, deference to authority, dominant political parties, and strong interventionist states. See an interesting discussion on this 'Asian-style Democracy' in Clark D. Neher and Ross Marlay, Democracy and Development in Southeast Asia: The Winds of Change (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 13-27.



deepening of the democratic content of existing political institutions. O'Donnell and Schmitter assert that democratization involves a process,

whereby the rules and procedures of citizenship are either applied to political institutions previously governed by other principles [other than democratic principles]..., or expanded to include persons not previously enjoying such rights and obligations..., or extended to cover issues and institutions not previously subject to citizen participation.<sup>11</sup>

One development in the study of democratization since the late 1980s has been a scholarly trend to use the concept of facilitating and obstructing factors for democratization. By analyzing a host of factors, this approach seeks to determine why and how countries do or do not evolve towards, consolidate, maintain, lose or reestablish a more or less democratic system of government.<sup>12</sup> However, rather than discussing a large number of factors, this thesis will focus on the most commonly discussed factors that facilitate and obstruct democracy, examine these factors, and develop a framework of analysis compatible with the Indonesian setting. These factors are socioeconomic development, international factors, the elites, and political culture.

## **1. Socioeconomic Development**

A good many quantitative analyses have over the past three decades reviewed the issue of the relationship between socioeconomic development and

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<sup>11</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell, and Philippe C. Schmitter, "Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies," in Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead (eds.), Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), Part IV, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Doh Chull Shin, "On the Third Wave of Democratization: A Synthesis and Evaluation of Recent Theory and Research," World Politics, Vol. 47, October 1994, p. 151. See also Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990), and Axel Hadenius, Democracy and Development (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

democracy. Theoretically, the more current literature on democratization has focused not on the question of whether the relationship exists, but on how it is manifested over time. To answer such a question, we should first look at Lipset's theory of the social requisites of democracy which has ignited a prolonged debate among scholars about the relationship between socioeconomic development and democracy.

Lipset argues that there is a strong correlation between socioeconomic development and the prevalence of democratic political systems.<sup>13</sup> The logic of his argument can be summarized as follows. Socioeconomic development or modernization strengthens the civil society. At the societal level, industrialization and urbanization work together to create and strengthen a large middle class as well as intermediary organizations and associations. If such a middle class plays an important role in moderating conflict and therefore makes democratic practices easier to work, intermediary organizations and associations serve as (1) sources of countervailing power, (2) sources of information and communications among opposition groups, (3) training institutions for citizens to develop political skills, and (4) mechanisms to increase the level of interest and participation in politics. Together, they erode the capacity of rulers to dominate and control their societies.

At the individual level, increasing education and expanding income expose a large proportion of the population to the virtues of democratic civilization. They also provide ordinary citizens with knowledge, skills, and

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<sup>13</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review*, No. 53, April 1959; see also Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1963), especially pp. 27-86.

moral incentives to pursue democratic practices. In short, the existence of autonomous associations and the steady increase in the cognitive mobilization of the masses would make democracy much easier to work. It should be added, however, that Lipset does not intend to conclude that high levels of socioeconomic development *cause* the birth of democracy. Indeed, he stresses that the existence of a strong correlation between socioeconomic development and the prevalence of democratic political systems "does not justify the optimistic liberal's hope that an increase in wealth, in the size of the middle class, in education, and other related factors will necessarily mean the spread of democracy or the stabilizing of democracy."<sup>14</sup>

However, most of Lipset's critics based their arguments on the assumption that his theory implies that economic growth would inevitably produce social modernization and differentiation that would lead to democracy. Huntington agrees with Lipset in that economic growth will bring about socioeconomic changes which in turn will "extend political consciousness, multiply political demands, broaden political participation."<sup>15</sup> However, Huntington contends that these changes would not always result in the birth and consolidation of democracy. If the existing political institutions fail to expand and adapt to accommodate this increasing (and increasingly autonomous) political participation, the obvious result is chaos. If this is the case, a regime may resort to repressive rather than democratic measures to restore order.

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<sup>14</sup> Lipset, "Some Social Requisites....," *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 5.

Another criticism came from O'Donnell in 1973.<sup>16</sup> Referring to the experience of Brazil and Argentina, he argued that as economies move beyond import substitution to deepening industrialization, political and socioeconomic conditions tend to promote the strengthening control of populist forces through a repressive state apparatus. Thereafter, the political process would be stimulated through the work of a technocratic elite operating in tandem with the armed forces and—we may add—the key sectors of business community. Thus, for O'Donnell, economic progress would encourage neither democracy nor revolution but bureaucratic authoritarianism.

Judging from the evidence in Latin America and East Asia, Wiarda seems to be correct when he states that “economic and social change gave rise to authoritarianism at least as much as to democracy.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, socioeconomic change—as a result of either rapid economic growth or economic stagnation—can stimulate the birth of democracy or the deepening of authoritarianism. To explain this phenomenon, it is useful to borrow Huntington's proposition of “a zone of transition.” According to him,

[a]s countries develop [or stagnate] economically, they can be conceived of moving into a zone of transition or choice, in which traditional forms of rule become increasingly difficult to maintain and new types of political institutions are required to aggregate the demands of [the]...society and to implement public policies....<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell, Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics (Berkeley: University of California, 1973).

<sup>17</sup> Howard J. Wiarda, Introduction to Comparative Politics: Concepts and Prospects (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1993), p. 50.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, “Will More Countries Become Democratic?” in Roy C. Macridis, and Bernard E. Brown (eds.), Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, Inc., 1990), 7th ed., p. 86.

The above proposition basically suggests that once a regime is in a zone of transition, the subsequent events will be determined by choices taken, and policies made, by political elites. This is another way of saying that democratic institutions and practices can be crafted virtually anywhere provided that they are appropriately designed and there is sufficient political commitment among elites to install and sustain them. Of course, we cannot rule out the proposition that a high level of socioeconomic development makes democracy more likely to emerge and to be sustained. The available evidence suggests that changes in the social structure generated by industrialization obviously favour emerging political pluralism frequently associated with democratic political systems. Urbanization, the creation of a large workforce, the emergence of a strong middle class, the demographic transition, higher educational levels, bureaucratization of the workplace, and the need for modern work habits, are all the consequences of industrialization that provide strong underpinnings for a democratic movement. But it does not mean that a certain level of economic development is an absolute requirement for democracy to emerge and consolidate. Rather, what really matters are the elites' choices and the context within which choices are made.

## **2. International Factors**

Most—if not all—theorists of democratization agree that although the course of political development and regime change should be attributed mainly to internal causes, the external or international factors do play a role in the process. Such scholars as Huntington, Dahl, Diamond, Stefan, Whitehead, and Blasier have demonstrated how democratization in many Third World countries has to some significant extent been made possible and even spurred on by

international factors. These factors include the colonial legacy, foreign occupation, the snowballing effects of democratization, and the use of political, economic, and diplomatic means by Western countries to promote democratization.<sup>19</sup> Other scholars such as Diamond, Linz, Lipset, Cammack, Pool and Tordoff have also pointed to cases in which democratic breakdowns and the persistence of authoritarian regimes could, or even should, be attributed to the global strategy of the West in general, and the US in particular, in the Cold War context.<sup>20</sup>

What seems to be more important to our discussion, however, is looking at the relationship between the international factors and democratization from a different perspective. To begin with, since the end of World War II, the rights of national self-determination, dignity, equality, and non-interference have become the central themes of foreign policy of many developing countries, especially countries in Asia that had experienced a long period of foreign occupation. People in this region are still sensitive about such principles, so that an assertive foreign policy of the West in promoting democracy tends to be perceived by the former as part of the West's intention to dominate the non-Western world by implanting alien values and norms. Despite all the talk in the

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<sup>19</sup> Huntington, "The Third Wave...", pp. 85-108; Dahl, "Polyarchy...", pp. 189-201; Larry Diamond, "Promoting Democracy," Foreign Policy, No. 87, Summer 1992, pp. 25-46; Alfred Stefan, "Paths Toward Redemocratization," in Macridis and Brown, "Comparative Politics...", pp. 144-6; Laurence Whitehead, "International Aspects of Democratization," in O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, "Transition from Authoritarian Rule...", Part III, pp. 3-46; and Cole Blasier, "The United States and Democracy in Latin America," in James M. Malloy and Mitchell A. Seligson (eds.), Authoritarians and Democrats: Regime Transition in Latin America (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), pp. 219-33.

<sup>20</sup> Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, "Introduction: Comparing Experiences with Democracy," in Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, "Politics in Developing Countries...", p. 32. See also Paul Cammack, David Pool, and William Tordoff, Third World Politics: A Comparative Introduction (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1988), especially pp. 214-49.

West about the mutually beneficial consequences of growing international interdependence, many Asians have interpreted the Western promotion of democracy as posing threats to a variety of local values that function as "the glue that helps hold [their] countries together as they go through the wrenching process of [development]." <sup>21</sup>

What results from such circumstances is the emergence of Asian "reactive nationalism" <sup>22</sup>--to borrow Spanier's term--that works two ways. Inwardly, the elite and the masses in Asia--especially the older generations who experienced at first hand the hardship of the early years of independence--have become more keen on cultivating local values, norms, and beliefs as filters for keeping some Western ideas out and allowing others in. Outwardly, Asian countries have become more reluctant to be treated simply as cards in the international relations game; they are now demanding respect as equal players. In addition, the success stories of the Asian NICs (Newly Industrialized Countries, which include South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore) are likely to inspire and provide the voice for original, distinctly Asian ideas on a host of such issues as human rights, labour rights, the debate over democracy versus economic development, and the relationship between individuals and the society, and between the society and the state. Hence, it is important to understand the Third World countries' foreign policies if we are to understand their reactions to international pressure for democratization.

Theoretically speaking, the foreign policy of a given country in a given situation is the result of a combination of several factors. However, most

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<sup>21</sup> Wiarda, "Introduction to Comparative Politics....," p. 61.

<sup>22</sup> John Spanier, Games Nations Play (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1990), 7th ed., p. 230.

scholars in the study of foreign policy recognize—implicitly or explicitly—that the process of formulating foreign policy always centres on elites (foreign policy makers) and political culture (psychological factors in foreign policy decision making). Hollis and Smith, for instance, argue that the formulation of foreign policy is primarily the enterprise of the elites, with certain factors serving to constrain or enable them to choose the best policy alternatives. These include the personality, roles, positions, and power of individual policy makers relative to others.<sup>23</sup> In a similar vein, Coplin argues that at the centre of every foreign policy decision making circle is an elite, which tends to act rationally but which is also constrained and enabled by political culture.<sup>24</sup> Holsti makes the point clearer by asserting that to understand the foreign policy of a given country, one should start by examining the perceptions, images, attitudes, values, and beliefs of those who are responsible for formulating it and ordering actions.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, as our discussion about socioeconomic development also points to the same direction, it can be concluded that a country's reaction to international promotion of democracy depends upon the elites' choices and the context within which choices are made.

### **3. The Role of the Elite**

It was Dankwart Rustow who, in 1970, called for more attention to the role of elites in democratic theorizing. Rustow's model of democratization

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<sup>23</sup> Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, Explaining and Understanding International Relations (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>24</sup> William D. Coplin, Introduction to International Politics: A Theoretical Overview (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing, Co., 1977), 2nd ed.

<sup>25</sup> K.J. Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1988), 5th ed.



involves a sequence from national unity, through struggle and compromise among key elites, and habituation on a broader political base, to democracy. His dynamic process of democratization is set off by "a prolonged and inconclusive political struggle" when a new elite emerges to represent depressed and previously leaderless social groups.<sup>26</sup> An opening for democracy occurs when a relatively small circle of elite members decides to accept the existence of diversity in unity and to wage their conflicts peacefully under democratic rules and procedures.

A year later along came Robert Dahl with his work, *Polyarchy*, in which he introduced the concept of the elite in a government acting as a rational actor.<sup>27</sup> The logic of his proposition is that democracy (or polyarchy, in his term) is likely to develop when a small elite (rather than a large and heterogeneous collection of leaders) perceives that because of changing environments the costs of repressing opposition groups will exceed the costs of tolerating them, and that only by liberalizing the existing political system can its long-term interests be best pursued. Similarly, O'Donnell and Schmitter assert that regime change begins when a regime splits and some portion of its leadership calculates that its interests are best served by liberalization. Both also argue that "no [democratic] transition can be forced purely by opponents against a regime which maintains the cohesion, capacity, and disposition to apply repression."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 2, April 1970, especially pp. 352-7. We conceive of "elites" as persons who are able, by virtue of their authoritative positions in powerful organizations or government offices, to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially.

<sup>27</sup> Dahl, "Polyarchy...", especially pp. 1-16.

<sup>28</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter, "Tentative Conclusions...", p. 19.

Rustow, Dahl, and O'Donnell and Schmitter all see that democratization is highly likely to occur if it is initiated from the top. However, as Stefan argues, such a model of democratization has at least three predictable problems. First, if the opening of the political systems results in situations in which "the costs of toleration are much greater than the costs of repression," elites may attempt "to reverse their initial liberalizing decision." Second, elites may commit themselves only to "formal and informal rules of the game that guarantee their core interests even in the context of the successor democratic regime, and thus yield only a limited democracy." Third, the security apparatus of the authoritarian regime may attempt "to preserve its prerogatives intact."<sup>29</sup>

Based on the works of Rustow, Dahl, O'Donnell and Schmitter, and Stefan, we can, therefore, predict that (1) the more there are political demands from the masses and former active supporters, and (2) the more there is the chance for the existing elites to retain and ratify much of their power by moving towards liberalization, the greater the chance that the authoritarian elites will initiate the political openings, which may in turn prove to be important in triggering a genuine process of democratization. Apparently, the decision to liberalize stems not from a shift in fundamental values but from strategic considerations on the part of the elite. However, such logic does not neatly fit the reality for the following reason.

It assumes that political elites are simply gain maximizers and loss minimizers. It considers elites as rational actors who, whenever the circumstances necessitate, enter a process in which they calculate the cost-

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<sup>29</sup> Alfred Stefan, "Paths toward Redemocratization: Theoretical and Comparative Considerations," in O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, "Transition from Authoritarian Rule...", Part III, p. 72.

benefit of alternatives before taking a decision. However, the more recent literature on democratization shows that elites' decisions stem not only from such strategic calculations, but also and more importantly from changes in elite political culture. Diamond and Linz, for example, argue that the problems of democratic consolidation in Latin America have a deeply rooted cultural component, and that the decision made by political elites to move towards greater democracy was influenced by values that preceded the presence of democratic values among the masses.<sup>30</sup> Some works on democratization in South Korea and the Philippines also suggest that political culture has been a powerful—although not the only—explanatory factor in understanding elites' choices to accommodate demands for democracy.<sup>31</sup> In this regard, Wiarda asserts that "[m]any political phenomena cannot be explained without understanding the cultural context in which they take place," and that "in conjunction with other factors political culture can be a useful explanatory tool."<sup>32</sup>

One more point has to be made here. As Hollis and Smith argue with regard to the role of individual elites in the foreign policy decision making process, elites' choices are not only influenced by strategic considerations and

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<sup>30</sup> Larry Diamond and Juan J. Linz, "Introduction: Politics, Society, and Democracy in Latin America," in Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1989), pp. 10-4.

<sup>31</sup> See Doh Chul Shin, Myung Chey, and Kwang-Woong Kim, "Cultural Origins of Public Support for Democracy in Korea: An Empirical Test of the Douglas-Wildavsky Theory of Culture," Comparative Political Studies, Vol. 22, No. 2, July 1989; and Thomas W. Robinson (ed.), Democracy and Development in East Asia (Washington: The AEI Press, 1991), especially chapters by Kim Kyong-dong (on South Korea) and David Rosenberg (on the Philippines).

<sup>32</sup> Howard J. Wiarda, "Toward the Future: Old and New Directions in Comparative Politics," in Howard J. Wiarda (ed.), New Directions in Comparative Politics (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), p. 236.

their political culture, but are also constrained and enabled by the relative power of the actors involved in the political process. The greater the relative power of an actor, the greater the chance that he can impose his choices. This type of argument appears to be important in analyzing Indonesian politics.

#### 4. Political Culture

We should begin examining political culture as a facilitating (or obstructing) factor with a working definition of political culture as predominant beliefs, attitudes, values, ideals, sentiments, and evaluations about a political system, and the role of the self in that system. This definition is not meant to suggest that the same political culture is shared by all groupings in a society, or that values and beliefs are evenly distributed throughout the population. As our discussion on the previous section indicates, elites usually have distinctive values, beliefs, and perceptions, and they often lead the way in large-scale value change. It is also true that distinctive types of values and beliefs prevail in different institutional settings (such as parliament, military, and bureaucracy) as well as in different ethnic and regional groups within a single country. Therefore, it is "somewhat misleading to talk of *the* political culture of a nation, except as a distinctive mixture or balance of orientations."<sup>33</sup>

Because "it resides in the personality of everyone who has been socialized to it," Pye believes that political culture is "remarkably durable and persistent."<sup>34</sup> Such an approach believes that political culture predetermines

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<sup>33</sup> Larry Diamond, "Introduction: Political Culture and Democracy," in Larry Diamond (ed.), Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993), p.9. Emphasis in original.

<sup>34</sup> Lucian W. Pye, Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 20.

political structures and behavior, and that the elements of political culture are impervious to change over time. However, based on the works of a number of scholars, Almond argues that, theoretically, "[t]he causal arrows between culture and structure and performance go both ways," that is, "attitudes influenced structure and behavior, and that structure and performance in turn influenced attitudes."<sup>35</sup>

Based on the empirical evidence, Diamond also rejects the deterministic approach to political culture. He argues that

although political culture affects the character and viability of democracy, it is shaped and reshaped by a variety of factors, including not only...political learning from historical experience, institutional change, [and] political socialization, but also by broad changes in economic and social structure, international factors (including colonialism and cultural diffusion), and, of course, the functioning and habitual practice of the political system itself.<sup>36</sup>

How, then, will analyzing political culture help to assess the prospects for democracy? Diamond states that one way political culture contributes to democratization is by changing the beliefs and perceptions of the key elites.<sup>37</sup> In this regard, some theorists have also argued that the development of a pattern, and ultimately a culture, of *moderation*, *cooperation*, *bargaining*, and *accommodation* among political elites is necessary—or at least highly functional-

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<sup>35</sup> Gabriel A. Almond, A Discipline Divided: Schools and Sects in Political Science (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1990), p.144.

<sup>36</sup> Diamond, "Introduction...", p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> Larry Diamond, "Causes and Effects," in Diamond (ed.), "Political Culture and Democracy...", p. 423.

-for the emergence of democracy.<sup>38</sup> In other words, there must be certain behavioral orientations among elites for democracy to emerge. These include

*tolerance* for opposing political beliefs and positions, and for social and cultural differences more generally; *pragmatism* and flexibility, as opposed to a rigid and ideological approach to politics; a sense of *trust* in other political actors;...a *willingness to compromise*; ...and a certain *civility* of political discourse and respect for other views.<sup>39</sup>

All of these orientations stem from beliefs and perceptions that are shaped and reshaped over time by such factors as historical influences, institutional socialization, political leadership and interests, socioeconomic change, and international diffusion of values and beliefs.

The relevance of approaching the problems under analysis from a political culture perspective is not only that it will help to explain and understand elites' choices and the context within which choices are made, but also that there exist some concepts in Indonesian politics which--theoretically--recognize the need for democracy. These include the concepts of unity in diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*), deliberation (*musyawarah*), consensus (*mufakat*), mutual cooperation (*gotong-royong*), and maintaining harmony through self-restraint (*kekeluargaan, rukun*), and these will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three below.

To sum up, our discussion about theories of democratization suggests that while there are some facilitating and obstructing factors for democratization that need to be considered, it is far more important to clarify how these factors

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<sup>38</sup> Lipset, "Political Man...", pp. 78-9; and Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1965), pp. 337-74.

<sup>39</sup> Diamond, "Introduction...", p. 10. Emphases in original.

relate to each other. We have focused our attention on only four factors—socioeconomic development, international factors, the role of the elite, and political culture—simply because they are the most important and commonly discussed factors. They allow us to draw an analytical framework as follows. Pressure for democratization comes primarily from the combination of socioeconomic and international factors. However, these factors alone do not guarantee that democracy will automatically come to the surface. We also need to examine the other two factors—the elites and political culture—before any conclusion can be drawn as to whether the country under study will democratize in the future.

Based on such a framework, Chapter II will discuss how far the socioeconomic development and international factors have generated pressures for change in Indonesian politics. This will require, first, a discussion of changes brought about by socioeconomic development in the society, and of the newly emerging international environment in which human rights and democratization have become major issues. This will include a short discussion of Indonesia's experiences with international criticisms. Then, we will devote our discussion to the impacts of internal and external pressures for change on Indonesian politics.

Chapter III will be devoted to a discussion about Indonesian political culture and the role of the New Order elites in Indonesian politics. To come to the best possible understanding, it is necessary that we begin with the early years of the New Order. This, however, does not mean that we can ignore events that happened before the inception of the New Order government since the birth of the New Order itself was a response to the failure of the previous

governments to maintain order and to carry economic development programs. Thus, the chapter will not only discuss elements of political culture such as major values, historical legacies, and the traumatic events experienced by the nation, but also--briefly--the policies Suharto and his closest associates have adopted to develop a political system that differs from the previous ones. The rest of the chapter will discuss the manifestations of political culture and the interests of the various elites in Indonesian domestic politics and foreign policy.

Chapter IV, then, will explain the current changes in Indonesian domestic and foreign policies. It is in this chapter that we will discuss how the four factors--socioeconomic development, international factors, the role of the elite, and political culture--have intertwined with each other so as to bring about changes in Indonesian domestic and foreign policies. After that, we will assess the prospects for democratization in Indonesia.

Finally, Chapter V will sum up the whole discussions about politics in Indonesia and verify the central argument of this thesis. It will be suggested that Indonesian political system will inevitably move towards a more democratic system. However, given the nature of Indonesian political culture and of the persistent elites' interests, the movement towards a more democratic system will follow a gradual and cautious path which emphasizes compromise and moderation.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **PRESSURE FOR CHANGE: INDONESIA IN CHANGING ENVIRONMENTS**

It is important to recall that the emergence of pressure for democratization is the result of a combination of factors. One of these factors is socioeconomic change brought about by either economic development or economic stagnation. Other factors considered by many analysts as having played an increasingly important role in the process, especially since the 1970s, are what can be termed broadly as the international factors of democratization. In the Indonesian case, it is a combination of progress in socioeconomic development, on the one hand, and the international promotion of human rights and democracy, on the other hand, that has generated new pressure for democratization. One of the results of this pressure is that it has aggravated cracks in the elite circle, with both sides of the conflict trying to capitalize on growing popular demands for more political participation. Hence, the country began to witness a process of political opening, although it appears that for the time being the pro-democracy activists should not expect too much from this changing situation.

The following discussion will be divided into three sections. The first section will discuss changes brought about by socioeconomic development at home. These include the country's growing wealth, industrialization, urbanization and expanding middle class, and the proliferation of student groups and nongovernmental organizations. The second section will review the

rise of the issues of human rights and democratization and the spread of democratic ideas in international relations. One question which will be addressed in this section is how far have the new developments in world politics persuaded the Suharto regime to democratize. Finally, this Chapter will offer a brief discussion of the impacts of Indonesia's changing environments on the country's political life.

### **A. Internal Pressure**

Under the Suharto's New Order government, Indonesia—for the first time since its independence—began to experience rapid socioeconomic growth. From 1967 onwards, the economy grew quickly, with the gross domestic product (GDP) increasing at an annual average rate of 7 percent. The levels of wealth, industrialization, urbanization, and education—the four indices of economic development used by Lipset to measure societal progress in its relation to democracy—have improved significantly. Although numbers certainly cannot tell the whole story, they may help us appreciate how far the Indonesian society, by the 1980s and early 1990s, has improved on its conditions of a decade or so earlier.

#### **1. Wealth**

To begin with, perhaps the most common way to see whether a country has made significant socioeconomic progress is by considering how far it has reduced the level of poverty and increased its per capita gross national product (GNP). As far as the former is concerned, Indonesia under the Suharto government has made noticeable progress. *The Economist* has noted that

X In 1970, the first attempt to estimate how many Indonesians lived in absolute poverty found that 60 percent of the population, 70 million people, lived below the official poverty line. In 1987,...this ratio had fallen to 17 percent, 30 million people....Although the poor's share is still miserable, it has at least been growing, which is more than can be said for many countries.<sup>1</sup>

As found in virtually all developing countries, there were and still are pockets of extreme poverty in urban and rural areas, but continued efforts to help the poor have lowered the figure to about 15 percent or 27 million people today.<sup>2</sup>

It should, of course, also be noted that the yawning gap between the rich and the poor is still there and in some areas has become wider, creating what a report in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* calls "social dynamite" that may in the future bring Indonesia into chaos.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, it can hardly be denied that Indonesia has recorded a significant increase in its per capita GNP, though it still lags behind Malaysia and Thailand. While the per capita GNP was only \$51 in 1967, it rose to \$530 in 1985 and to over \$600 in 1991 (in constant 1985 US dollars). What should be kept in mind is that these improvements were achieved against the backdrop of the global economic recession of the 1980s and a steady increase of the population (from 104.5 million in 1965 to 162.2 million in 1985 and about 180 million in 1991).<sup>4</sup>

Such progress in wealth has a number of implications for the lives of most Indonesians, but two of them merit further consideration. First, it allows

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<sup>1</sup> *The Economist*, August 10, 1991, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> "Succession talk recedes: Suharto could lead into the 21st century," *Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER)*, May 18, 1995, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> "Social dynamite," *FEER*, February 15, 1996, pp. 20-22.

<sup>4</sup> Larry Diamond, "Introduction," in Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), *Democracy in Developing Countries: Asia* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1989), pp. 36-37; and James C. Abegglen, *Sea Change: Pacific Asia as the New World Industrial Center* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), p. 159.

more Indonesians from lower and lower-middle strata to acquire information on a regular basis. Radio receivers, television sets, and printed mass media have become an inseparable part of the lives of most Indonesians. Since the 1980s listening to *Radio Australia* or the BBC from London, which broadcast their news in *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian language) twice a day, has become an alternative especially for university students across the country to listening to the news from the government-controlled radio broadcaster *RRI* (Radio of Republic of Indonesia). Parabolic antennas have since the mid-1980s penetrated urban and rural areas not only in Java, but also in the outer islands, allowing more people to watch, for example, the Western-style debate on the CNN's Crossfire Show or CNN's Larry King Live. Meanwhile, printed media offers another source of information to the society. Although it is still under the state control and is employing self-censorship, occasionally it touches issues critical of government. In short, it has become more difficult for the government to block the flow of information, be it from within or outside the country.

Second, as wealth increases, so does the chance to acquire higher levels of education. Tertiary education is no longer an exclusive preserve of the upper class in the big cities, as it arguably was in the 1960s and even the 1970s. Instead, it has become more accessible to a wider circle of Indonesians. Families of lower and lower-middle class backgrounds can now afford to send their children to public universities. Those from the upper-middle and upper classes do not have any difficulty in sending their children to the more-expensive private universities--which have increased in number from 63 in 1978 to 221 in 1990--or to universities overseas.<sup>5</sup> This, combined with other factors,

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<sup>5</sup> Steven Schlossstein, Asia's New Little Dragons: The Dynamic Emergence of Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1991), p. 130. By the mid-1980s there

has created "a generation of Indonesians who are less inclined than their parents to take the authority of their rulers for granted."<sup>6</sup>

## **2. Industrialization, Urbanization and the Expansion of the Middle Class**

The increase in wealth discussed above is closely related to the country's industrialization. National industrialization under the Suharto government was by no means a smooth and easy process. Initially, the process was heavily funded by oil revenues channelled through the state oil corporation of *Pertamina*, and by cheap international loans. A number of large scale industries built in the 1970s, such as a fertilizer plant, cement production plants, a complex of iron and steel processing industries, and an aircraft maker, were either *Pertamina* projects or supported financially by the corporation and international capital. Many other modern factories were also built in this period, but they were dominated by one industry—petroleum refining—which is exclusively state-owned. Hence, Indonesia adopted state-led import-substituting industrialization (ISI). It should be added, however, that in the 1970s agriculture also played an important role in revitalizing the economy as a whole.

By the early 1980s the Indonesian ISI began to result in a high-cost economy and was increasingly running contrary to the interests of international capital. The country faced steep balance of payments deficits in 1981 as a result of its 'economic nationalism.' For the first time, the World Bank, in its reports in 1981, became critical of Indonesian ISI, advocating "an opening up

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was at least one public university in every provincial capital. In the late 1980s, there were as many as 10,000 Indonesian students studying in North America and an equivalent number in Europe and Australia.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Cribb and Colin Brown, Modern Indonesia: A History since 1945 (New York: Longman, 1995), p. 149.

of the economy...and the removal of 'distortions to the market' in the form of subsidies."<sup>7</sup> The government—though grudgingly at first—responded to the report by reforming tax and excise regimes, reducing subsidies on fuel and foodstuffs, and introducing various export incentives.

Yet another crisis hit the Indonesian economy when oil prices fell drastically from their peak in 1982 of about US\$36 per barrel to as low as \$11 in 1986, before it stabilized at an average of \$17. This crisis forced the government to cut back its expenditures, including investment on some development projects. Added to the decline of oil revenues was a sharp increase in Indonesia's debt service requirements following the Plaza Accord of September 1985. By the Accord, the US dollar was depreciated against major OECD currencies, causing the Japanese yen to appreciate, virtually doubling its value in eighteen months. And since most of Indonesia's external debt was X denominated in yen, the Accord caused an increase in Indonesia's total debt, in dollar terms, of about 40 percent.<sup>8</sup>

Confronted by these crises, Suharto came to see that Indonesia needed to adopt an export-led development strategy, although this change in policy did not necessarily mean a complete eradication of Indonesia's economic nationalism. Jakarta then tried hard to deal seriously with the problems of over-regulation and inefficiency, to diversify the economy, and to encourage more domestic private capital accumulation in export-oriented economic activities. As a result, while during the 1980-1985 period the oil and gas sector represented an average 60 percent of the country's exports, it began to drop in the latter half

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<sup>7</sup> Chris Dixon, South East Asia in the World Economy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 200.

<sup>8</sup> Schlossstein, "Asia's New Little Dragons...", p. 53.

of the 1980s, reaching only 40 percent in 1991. At the same time, the contribution of the manufacturing industry to the GNP has increased, from only 16 percent in 1985 to more than 20 percent in 1994 (in 1985 constant prices).<sup>9</sup>

In combination, the increase in wealth and the rapid industrialization have generated at least three important developments. First, they contribute directly to the changing attitudes and perceptions of most Indonesians. People, especially those who were born after 1950, no longer consider endeavour to be restricted by fate or hold pessimistic views about their social, economic, and even political environments. They also tend not to take it for granted that the government has done what is best for the country; they are now prepared to debate virtually all government policies. As Buchori--former deputy chairman of the government-sponsored Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI)--asserts,

[t]his is especially true for groups of young people who are relatively independent from formal organizations sponsored or supervised by government institutions....[While] among groups of young people who operate under the umbrella of government institutions, the practice is still very much like that of the old generation: dialog, *musyawarah*, and no debates.<sup>10</sup>

Second, relatively secure incomes in factories and other sectors of industry have attracted more people to urbanize, although in some cases the flow of job-seekers from villages to cities was also encouraged by local problems, such as harvest failure and land acquisitions by local rich farmers or investors from big cities. Available data show that Indonesia's urban population

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<sup>9</sup> Abegglen, "Sea Change...", p. 160; and Hans-Dieter Evers, "The Growth of an Industrial Labour Force and the Decline of Poverty in Indonesia," in Daljit Singh and Liak Teng Kiat (eds.), Southeast Asian Affairs 1995 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1995), p. 167.

<sup>10</sup> Mochtar Buchori, "Indonesians still have to learn many things about debate," The Jakarta Post, December 5, 1993, p. 4.

has continued to grow at a fast pace. In 1970, the figure was 17.1 percent of the total population. In 1980 it increased by 4 percentage points to 22.1, and five years later it rose to 25 percent.<sup>11</sup> The sharp increase between 1980 and 1985 occurred at a time when the economy was beginning to make adjustments to overcome the balance of payments deficits. Since more serious measures to boost the national industry have been taken after the fall of oil prices in 1986, it can be predicted that by the late 1980s the figure was somewhat higher than the 1985 figure. But, what does this mean with regard to pressure for change?

Increased urbanization is closely related to the expansion of the working class. People in this group are increasingly adopting capitalist values, such as profitability, competition, efficiency, self-reliance, and self-responsibility. They may well continue to place great reliance on, trust in, and respect for seniors, especially within the family and the kindred group. Outside these circles, however, they become more critical. Hence, the social fabric of Indonesian society is changing as class consciousness not only grows in cities, but also permeates rural life in Java and some other islands. It can be said further that the nation as a whole is now gradually but surely entering the Huntington's zone of transition, in which traditional, authoritarian forms of rule become increasingly difficult to maintain.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Diamond, "Introduction....," pp. 36-7; and Dixon, "South East Asia....," p. 27. As happened virtually in all developing economies, increases in industrialization and urbanization are followed by a decrease in labour force in agricultural sector. In the Indonesian case, labour force in agriculture fell from 64 percent of the total population in 1970 to 55 percent in 1985 and below 50 percent in 1994.

<sup>12</sup> See Evers, "The Growth of an Industrial Labour Force....," pp. 164-5; Michael R.J. Vatikiotis, Indonesian Politics under Suharto: Order, Development, and Pressure for Change (New York: Routledge, 1994), rev.ed., pp. 96-7; and Rita Smith Kipp, Dissociated Identities: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in an Indonesian Society (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 98-99. For a discussion of changes in rural areas, see Erik Thorbecke and Theodore van der Pluijm, Rural Indonesia: Socio-Economic Development in a Changing Environment (New York: New York University Press, 1993).



Third, rapid industrialization, in turn, results in the expansion of a middle class, which has long been associated in political theories with the birth and development of democracy. Exact figures of Indonesian middle class are not available, for it depends on how one defines the term. But if we follow Evers' definition of middle class, which includes those who have "reached income levels that allow consumption beyond the satisfaction of basic needs and [have] graduated from [at the least] high school,"<sup>13</sup> we then can say with some confidence that the Indonesian middle class has indeed been growing fast. Its members can easily be observed in virtually all the urban and the urbanized rural parts of the country, and they include intellectuals, skilled workers, rich peasants, employees in private companies, civil servants, and high- and middle-rank officers of the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI).

It is because of its composition that many scholars argue that the Indonesian middle class is very much a beneficiary of the Suharto government's policies. It is highly unlikely, so the argument runs, that members of this privileged class will be interested in giving support to—let alone initiating—a movement towards democratization.<sup>14</sup> Others also believe that "[a]lthough the 'independent' middle class is growing, it is still small compared to more developed countries" and—by implication—it is difficult to perceive that this class will be "in the forefront of challenges to the government."<sup>15</sup> However, if we

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<sup>13</sup> Evers, "The Growth of an Industrial Labour Force," p. 172.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Evers, *Ibid.*; Ulf Sundhaussen, "Indonesia: Past and Present Encounters with Democracy," in Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, "Democracy in Developing Countries...", p. 459; and Cribb and Brown, "Modern Indonesia...", p. 151.

<sup>15</sup> Harold Crouch, "Democratic Prospects in Indonesia," in David Bourchier and John Legge (eds.), Democracy in Indonesia: 1950s and 1990s (Clayton, Vic.: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1994), p.118.

cannot be so optimistic about the role of Indonesian middle class in bringing about political changes, we also should not be too pessimistic due to the following reasons.

First, since the early 1980s and especially after the downturn in oil prices in 1986, the financial muscle of the New Order government has somewhat weakened. The government still plays a major role in the economy, but this is due to the fact that (1) it still disproportionately dominates politics; (2) it does so by way of licences, monopolies, protections, and personal connections; and (3) some economic activities are still highly dependent upon government expenditure. As a result of extensive deregulation programs prior to and after the fall of oil prices, however, the state has had to abandon its monopolies in some lucrative sectors such as banking, television, and public utilities, thus allowing private domestic and international capital to accumulate and grow independent of the state. These and other sectors, including consultancy and—more recently—arts and film, have produced many prominent members of the middle and upper-middle classes who have shown their resentment of "the arbitrary and intrusive nature of the regime [and] the pervasiveness of corruption and the arrogance of officials."<sup>16</sup>

Second, the available evidence suggests that it is precisely from the Indonesian middle class that intermediary organizations and institutions have materialized.<sup>17</sup> To recall one of Lipset's arguments, such intermediary

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<sup>16</sup> Richard Robison, "Indonesia: An Autonomous Domain of Social Power?" The Pacific Review, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1992, pp. 340-2.

<sup>17</sup> In his study that covers the period between 1988 and mid-1994, Aspinall finds that many of student activists as well as members of NGOs critical of the government are from "a broad range of middle class and elite backgrounds." More strikingly, "many are the children of middle and low ranking ABRI officers." See E. Aspinall, "Students and the Military: Regime Friction and Civilian Dissent in the Late Suharto Period," Indonesia, No. 59, April 1995, p. 32 n. 27.

organizations and institutions, including nongovernmental voluntary organizations (NGOs) and professional organizations, can function as (1) sources of countervailing power and new opinions for government oppositions; (2) a means of communicating opposition ideas; and (3) a means to train society in political skills and to increase the levels of interests and participation in politics. In the Indonesian case, NGOs, together with student groups on- and off-campus, challenge the New Order on a variety of issues. We will discuss this topic briefly below, but it must be clear at this point that the Indonesian middle class does pose a real, if only potential, challenge to the future of the New Order's authoritarian rule.

### **3. Student Groups and Indonesian NGOs**

Throughout the 1980s and well into the 1990s Indonesia has been witnessing the proliferation of student groups and NGOs. After the clampdown of independent student councils on campuses in the late 1970s, groups of students in Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Solo, and Surabaya began to re-emerge in the first half of 1980s. Initially, they took the form of study groups around mosques in universities. Later, they established student organizations and showed their strength in street rallies and public speeches. They continued to voice issues raised in the previous decade, such as the rule of law, freedom of expression, accountability of officials, and democracy. Different from their predecessors, however, these younger generations of students are also active in defending villagers and the poor against what can be broadly termed as human rights abuses by the government and wealthy capitalists. This had added to the students' concerns a sense of urgency in terms of the need for change.

Meanwhile, there are also community-based NGOs, which sprang up in the country for the first time during the early 1970s. These NGOs work in a variety of fields, from environment and rural development to consumer protection and legal aid, and most of them managed to preserve considerable independence from the state. Some of these NGOs work at the national level, but there are more small grass-roots organizations working at the local level. Since the 1980s, NGOs that were active in the fields of environment and rural development have been increasingly able to raise their concerns to a prominent place on the national political agenda. As Eldridge put it in 1989, "[t]he last ten years have seen a broadening and deepening of this agenda as more NGOs have entered the field and wider segments of the bureaucracy have been exposed to [their] ideas."<sup>18</sup>

The other NGOs work in a more challenging arena. They focus their activities on politically and economically sensitive issues. Perhaps the most prominent NGO in this category is the Legal Aid Institute (known by its Indonesian acronym, LBH). Consistent in providing legal representation for students and other defendants in politically sensitive trials, the LBH often clashed openly with the government in and out of the courts. If the LBH has survived so far, it

is partly a reflection of the Jakarta regime's need to put on at least a show of democracy in the face of increasingly sceptical world opinion,

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<sup>18</sup> Philip Eldridge, "NGOs and the State in Indonesia," in Arief Budiman (ed.), State and Civil Society in Indonesia (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990), p. 510. See also Colin MacAndrews, "Politics of the Environment in Indonesia," Asian Survey, Vol.34, No.4, April 1994, pp.377-8.

and partly a reflection of the LBH's own organizational strength and high level of popular support.<sup>19</sup>

Coincident with the weakening of the absolute financial power of the New Order government, and a subsequent crack in the elite circle (discussed below), the number of student groups and NGOs began to mushroom in the second half of the 1980s. A city-wide organization aimed at coordinating the activities of the campus-based groups appeared in 1988 in Yogyakarta. This was followed by the formation of similar organizations in other cities, and the establishment of an inter-city student organization in 1989.

Outside campuses, some individuals, who are predominantly from middle class backgrounds, established new NGOs. While avoiding radical goals such as toppling the existing regime, they actively endeavour to address the issues of inequality, freedom of expression, the rule of law, human rights, bureaucratic reforms and other democracy-related issues. Thus, the period after 1986 has witnessed the establishment of the Centre of Information and Action Network for Democratic Reforms (PIJAR), Forum for Democracy (*Forum Demokrasi*), Institute for Society Study and Advocacy (ELSAM), Indonesian Students' Solidarity for Democracy (SMID), Democratic People's Alliance (PRD), and the Indonesian Front for the Defence of Human Rights (INFIGHT)—to name just a few.

While Robison is correct when he argues, in discussing the Indonesian NGOs, that although "reformist voices and perspectives exist, their political effectiveness has been limited,"<sup>20</sup> we cannot simply overlook the importance of

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<sup>19</sup> Adnan Buyung Nasution, "Defending Human Rights in Indonesia," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, July 1994, p. 117.

<sup>20</sup> Robison, "Indonesia...", p. 343. A similar argument has also been put forward by many scholars who maintain that professional and business organizations in Indonesia have no influence over the decision-making process. On the contrary, as MacIntyre finds it, these

student and NGOs activities in the country's national political life. In the Indonesian context, the emergence of a large number of NGOs and student groups critical of the government is significant political phenomenon. They serve as one of the very few channels through which the concerns of the society can be articulated. Given the fact that the MPR (the five-yearly congress), the DPR (the parliament), the political parties (the government-sponsored party, Golkar, and two opposition parties, PPP and PDI), and the press have in one way or another been put under government control, the NGOs and student groups often become the last resort for the poor and the oppressed in defending their interests against the economically and politically powerful actors or institutions. Moreover, in expressing their concerns, the NGOs usually cooperate with reform-minded journalists to gain a nation-wide press coverage to such an extent that the government cannot simply ignore the issues being raised.

There is no a clear, direct link between, on the one hand, the proliferation of student groups and NGOs in Indonesia, and, on the other hand, growing international concerns on such principles as human rights and democracy. But, however abstract, there must be a relation between the two in that the former has been encouraged by the latter. Discussing the causes of current democratization around the globe, Wiarda puts forward an argument that also holds true in the Indonesian case. According to him, there was

the growing realization in the 1980s and early 1990s that democracy was the only system that worked or that people believed in. Democracy...

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organizations have increasingly been able to function as effective pressure groups, especially after the fall of oil prices in 1986. See Andrew MacIntyre, Business and Politics in Indonesia (St. Leonards, New South Wales: Allen and Unwin, 1992), pp. 38-40 and 244-58.

looked better and better. It was not that democracy was totally without faults, but in comparison with others democracy looked pretty good.<sup>21</sup>

## **B. External Pressure**

### **1. Human Rights and Democracy in International Relations**

X Human rights and democracy are not newly invented issues in international relations, but since the latter half of 1970s they have gained new importance, affecting the existence of many authoritarian regimes as well as the relationship between the West and the rest of the world.<sup>22</sup> At first, a world-wide campaign against authoritarian rule was initiated by the Second Vatican Council of 1962-5 that urged the Catholic Church around the world to actively help the poor and the oppressed in their struggle against state repression. The campaign gained new momentum in the 1970s as some important events took place in Europe and North America. In August 1975, for example, 35 heads of governments from both sides of the Atlantic signed the Helsinki Final Act, with one of its ten principles calling for respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. This was followed by the creation within each country of commissions or watch groups to monitor local governments' compliance with the agreement. In turn, such developments also strengthened the existing international NGOs and encouraged the creation of the new ones aimed at monitoring human rights conditions in all countries in the world.

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<sup>21</sup> Howard J. Wiarda, Introduction to Comparative Politics: Concepts and Processes (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1993), pp. 92-3.

<sup>22</sup> The following discussion is drawn mostly from Samuel P. Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp. 72-106; and Cole Blasier, "The United States and Democracy in Latin America," in James M. Malloy and Mitchell A. Seligson (eds.), Authoritarians and Democrats: Regime Transition in Latin America (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), pp. 219-233

At about the same time and initiated by Congress, Washington adopted the promotion of human rights as one of its major foreign policy goals. As the Cold War remained in place, however, the US still employed its "realpolitik" approach to foreign policy. It was not until Jimmy Carter came to the Whitehouse that human rights became a world-wide issue. Partly launched to restore the public's faith in politicians, Carter's human rights campaign showed limited accomplishments and was never translated into a coherent or comprehensive policy.<sup>23</sup> In spite of this, his concerns about human rights observance had a significant effect in that many authoritarian regimes, especially those whose economic survival was dependent upon American aid, found it necessary to do something about the issue.<sup>24</sup>

Initially opposed to Carter's human rights approach to foreign policy, Ronald Reagan came to see that giving a human rights campaign a broader focus on democracy would better serve his position at home and the US government's position abroad. At home, emphasizing human rights and democracy enabled him to unite the Congress, the media, and public opinion behind the US policy. Overseas, it allowed Washington to exert pressure for greater political—and by implication, also economic—openness in non- and less-democratic countries.<sup>25</sup> By 1984 Washington founded the National Endowment for Democracy as part of its new commitment to actively promoting human

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<sup>23</sup> Alexander Moens, Foreign Policy Under Carter: Testing Multiple Advocacy Decision Making (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p. 26.

<sup>24</sup> In the Indonesian case, this was exemplified by the release in the end of 1970s of thousands of political prisoners held because of the 1965 events, apparently without the presence of domestic pressure to do so. See "Releases and new arrests in Indonesia," Amnesty International Bulletin, Vol. 6, No. 2, February 1979, p. 1; and M.C. Ricklefs, A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 306-7.

<sup>25</sup> Wiarda, "Introduction...", p. 92.



rights and democracy abroad. Still, it should be kept in mind that throughout the 1980s the US campaigns on human rights and democracy were balanced against its economically and politically strategic interests in the world. This explains why in the 1980s (and in some cases, until today) the US appeared to employ what the East Asian authoritarian regimes perceive as a double-standard policy: pressing democratization if an authoritarian regime declined to protect and promote US interests, but maintaining American assistance if the regime was friendly towards the US.

Nevertheless, by the late 1980s human rights and democracy had become major issues in international relations. Authoritarianism and Marxism-Leninism both lost their appeal in a way that leaders of non-democratic regimes, including those in Indonesia, "find it necessary to wrap themselves in the rhetoric and constitutional trappings of democracy, or at least to state as their goal the eventual establishment of democracy."<sup>26</sup> Some forms of political liberalization and the total collapse of authoritarian or totalitarian regimes in the Philippines, South Korea, Pakistan, Mexico, Chile, Nicaragua, Haiti, Senegal, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union in the period from 1986 to 1991 also gave incentives for Western countries to place human rights and democracy high on the world's agenda. In 1990, for example, the Bush administration enunciated five US foreign aid objectives, one of which was promoting the creation of democratic institutions.<sup>27</sup> In April 1991 Japan,

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<sup>26</sup> Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, "Introduction: Comparing Experiences with Democracy," in Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 1990), p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> John W. Sewell and W. Patrick Murphy, "The United States and Japan in Southeast Asia: Is a Shared Development Agenda Possible?" in Kaoru Okuizumi, Kent E. Calder, and Gerrit W. Gong (eds.), The U.S.-Japan Economic Relationship in East and Southeast Asia: A Policy

apparently under pressure from local politicians, members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and especially the US, announced that it was ready to review its Official Development Assistance (ODA) policy on the basis of a recipient's performance in four areas, and one of these was "the acceptance of human rights and political democracy"<sup>28</sup> by the local government.

All these developments suggest that Indonesia's international environment has been experiencing significant changes. Ideological conflicts between communist and capitalist worlds are in the process of fading away and a new trend has come to the surface: linking economic relations with the issues of human rights and democracy. This, in turn, has fuelled prolonged and sometimes fierce debates, especially between the West and the Southeast Asian authoritarian leaders, about the rights of the West to impose its concepts of human rights and democracy on culturally different countries. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss these debates at length. In the Indonesian case, however, it is plausible to maintain that the New Order government realizes that there is no alternative other than welcoming the growing global trend towards democracy, *but* at the same time it also maintains that no country should use its power to impose conditions on others.<sup>29</sup>

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Framework for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Washington, D.C.: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1992), p. 121.

<sup>28</sup> Ryokichi Hirono, "Japan and the United States in Development Cooperation with East Asian Countries," in Okuizumi, Calder, and Gerrit, *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>29</sup> See an article by a prominent scholar and member of Golkar Jusuf Wanandi, "Human Rights and Democracy in the ASEAN Nations: The Next 25 Years," The Indonesian Quarterly, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1993, pp. 14-24.

## 2. Indonesia's Encounters with International Criticisms in the 1980s

X Suharto's friendly foreign policy towards the West, especially compared to that of Sukarno, has not guaranteed that Indonesia is free from international criticisms. During the 1980s, along with the growing international concerns for human rights and democratic principles, Indonesia faced continuous criticisms from international organizations, NGOs, and Western governments. None of these criticisms, however, was strong enough to substantially weaken the Suharto government. This was in part due to the fact that the West in general, and the US in particular, appreciated Indonesia's moderating influence and its role as a staunch anti-Communist bulwark in the region. As we shall discuss, however, approaching the end of the 1980s and along with the waning of the appeal of communism around the world, Indonesia began to face criticisms directly addressed at the authoritarian nature of the Suharto government.

Discussing Indonesia's experience with international criticism would be incomplete without mentioning the East Timor issue. The incorporation of East Timor in 1976 and human rights violations that have occurred since then in the territory are two issues that have been raised by international NGOs such as the Europe-based Amnesty International and the US-based Asia Watch as well as some Western governments. X On the other hand, the West was also aware that further jeopardizing its relations with Indonesia on the basis of the East Timor question would be disadvantageous for the West, at least as long as Y Indonesia was friendly towards the West and was not threatening the Western countries' strategic interests in the region. This explains why there was no intention on the part of the Western countries throughout the 1980s to use economic sanctions to press Indonesia on this issue.

Similarly, two incidents that occurred in 1984 and 1986 showed that the Western governments highly valued a friendly Indonesia. Indeed, while continuing to draw attention to Indonesia's records on human rights and democracy, in neither case was strong, decisive pressure, comparable to that exerted by the US on President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines and on President Chun Doo-hwan of South Korea during their last days in power, ever exerted on Suharto. In the first incident, representatives from the US, the Vatican, and the Netherlands expressed their deep concern over the extra-judicial killings during 1983 of an estimated three to four thousand actual and merely suspected criminals by special death squads. In December 1983, at a human rights conference of Asian NGOs in Jakarta, Adnan Buyung Nasution of the Legal Aid Institute openly accused the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI) of the killings and urged members of the IGGI (the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia) to exert pressure on the Indonesian government to stop the murders.<sup>30</sup> This issue was discussed at the IGGI meeting on April 1984, but the killings stopped late in the year only after the government in Jakarta realized the adverse international publicity it was creating.

The second incident can be considered as an Indonesian public relations disaster. On 10 April 1986, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published David Jenkins' long article under the headline "After Marcos, Now for the Soeharto Billions." The article contained little that was not already known, but the sensational manner of its presentation and the insulting association with Marcos' just deposed corrupt and arbitrary regime gave serious offence to

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<sup>30</sup> J. 't Hart, "Aspect of Criminal Justice," in Hans Thoolen (ed.), Indonesia and the Rule of Law: Twenty Years of 'New Order' Government (London: Frances Pinter, 1987), p. 202-3. See also Justus M. Van der Kroef, "PETRUS: Patterns of Prophylactic Murder in Indonesia," Asian Survey, Vol. 25, No. 7, July 1985, pp. 745-59.

Suharto. Jakarta's prompt response was harsh,<sup>31</sup> but it only invited wide attention from the American press since the resulting Indonesian-Australian diplomatic stalemate occurred less than three weeks before President Reagan's three-day visit in Bali en route to a summit meeting of the richest democracies in Tokyo.

Prior to Reagan's visit, Jenkins' article became required reading for the White House press corps. Jakarta's refusal to issue visas to two Australian journalists and the expulsion of the Bangkok-based Southeast Asia correspondent for the *New York Times* travelling with the presidential party raised the issue of press freedom. In turn, it also generated sharp criticisms of the Suharto's authoritarian government in the American press during Reagan's stay in Bali from April 29 to May 1.<sup>32</sup> If Reagan chose not to comment on the incident during his stay, it was due to two reasons. First, the American and Australian press had done enough damage to Indonesia's image in the West, and there was no need for the US to put its economic and other strategic interests at stake by officially criticizing Suharto. Second, there was a more pressing agenda to be discussed with Suharto and all ASEAN foreign ministers present in Bali, that was, the Cambodian question. Reagan seemed aware that Indonesia might help promote the US strategic interests in the region as Jakarta's dual-track diplomacy offered new hope that Vietnam would accept a more realistic approach to Cambodia.

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<sup>31</sup> See Richard Robison, "Explaining Indonesia's Response to the Jenkins' Article: Implications for Australian-Indonesian Relations," and David Jenkins, "Indonesia: Government Attitudes Towards the Domestic and Foreign Media," *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 40, No. 3, December 1986, pp. 132-7, and 153-61, respectively.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, "Indonesia's press needs Reagan's help," *The New York Times*, April 29, 1986; "A chance to oppose tyranny," *Washington Post*, April 29, 1986; and editorials in both newspapers on May 1, 1986.

Nonetheless, the Suharto government learned an important lesson from the two incidents: arbitrary and grossly repressive measures and harsh reaction towards foreign criticisms would be widely condemned by the West and thus further damage Indonesia's international image. Suharto seemed aware that while the West needed Indonesia, it was not as much as Indonesia needed continued access to the Western economies and their allies in East Asia. Moreover, the cooling down of tensions between the East and the West, followed by the self-destruction of communist systems throughout Eastern Europe in 1989, meant that Indonesia lost some of its strategic importance to the West. The relation between the Western and non-Western countries has now become a major issue, replacing that of communism versus capitalism. In addition, with the end of the Cold War, the power of the West has increased to such an extent that no regional—let alone international—issue can be resolved without involving the West. Therefore, while keeping its firm stance that no other country should impose its concepts of human rights and democracy on Indonesia, the Suharto government has also come to realize that it is important for Indonesia to maintain good relations with the West by paying closer attention to, or at least not exacerbating, the problems of human rights and democracy in Indonesia.

It is in this context that Suharto's acceptance—albeit reluctant acceptance—of the proliferation of Indonesian NGOs can be partly understood. Following the formation of the International NGOs Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID) in June 1985, which was aimed at pressing the IGGI members to pay closer attention to the negative effects of economic development, some leading Indonesian NGOs began to take active roles in

international forums from late 1986 onwards. Jakarta, however, decided to remain calm in facing such a development, something that would have not been tolerated a decade beforehand. The government did call in the representatives of some NGOs in August 1989 for a dialogue after the INFID produced a letter to the World Bank critical of Indonesia's bad record on human rights and environment. No further action was taken by the Suharto regime, however, for it would only have invited further international criticism.<sup>33</sup>

The year 1989 also witnessed the visits by the US Vice-President Dan Quayle and Japan's Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu to Jakarta.<sup>34</sup> Repeating a call for greater political openness delivered in May by the US Ambassador to Indonesia Paul Wolfowitz, Quayle argued that Suharto should democratize his government, and conducted a meeting with some Jakarta-based dissidents and NGOs. Prior to Kaifu's visit in late 1989, Japanese diplomats also made contacts with some of Suharto's critics in Jakarta, discussing with them the future of Indonesian politics. In both cases, the Indonesian elites felt quite uneasy, but no public comment was made by the Suharto government for fear that it would put at risk Indonesia's relations with the two economic giants.<sup>35</sup> The message, however, was clear for the Suharto regime that the time had come to pay closer attention to the problems of democracy.

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<sup>33</sup> Gordon R. Hein, "Indonesia in 1989: A Question of Openness," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 30, No. 2, February 1990, p. 223.

<sup>34</sup> Hein, *Ibid.*, p. 221; and Vatikiotis, "Indonesian Politics....," p. 167.

<sup>35</sup> In a private interview, former Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja did express his uneasiness about Quayle's visit. See Schlossstein, "Asia's New Little Dragons....," pp. 121-2.

### **C. Impacts on Indonesian Politics**

There should be no doubt at this point that since the early 1980s both Indonesia's domestic and international environments have been experiencing fundamental changes. At the national level, the society has entered the process of transformation from an essentially agrarian to a more industrial society with all of its consequences. At the international level, attention is now focused more on the economic and moral issues of human rights and democracy than on ideological conflicts. But, how far have these changing environments affected Indonesian politics, especially in elite circles?

#### **1. Split between ABRI and Suharto**

One of the important consequences of this pressure for change on Indonesian politics is that it aggravated the split which had been developing since the early 1980s between the president and his close aides in the palace on the one hand, and the ABRI leadership on the other hand. When Indonesia began to face problems produced by the balance of payments crisis in 1981, the palace—with Suharto's blessing and coordinated by the State Secretary, Lieutenant-General Sudharmono—replaced officers in many economically strategic positions with civilian economists who had graduated from the West. Later, Sudharmono—from his strategic position controlling the bureaucracy—gave strong support to the increasingly influential civilian, nationalist Minister for Research and Technology, B.J. Habibie, who took over the control of state-owned strategic industries previously under ABRI's exclusive control.

As soon as Sudharmono was elected the General Chairman of Golkar in 1983, he appointed more civilian politicians to the government-sponsored party as well as to the state bureaucracy. In particular, he "brought in some of the



student leaders of the mid-seventies, men whose experiences had imbued in them resentment of ABRI's political role,"<sup>36</sup> in part as a way to accommodate growing demands among members of the middle class for a more participatory politics. He also used his subtle administrative prowess to divert lucrative government tenders, which formerly passed through military hands, to civilians.

The reason put forward to justify all of these policies was to boost national development which—as discussed earlier—during the period 1981-1987 experienced economic hardship and needed to be handled by professionals. However, what bothered army generals under the leadership of the ABRI Commander, General L.B. Murdani, was that the ABRI financial base was severely curtailed for the benefit of close civilian business associates of the president and particularly Suharto's own children.<sup>37</sup> This was done primarily through the expansion of patronage under Sudharmono's control, and it produced a situation which meant that Murdani essentially agreed with Jenkins' article. Moreover, Sudharmono—trained as a military lawyer—had little affinity with combat officers who dominated the ABRI's senior ranks, and his policy of replacing officers with civilians in politically strategic positions whenever possible was perceived by senior officers as undermining ABRI's political role in the country.

It was against this backdrop that the ABRI leadership decided to distance itself from Sudharmono-led Golkar. It was not until copies of Jenkins' article were widely distributed among university students, political dissidents, NGOs,

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<sup>36</sup> Michael R.J. Vatikiotis, "Party and Parliamentary Politics 1987-1993," in Bouchier and Legge, "Democracy....," p. 238.

<sup>37</sup> "Siege tactics: Vice-President increasingly isolated by wary military," FEER, November 29, 1990, p. 19.

and loyal politicians that Murdani extended ABRI's support to the PDI (Indonesian Democratic Party, one of two opposition parties). Speaking before a conference of leaders of the PDI in September 1986, Murdani openly—and obviously against the New Order tradition—stated that "the people are putting new hopes on PDI to better carry their aspirations under Pancasila and the 1945 constitution," as well as hoping that the party would leave "something valuable for the nation."<sup>38</sup> Indeed, during the 1987 general elections ABRI was much less active in supporting Golkar than it had been in the past. This was interpreted by the proponents of a clean, more democratic governance, both within and outside the establishment, as tacit support for them to go ahead with their agenda.

The conflict between Murdani and the president came into the open in 1988. First, in late February and less than two weeks before the MPR sessions, Suharto abruptly ordered Murdani to hand over the command of ABRI to General Try Sutrisno, who was much less critical of Suharto, although later Murdani was appointed the Minister of Defence and Security in the new cabinet announced in late March. In the other incident and against the very nature of Indonesian political culture, Suharto's nomination of Sudharmono as vice-president was publicly opposed by ABRI delegates during a general session of the MPR. Suharto managed to go on with his plan, but the course of events thereafter clearly suggest that the tensions between officers under Murdani's influence, on the one hand, and Suharto and his close associates, on the other hand, became inevitable and continued well into the early 1990s. This was

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<sup>38</sup> Leo Suryadinata, Military Ascendancy and Political Culture: A Study of Indonesia's Golkar (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1989), p. 113-4, quoting The Jakarta Post, September 8, 1986.

exemplified by Murdani's efforts to dislodge Sudharmono from the chairmanship of Golkar. Indeed, Sudharmono was eventually replaced during the party's congress in November 1988 by an ABRI-chosen candidate. Interestingly, confronted by internal and external pressure for change, both sides of the conflict—the president and the ABRI leadership—capitalized on growing popular demands for a more open, democratic governance to preserve and advance their underlying interests.

Riding on the wind of *glasnost* blowing from the Soviet Union, the ABRI fraction in the DPR initiated in early 1989 a series of sessions on political openness. This was enthusiastically taken up by politicians inside and outside the parliament, intellectuals, religious leaders, students, and the media, and made an important contribution to legitimising the questioning and criticizing of the Suharto government. It also helped to raise the issue of presidential succession as Suharto approached his seventieth year. In addition, criticisms of the monopolies of Suharto's children in some lucrative businesses also intensified. It was widely believed that Murdani and his network in the armed forces were behind these criticisms.

For his part, Suharto was also involved in the debate about openness, including the succession issue. However, he was cautious not to let the debate get out of hand and weaken his own position. In particular, Suharto was alarmed by what happened in China, where the communist regime harshly ended pro-democracy demonstrations at Tiananmen square in June 1989. In his National Day address to the DPR in August 16, 1989, Suharto maintained:

Experience in all developing countries proves that if political development were neglected, it might become the source of retardation and backwardness; in fact, it might even thwart the entire development

towards take-off. Conversely, if political development were to proceed far ahead of this development progress in other sectors, it might also become the source of the emergence of all kinds of difficulties and problems obstructing progress in development.<sup>39</sup>

To make this point clearer to his critics and especially Murdani, Suharto stated blatantly in September 1989 that he would "clobber" anyone who tried to depose him "unconstitutionally,"<sup>40</sup> and his audience knew well that what constitutes constitutionally or unconstitutionally was subject to Suharto's personal interpretation. Since then Suharto has been increasingly able to regain control over all political debate and outcomes. We shall return to this and discuss the subsequent events at length in Chapter IV. However, it is necessary at this point to draw some conclusions from our discussion of the split between the ABRI and Suharto.

Initially, it was the need to adapt to the changing environments and the economic slowdown that provided the seeds of the split between the ABRI and the president. Central to this split was Suharto's attempts to advance his interests at the expense of ABRI's interests. ABRI's decision to distance itself from Golkar—which coincided with the economic problems confronting Indonesia, the rise of democratic governments in the Philippines and later in South Korea, and growing concerns of external actors for the issues of human rights and democracy—had allowed space for the proponents of democracy to manoeuvre and raise their cause more openly.

What we see in the late 1980s, then, was a situation in which each contending party—the ABRI and the palace—cultivated the issue of openness to

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<sup>39</sup> Hein, "Indonesia in 1989...", p. 222, quoting The Jakarta Post, August 18, 1989.

<sup>40</sup> Hein, Ibid., p. 223; and William Liddle, "Indonesia's Threefold Crisis," Journal of Democracy, Vol. 3, No. 4, October 1992, p. 62. In Indonesian politics, the use of word "clobber" by the president is something that is very unusual.

gain support from pro-democratic factions both in the society and government circles. Pressure for change now came not only from the society, but also and more importantly from within the ruling elites, although it might be suspected that the elites have their own motives to pursue such a strategy. However, Suharto's message in August 1989 and his stern warning in September reminded all that while there is hope for political liberalization, it would proceed only under Suharto's terms.

## **2. Cracks in the Foreign-Policy Elite Circle**

To a lesser extent and beneath the surface, Indonesia's changing environments also contributed to tensions that developed among the foreign policy-making elites. Basically, there are three key actors in the foreign policy-making process. They are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Suharto, and the armed forces (ABRI). Before the mid-1980s, these foreign policy elites were relatively unified. Since the mid-1980s, however, a crack between the ABRI and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs began to develop, with the president in the centre. It was the mysterious, extra-judicial killings of suspected criminals in 1983 and 1984 by elements of the armed forces that prompted high officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to feel uneasy. It was the ministry which had to deal directly with international criticisms of the actions it did not commit.<sup>41</sup>

The Jenkins incident, followed by criticisms from the American press, made it even more difficult for the ministry to maintain a good image of Indonesia abroad. Again, as in the mysterious killing incident, it was generals from the ABRI who did most of the damage. Jakarta's harsh responses to Jenkins' article were taken by the Minister of Information, the Justice Minister,

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<sup>41</sup> See van der Kroef, "PETRUS...", pp. 745-59 *passim*.

and the Director-General of Immigration, all retired generals acting on their own. Fierce criticisms of—or to be precise, attacks on—Australian culture, political system, and its position in the region were also published in a newspaper that belongs to the ABRI. Realizing the perceived consequences, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, did try to intervene on behalf of Australian journalists and the *New York Times* correspondent travelling with Reagan. However, the ABRI was firm in punishing those who could directly or indirectly be linked to the controversy. It may be argued that these and other officers did so as a manifestation of their perceptions that outsiders always tend to do harm to Indonesia, or that—acting in a uniquely Indonesian environment—they tried to gain the recognition of the president. Whatever the explanation is, it was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which had to work hard to deal with the resulting problems, and to restore Indonesia's international image.<sup>42</sup>

Since then the armed forces have focused their attention more on domestic political events as discussed earlier. However, there were other incidents in the provinces of Aceh, South Sumatra, East Timor, and Irian Jaya where the ABRI committed human rights violations, thus inviting sporadic criticisms from international NGOs and the foreign diplomatic corps. Approaching the end of the 1980s there were efforts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the palace to persuade Suharto that little could be done to clean up Indonesia's human rights image abroad unless the ABRI paid more

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<sup>42</sup> See "Dispute over press mars visit to Indonesia," Washington Post, May 1, 1986; and "Indonesia vs. press: Twain can't meet," The New York Times, May 1, 1986.

respects to human rights and loosened its security approach to social problems.<sup>43</sup>

It is not difficult to predict that the advocates of a more open-minded foreign policy soon won the president's ear. In fact, Indonesia's environments, both national and international, left Suharto very little room to manoeuvre. Ignoring international opinion would certainly have damaged Suharto's own image abroad. This was not an alternative for it would only have run counter to Indonesia's attempts since 1985 to play a more active role in international affairs. On the other hand, opting for a conciliatory approach to international opinion would allow Indonesia more space and time to explain to the outside world its position on various issues, such as human rights, democracy, labour rights, development strategy, and economic relations between the rich North and the poor South.

To conclude this chapter, then, it can be said that since the mid-1980s the Suharto government has been confronted by increasing pressure for change. At home, Suharto faced pressure arising from his own successes in presiding over the country, and from his policies of favouritism towards his own children and business associates. Added to this pressure was the split between the president and the ABRI leadership, with both sides of the conflict competing to impress the public with their democratic commitment. At the international level, the attention of external actors was increasingly focused on the issues of human rights and democracy. Of course, pressure from the international community alone would not be able to significantly affect politics in Indonesia. Rather, it is the combination of internal and external pressure that prompted

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<sup>43</sup> Vatikiotis, "Indonesian Politics...", p. 185

some factions within the Suharto government to realize that the cost of continuing harsh repression may far exceed the cost of accommodating demands for a more democratic and participatory politics and respect for human rights.

At this point, one may argue that a regime transition in Indonesia is only a matter of time, and that the country will soon be ruled by a new regime that meets the Western standards of democracy. However, Suharto's messages in August and September 1989, and the subsequent political events that followed clearly suggest that political developments in Indonesia were not, and will not be, as simple as one might have thought.

To be sure, Indonesia in the late 1980s was in a situation characterized by the emergence of conflicting (or competing) opinions among political elites and increasing popular demands for democracy. As our theoretical discussion suggests, it is a situation in which political culture and elites play extremely important roles in shaping the political landscape and determining in which direction it will develop. And, according to Bermeo,<sup>44</sup> this is also the situation in which foreign influences are most important, either in accelerating or obstructing the process of change, depending on how the elite and the masses perceive those influences. Therefore, in-depth discussions of Indonesian political culture and the elite of the Suharto government are in order.

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<sup>44</sup> Nancy Bermeo, "Democracy and the Lessons of Dictatorship," Comparative Politics, Vol. 24, No. 3, April 1992, pp. 283-4.



### **CHAPTER III**

## **UNDERSTANDING INDONESIAN POLITICAL CULTURE AND THE ELITE OF THE NEW ORDER**

It was stated in Chapter One that due to the unique Indonesian political culture and the persistence of elites' interests, democratization in Indonesia will proceed only gradually and cautiously. Discussions in Chapter Two also suggest that current and future developments of Indonesian politics may best be assessed by first understanding the nature of the country's political culture and the role of the elites in Indonesian politics. This chapter, then, will set out an understanding of these two variables.

To begin with, different scholars have proposed different approaches to better understanding Indonesian political culture. Based on the debate about the appropriate approach to interpreting politics in the New Order era,<sup>1</sup> it is clear that the post-1966 Indonesian political culture has been shaped and reshaped by a combination of factors. These factors include traditional values shared by the majority of the population, historical legacies, and the traumatic events of 1965 that were experienced by the nation.

However, following Diamond's argument that actions, doctrines, and teachings of political leaders can also strongly influence the shaping of political

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Benedict Anderson and Audrey Kahin (eds.), Interpreting Indonesian Politics: Thirteen Contributions to the Debate (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1982), especially chapters by Ruth T. McVey, Dwight Y. King, and Richard Robison. See also Ismid Hadad, Political Culture and Social Justice in Indonesia (Townville: James Cook University of North Queensland, 1989), edited and translated by Antony Cominos.

culture,<sup>2</sup> we also need to include in our discussion the ways the New Order elites have sought to simultaneously serve their own interests and establish a stable, strong central government capable of maintaining political stability and rehabilitating the ailing economy. It will be suggested that it is this combination of factors which has shaped contemporary Indonesian political culture. In turn, this emerging political culture has meant that Indonesian domestic politics and foreign policy has tended to reject any move toward instigating a revolutionary, large scale—let alone foreign-influenced—democratization process.

The following discussion will be divided into three sections. The first section will be devoted to a discussion of traditional values, historical legacies, and the traumatic events of 1965. The next section will discuss how the actions, doctrines, and the teachings of the New Order leaders have combined with their interests so as to influence the formation of Indonesian political culture since the late 1960s. Included in this section is a discussion of the performance and legitimacy of the New Order regime. Finally, the third section will discuss how factors explored in the first section have intertwined with those studied in the second section so as to give a distinctive character to the Indonesian domestic politics and foreign policy.

## **A. Traditional Values, Historical Legacies, and the Traumatic Events of 1965**

### **1. Traditional Values**

Almost all scholars who study Indonesian politics agree that to a substantial extent Indonesian political culture has been influenced by a number

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<sup>2</sup> Larry Diamond, "Causes and Effects," in Larry Diamond (ed.), Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993), pp. 417-9.

of Javanese values. The reason for this is that since the colonial era government as well as political and socioeconomic activities have centred on Java. Moreover, the independence war—an important psychological aspect of modern Indonesian politics—was fought mainly in Java. This gives the Javanese considerable influence on the course of events in Indonesian politics. In addition, the Javanese constitute the majority of the Indonesian population, and they have numerically dominated the government, including the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI), the bureaucracy, and the national elite. This, in turn, makes it easy for Javanese values to permeate politics at the national level.<sup>3</sup>

Literature on modern Indonesian politics points to at least five values as responsible for the shaping and reshaping of Indonesian political culture.<sup>4</sup> First, the world is viewed as a stable world based on conflict; it is essentially a balance of the totality of forces that encompasses the conflicting currents between the macro- and microcosms. So long as persons and things are in their right place, regular, predictable, and without disturbance, the world is considered as balanced and in order.

The desirability of maintaining balance and order underlies the system of consultation (*musyawarah*) aimed at achieving a mutual consensus (*mufakat*).

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<sup>3</sup> Jusuf Wanandi, "Sociopolitical Development and Institution Building in Indonesia," in Robert A. Scalapino, Seizaboru Sato, and Jusuf Wanandi (eds.), Asian Political Institutionalization (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986), p. 186. It should be kept in mind that these values are themselves a mixture of animism, mysticism, Hindu-Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, and since the early 1920s have been influenced by Indonesian nationalism.

<sup>4</sup> See, *inter alia*, Donald K. Emmerson, Indonesia's Elite: Political Culture and Cultural Politics (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), especially pp. 175-258; Niels Mulder, Mysticism and Everyday Life in Contemporary Java (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983), 3rd. Ed., pp. 36-113; Koentjaraningrat, Javanese Culture (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985); and Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), especially chapters 1 and 3.

Through such a process of decision making, all individuals involved should attempt to establish the totality and completeness of the wishes and opinions of all participants in the belief that the completeness or oneness (*kemanunggalan*) guarantees the truth, and that the truth is contained in the harmonious unity of the deliberating group. Only if the *musyawarah* fails to meet *mufakat* can the decision be made through the voting process, although the Javanese tend to avoid this option and prefer instead to delay the *musyawarah* or even not to make any decision at all.

Second, the interests of the individuals are de-emphasized in favour of those of the society. For Javanese, life in society should be characterized by the value of *rukun* (harmony) in which individuals are supposed to maintain a low profile, not to compete but to share, to be obedient, dependent, reliable, and co-operative. The value of *rukun* is best enacted in the *musyawarah*, but one should not press his point to the extent that others find him an obstacle to the decision making. The *mufakat*, therefore, should not only reflect unanimity, but also the harmony of all elements.

Third, changes—including political, social, and economic development—should follow an evolutionary path. This value is closely related to the above values; that is, any change in the society should not disturb the social equilibrium and harmony, predictability, and appropriateness.

Fourth, the relations among individuals, either horizontally or vertically, must reflect a sense of *halus* (respectful, polite, obedient, and distant). This value, in particular, dictates that criticism levelled against rulers and other social groups should be expressed in a polite, often indirect, way so that no one will feel disturbed. It is believed that overt criticism will only undermine the

social balance and harmony that are important to maintain in a world dominated by conflicting interests.

Finally, seniors and superiors are highly respected, and patron-client ties tend to be considered as natural in the superior-subordinate relationship. The patron, or *bapak*, usually assumes extensive obligations towards his clients, or *anak buah*. These include providing his clients with economic well-being, and physical and social security. The clients, in turn, owe the patron an incalculable debt, known as *hutang budi*, a kind of indebtedness which requires that the clients abide by their patron's wishes and policies, and take every effort to secure the patron's position high in the hierarchy.

## 2. Historical Legacies

Another factor influencing the formation of political culture in the New Order era is the political history of the nation. Theoretically speaking, the cultural and geographical diversity of the country has been important factors in determining its pattern of political and economic development. While centuries of inter-island communication, cultural contact, and long-distance trade have established a sense of commonality among its people, it was the colonial experience which created a national consciousness. Therefore, Indonesian nationalism was—in a very basic sense—the product of opposition to Dutch colonial rule, not a logical outcome of inter-island and cultural contacts.

With the proclamation of independence in 1945, disparate local, regional, and religious sentiments reasserted their sway and competed with nationalism as prime foci of identification and commitment. The struggle for independence, including the wars of 1947 to 1949, did very little to overcome this problem. Moreover, deviations from the 1945 Constitution were allowed to

occur as a tactic both to gain the support of world public opinion for the Republic's struggle, and to meet demands from various social and political forces for greater political participation. This resulted in a national elite that was sharply divided along ideological lines.

In the 1950s ideological divisiveness among political elites was deepened as Indonesia entered an era of liberal or parliamentary democracy. Adopted to win sympathy from the West and to accommodate demands from divided elites for more participatory procedures, liberal democracy, with an active parliamentary system, was introduced in 1950. Far from becoming mature and stable, the system was hopelessly paralyzed by divisions among secular, Islamic and communist parties—all seeking their divergent political interests. Succeeding cabinets floundered over issues of religion, ideology, regionalism, centralized governmental control and economic policy. Eventually, in the wake of anti-government regional and religious revolts, and acrimonious ideological debate among political elites, the parliamentary system was thoroughly discredited in 1959 to be replaced by a highly personalized system of "Guided Democracy."<sup>5</sup>

With the inauguration of Guided Democracy, Sukarno placed himself at the centre of the political realm. He opposed Western parliamentary practices and majority decisions—50 percent plus one should rule—as basically enhancing rather than solving conflict and putting minorities in the position of permanent losers. He believed that Indonesia should return to the system of *musyawarah*

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<sup>5</sup> For in-depth studies on the rise and fall of liberal democracy in Indonesia in 1950-1959, see Herbert Feith, The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962); and Daniel S. Lev, The Transition to Guided Democracy: Indonesian Politics 1957-1959 (Ithaca: Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1966), monograph series.

outlined in the 1945 Constitution although, in practice, he violated most of the constitution's stipulations. For example, he dissolved the Parliament and established an appointed Parliament with members drawn from several of the existing parties and functional groups, thus placing the reins of power in his hands. Sources of power that he could not directly control he sought to neutralize by playing them off against their opponents within the constantly changing array of councils, fronts, and movements that he created for that purpose.

The new political system also witnessed the growing importance of the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI), and this can be traced back to the late liberal-democracy years. In response to the regional crises and the ineffectiveness of succeeding governments in Jakarta, Sukarno declared martial law for the whole country on March 1957, thereby giving ABRI vast emergency powers. The important role of ABRI was further enhanced in December 1957 when it seized the bulk of the advanced sectors of the economy as Jakarta decided to nationalize much of the vast Dutch corporate empire in retaliation for the disagreements between Indonesia and the Netherlands over the West New Guinea issue. In 1958 it had become clear that Sukarno had no choice but to rely on ABRI as the regional unrest mounted and there was evidence that the United States and its allies were financing and arming the dissidents.<sup>6</sup> It was in this year that ABRI, under the leadership of General Nasution, declared its "middle way" concept which then served as a source of legitimacy for ABRI's

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<sup>6</sup> For a good discussion of the US direct involvement in Indonesian politics from 1957 to the first half of 1960s, see Audrey R. Kahin and George McT. Kahin, Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia (New York: The New Press, 1995), especially pp. 102-216.

engagement in politics. By this concept, ABRI insisted that “the military would not assume political power but would play a political role as one of the forces deciding the fate of the nation.”<sup>7</sup>

Until 1962 ABRI was the second most powerful actor after Sukarno in the new system, both as a counterbalance for the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI)—which was increasingly capable of recruiting the masses—and as a supporter of Sukarno in his efforts to develop a new, indigenous political system. However, the alliance between ABRI and Sukarno turned into a confrontation in 1963 when Sukarno embarked on liberating West New Guinea from the Dutch, while ABRI insisted that the scarce resources of the country should be used first to rehabilitate the economy.

When Indonesia finally succeeded in defeating the Dutch in West New Guinea (which later became Irian Jaya), Sukarno’s power had risen to such an extent that he was able to remove his opponents in the military and replace ABRI with the PKI as his main political supporter. The situation was at best unstable, however, and the fundamental reason was economic. Commenting on Indonesian economic conditions between 1963 and 1965, Mackie states:

[a]s inflation spiraled to reach 100 percent per annum by 1963 and over 400 percent by 1965, production declined and living standards fell. The effective power of the government to carry out its grandiose development plans, or even the most basic functions of government, gradually crumbled, and its basic regulatory mechanisms progressively atrophied....Meanwhile, as hardships increased, social and political tensions mounted steadily.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ulf Sundhaussen, “Indonesia: Past and Present Encounters with Democracy,” in Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour M. Lipset (eds.), Democracy in Developing Countries: Asia (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), p. 435.

<sup>8</sup> Jamie Mackie, “Indonesia: Economic Growth and Depoliticization,” in James W. Morley (ed.), Driven by Growth: Political Change in the Asia-Pacific Region (Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 74.



### **3. The Traumatic Events of 1965**

It has widely been noted by observers and analysts that the 1965 coup attempt inspired by the PKI was a major turning-point in the history of independent Indonesia. Six military generals, including the army commander, were murdered on the evening of 30 September 1965. Within hours the coup collapsed and its leaders had surrendered to Major General Suharto--by standing order deputizing for the army commander whenever the latter was absent--who had co-ordinated the counter-coup measures. The next six months saw the worst mass slaughter in the history of modern Indonesia. Hundreds of thousands of alleged or real communists and their sympathizers were killed by nationalist, Muslim, Christian, and Hindu youths, as well as the army.

The impact of that great social and political convulsion on the minds of Indonesian people has been far-reaching. It gave legitimacy to a total hostility towards communism and other Marxist or left-wing ideas. These ideas continue to be viewed as a dangerous, potentially treasonable ideology. The events of 1965 also gave rise to a strong desire for social and political order among the population for fear that any return to a similar breakdown in law and order would lead to the total collapse of the nation. Such psychological conditions provided Suharto with a very substantial measure of moral authority to restore order and to end Sukarno's political romanticism. When Suharto eventually formally supplanted Sukarno as president in 1968, he had won the support of the majority of the population to his priorities of rehabilitating the economy and restoring order. In fact, in these tumultuous years many Indonesians--especially the ordinary people--saw the rise of the New Order under Suharto's leadership as the best--if not the only--prospect for a stable government.

## B. Politics of the New Order

The development of Indonesian political culture in the New Order era has also been strongly influenced by actions, doctrines and teachings of the elites of the New Order, especially Suharto. Their role in shaping and reshaping the political culture as we know it today can be traced back to the early years of the New Order, when the newly-formed regime was challenged to both restore order and rehabilitate the ailing economy.

When he came to power Suharto recognized that rehabilitating the economy was his main task and that in the long run it could legitimate or break his regime. He was also aware that his ability to rehabilitate the economy would in large part depend upon his ability to restore and maintain order by establishing a stable, strong central government in Jakarta. The only way for Suharto and his followers to realize such goals was to reimplement the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila because, as Sundhaussen correctly puts it, "[p]art of the justification for the overthrow of Sukarno was that he had violated the 1945 Constitution as well as the stipulations of the *Pancasila*; so the New Order had to be seen to be based on the values contained in both."<sup>9</sup>

However, as we shall see, the efforts taken by the elites of the New Order to reimplement the constitution and the Pancasila ideology were inextricably intertwined with their efforts to maintain and advance their interests- -if necessary by running counter to the stipulations of the constitution and the ideology.

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<sup>9</sup> Sundhaussen, "Indonesia: Past and Present...", p. 439.

## 1. Politics and the 1945 Constitution

Following the fall of Sukarno, the Suharto government tried systematically to give the impression that it was acting upon the 1945 Constitution so as to gain more support from the population. We will return to this issue later. But, first, we need to take a close look at the constitution itself. Promulgated in 1945 under conditions that required centralized decision-making in order to carry out the armed struggle against the Dutch, the constitution was formulated by national leaders who had not derived their mandate from the people. Consequently, in formulating the constitution they were anxious to take care that the constitution they framed was in accordance with the traditions of the people, was in conformity with their religion, and was consonant with modern needs. The result was a constitution which gave very considerable power to the executive led by a president. Indeed, this power is assigned to the president in such a way that many observers and analysts see the constitution as providing "the possibility of a dictatorial president."<sup>10</sup> Seen in its historical context, perhaps the real problem is in the fact that the constitution was formulated in a very vague fashion and was based on a belief that whoever becomes the president, he or she will act in the best interest of the country—a belief that strongly prevailed in 1945 among the formulators of the constitution as well as Indonesians in general.

Briefly put, under the 1945 Constitution Indonesia is a unitary state—a Republic—with the highest power in the hands of the people. This power is exercised through the People's Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*, or MPR), which meets every five years to determine

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<sup>10</sup> Chua Beng Huat, "Looking for Democratization in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," Contemporary Southeast Asia, Vol. 15, No. 2, September 1993, p. 137.

the broad lines of state policy and elect both president and vice-president. The constitution guarantees such basic human rights as freedom of expression and religion as well as equity before the law, but it also calls for harmony between individual and societal rights.

The president has overall power over the armed forces. He appoints ministers and regional governors who in turn are to be responsible to him, not to the MPR. In the enactment of laws and in the budgetary process the president must consult with the day-to-day parliament, the *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* or DPR. Both the president and the DPR have veto rights, but neither has the power to direct the other; it is the MPR—under certain circumstances—that can exercise control over the president. Members of the MPR come from two corners: those who are members of the DPR and represent the electorate, and those who are appointed to the assembly to represent functional groups and the provinces.<sup>11</sup>

From the early years of the New Order Suharto, supported not only by the ABRI but also by the so-called original New Order coalition (which consisted of Western-educated technocrats, political parties, leading members of the intelligentsia, and student, youth, and religious organizations), was firm that the Indonesian political system should be based on the 1945 Constitution. Perhaps the only problem facing Suharto and his followers during that time was that their real and potential enemies—especially the communists and Sukarno sympathizers, as well as the most active anti-Communist politicians who were

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<sup>11</sup> Undang-undang Dasar, Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila, dan Garis-garis Besar Haluan Negara (The Constitution, the Directives for the Realization and Implementation of Pancasila, and the Broad Lines of State Policy) (Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, n.d.), pp. 1-21.

likely to be difficult to control—still had a substantial following and were likely to beat them in a completely free election. When the government won the 1971 general election, it was clear that this was achieved under its terms. By combining the tactics of political manipulation, intimidation, repression, and persuasion, the elites of the New Order were able to maintain and advance their political power in the subsequent elections that have taken place on a five-yearly basis since 1977. It should be noted, however, that this was achieved in the face of some resistance from the New Order's critics.

Three political conditions (as opposed to the economic conditions, which will be discussed later) allowed the elites of the New Order to maintain and advance their political power throughout the 1970s and 1980s. First, the ABRI has become an active, dominant political player legitimating itself by the new doctrine of "dual function" or *dwi-fungsi*. Published widely on August 1966, the doctrine stipulates that ABRI is both a military and a social-political force, implying that it has the right not only to defend the country and maintain order, but also to shoulder civil functions should the situation necessitate it.<sup>12</sup> Given the chaotic situation of the time, the doctrine led to the installation of officers—especially from the army—in key positions of power in politically and economically strategic offices both at the central and regional levels. Although their presence has become less pervasive today, military officers—in and out of uniform—remain significant political figures and are involved in important features of national life.

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<sup>12</sup>David Jenkins, *Suharto and His Generals: Indonesian Military Politics 1975-1983* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1984), pp. 2-5. The *dwi-fungsi* doctrine was first published in April 1965 as a modification to the 1958 ABRI's "middle way" concept.

Second, it has become an unwritten policy that only those who have been willing to discard their hard-core ideological ballast and commit themselves instead to supporting the New Order regime could participate actively in politics. This policy first appeared in 1968 in the form of granting the president the right to appoint to the DPR 75 officers and 25 civilians in addition to the 360 to be chosen in the election, and another 460 nominees to the MPR to represent not only functional groups and the provinces, but also the ABRI. The president was also given the right to veto the list of candidates of political parties prior to the general elections so as to guarantee that those with communist leanings would not make a political comeback in the DPR. Such rights, which turned out in the mid-1970s to be permanent rather than temporary rights, enable the president "to effectively dismiss potential candidates with oppositional views."<sup>13</sup> The long-term implication of the policy is far-reaching in that the DPR and MPR tend to perform according to executive wishes rather than the other way around.<sup>14</sup>

The same policy also resulted in the reining in of various elements of the original New Order coalition which were too critical of abuses of power and corruption among many New Order leaders, including the president and his family. Throughout the 1970s and up to the mid-1980s, Muslim radicals as well as student activists and organizations, independent intellectuals, and some military figures, who demanded more democratic procedures and a cleaner government, were denied access to decision-making processes that had

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<sup>13</sup> Huat, "Looking for Democratization...", p. 143.

<sup>14</sup> Howard M. Federspiel, "Muslim Intellectuals and Indonesia's National Development," Asian Survey, Vol. 31, No. 3, March 1991, p. 233.

increasingly been centralized in the presidential palace. Some of these critics eventually discarded their radicalism and worked instead with the government as loyal critics. Still others continued criticizing the regime, some worked on an individual basis and others formed non-governmental organizations.<sup>15</sup>

Third, the ABRI-sponsored party--*Golongan Karya* (the Functional Group, or Golkar)--has become an inseparable part of the New Order. Formed in 1964, Golkar was able to claim in the late 1960s to be the only political party identified with the interests of the society as a whole in contrast to the still ideologically-fragmented nine old-line political parties. Therefore, it is not surprising that, combined with the intimidation tactics employed by the government and ABRI, Golkar was increasingly able to gain popular support, bringing it into direct competition with Muslim parties which were able to maintain their traditional following in the 1971 general election.

Fear of the possibility that in the following general elections Golkar's votes would be outnumbered by those of the Muslim parties, the New Order elite decided in 1972 to secure Golkar's position by simplifying the party system. It was argued by Suharto and his close associates that Golkar plus two rather than nine political parties<sup>16</sup> would create a better condition for the working of the *musyawarah* in the DPR and MPR as stipulated in the constitution. Over their objections, the old nine political parties were forced to amalgamate into two in 1973: the four Muslim parties formed the Development

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Hamish McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1981), pp. 112-258 *passim*; and Michael R.J. Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto: Order, Development, and Pressure for Change* (New York: Routledge, 1994), rev. ed., pp. 37-193 *passim*.

<sup>16</sup> Since its inception in the early 1960s, leaders of Golkar as well as the ABRI have continuously refused to call Golkar a party, partly because of their dislike of Indonesian political parties. Nevertheless, it is a political party, and has been the government party since the late 1960s.

Unity Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* [PPP]), while the three secular parties and the two Christian parties formed the Indonesian Democratic Party (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* [PDI]).

Then in 1975, the New Order took another step to strengthen Golkar's position vis-a-vis PPP and PDI by adopting the concept of "floating mass." Under this concept, the political parties were, and still are, banned from operating below the district level—except for a brief period close to elections. The reason put forward to justify the policy was that the vast majority of Indonesia's population was still unenlightened (*masih bodoh* or still stupid) and thus susceptible to being misled.<sup>17</sup> However, given the fact that administrators at the lower levels were increasingly being appointed by the central government instead of locally nominated or elected, it is clear that Golkar benefited from this policy, asserting its influence down to the village level.

## 2. Politics and the Pancasila Ideology

Equally important with regard to the New Order's efforts to develop a new political culture in the post-Sukarno Indonesia is the inscription of the Pancasila ideology in the national consciousness. Briefly, Pancasila consists of five principles or *sila*, succinctly stated in Indonesian but—like the constitution—rather ambiguous when subjected to close analysis.<sup>18</sup> These principles are (1) a belief in one supreme being; (2) a commitment to a just and civilized humanitarianism; (3) a commitment to the unity of Indonesia; (4) a commitment

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<sup>17</sup> See, Leo Suryadinata, Military Ascendancy and Political Culture: A Study of Indonesia's Golkar (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University, 1989).

<sup>18</sup> It should also be added here that the Pancasila is less suggestive when translated into English.



to the idea of democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of *musyawarah* amongst representatives; and (5) a commitment to social justice for all the Indonesian people.

Judging from past experience in which economic development had been obstructed because governments had been unable to transcend competing ideological interests on which the political parties were based, the New Order decided, in the second half of 1970s, to elevate Pancasila to the status of the national ideology. The first step in this direction was that in 1978 the government embarked on an extensive program of up-grading courses on Pancasila. Known as the *P4* courses (a contraction which can be translated as the Directives for the Realization and Implementation of Pancasila), all civil servants below the rank of cabinet minister and all students preparing to study abroad are obliged to attend these two-week courses. Later, other groups such as government-sponsored youth organizations, and the only recognized labor union of All-Indonesian Worker Union (SPSI) found it advisable to organize their own *P4* courses.

The material presented in the courses is aimed at interpreting the values contained in Pancasila so that they could be understood as a crystallization of past experience, an expression of present perceptions, and the future aspirations of the nation. In reality, however, the courses have functioned more as a means to justify the policies of the New Order, especially in the economic and political fields. Regarding the economy, *P4* vaguely stresses that the correct path to economic development is one lying somewhere between capitalism and socialism, which emphasizes the interests of the whole society over those of individuals but at the same time avoids state domination of the

economy. No further discussion is offered of the ways in which the economy and various social relationships might have to be restructured so as to realize the desired economic system. Further interpretation is left to the government.

As far as politics is concerned, the courses give the New Order elite an ideological means to justify its emphasis on order and stability. References to ABRI and its doctrine of dual-function are made, implying that national development can proceed only if ABRI actively takes part in the process. Parts of P4 also assert that security is a basic precondition for national development, encompassing ideological security, political stability, economic justice, and social and cultural harmony, and it is the primary responsibility of ABRI to uphold this principle.<sup>19</sup>

Another step taken by the New Order to elevate Pancasila to the status of the national ideology was the promulgation in 1985 of the laws on political parties and on mass organizations. Hence, all mass organizations and political parties have to subscribe to Pancasila as the sole principle (*azas tunggal*). The government is given the right to disband any mass organization or political party that violates the law.<sup>20</sup> There were protests from Muslims who argued that religion should not be replaced by a man-made ideology as a society's guiding principle. Other protests also came from the advocates of democracy within and outside the establishment (some of them came from respected retired generals), who argued that the law ran counter to the principle of unity in diversity highly

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<sup>19</sup> Michael Morfit, "Pancasila Orthodoxy," in Colin MacAndrews (ed.), Central Government and Local Development in Indonesia (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 42-55.

<sup>20</sup> Michael van Langenberg, "Analysing Indonesia's New Order State: A Keywords Approach," Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs, Vol. 20, Spring 1986, pp. 1-47; and Vatikiotis, "Indonesian Politics...", p. 104.

honoured by the constitution and Pancasila, and that the law would only put a damper on initiative and creativity within society. Still, the government got its way in implementing the laws since it had all the necessary means to do so.

### **3. Performance and Legitimacy**

Discussing the politics of the New Order without making reference to the Suharto government's performance would be incomplete because it would fail to recognize the very foundation upon which the legitimacy of the New Order rests. As our discussions in Chapter Two suggest, the most impressive performance of the New Order has been in the economic field. Even the strongest critic of the New Order must be willing to acknowledge its economic achievements. Only a couple of years after Suharto assumed power, his government managed to reduce the rate of annual inflation. It went from 650 percent in 1966 to 12 percent in 1968, allowing him to initiate an ambitious first five-year development plan in 1969. This record was followed by two decades of rapid economic growth and social change, prompting Schlosstein to include Indonesia as one of the "Asia's new little dragons," along with Thailand and Malaysia.<sup>21</sup>

Such a success story cannot be separated from the New Order's policies to rehabilitate the ailing economy left by Sukarno. In particular, it was Suharto's decision to end Sukarno's policy of confrontation and establish instead a friendly foreign policy towards the West that allowed the New Order to draw in massive foreign aid, loans, and investment, especially from Japan, the US, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and a number of donor

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<sup>21</sup> Steven Schlosstein, Asia's New Little Dragons: The Dynamic Emergence of Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1991), pp. 18-133 *passim*.

countries that formed the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) in 1967. In addition, Suharto's decision to cooperate closely with resident Chinese businessmen was also important, since this minority has not only more capital compared to the indigenous bourgeoisie, but also international market connections.

The OPEC windfall in 1973 and the revival of raw-material exports during the 1970s further accelerated the rehabilitation of the economy, allowing Indonesia to develop an industrial base in the second half of the 1970s. This period also witnessed the formation of a complex "alliance" of foreign investors, Chinese bourgeoisie, the urban technocrat/administrative/managerial class, and politically dominant state bureaucrats (politico-bureaucrats). Though the major benefits of the economic boom have been reaped by this alliance, it must be admitted that the population at large has also experienced a remarkable increase in average levels of living and well being.<sup>22</sup> All this, in turn, gives Suharto and the New Order most of their legitimacy among the populace.

Equally important is the New Order's achievement in stabilizing the country. After twenty years of post-independence instability, regional revolts and continuing economic problems, the Suharto regime has succeeded in creating a relatively stable society in the archipelago, although this was achieved at the expense of democratic principles. Clearly, there are economic and political factors at work that have allowed Suharto to maintain order for

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<sup>22</sup> Richard Robison, "Culture, Politics, and Economy in the Political History of the New Order," in Anderson and Kahin, "Interpreting Indonesian Politics...", pp. 131-148; see also Richard Robison, Indonesia: The Rise of Capital (North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986); and Hans-Dieter Evers, "The Growth of an Industrial Labour Force and the Decline of Poverty in Indonesia," in Daljit Singh and Liak Teng Kiat (eds.), Southeast Asian Affairs 1995 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1995), pp. 165-173.

nearly three decades. There is an observable fact that having and maintaining a relatively secure, well-paid job in a sea of poverty has in itself become a privilege for most Indonesians. This, in turn, has its own implications in that the majority of the population tends to caution against what can be perceived as revolutionary activities which may result in chaos comparable to the traumatic events of 1965. Focusing on the linkage between economic growth, political life, and a stable society in Indonesia, Huat asserts:

The emergence of the various privileged classes, whose interests are tied to the continuation of economic growth, has a moderating effect on the political sphere, hence there is greater political stability. These inextricably tied, mutually re-inforcing social, political and economic effects jointly produce a stable society.<sup>23</sup>

In discussing economic growth and political restrictions in Indonesia Sundhaussen argues that legitimacy has never been very high, since some significant sections of society were, and still are, denied an input into the political system. There have been continuous and severe criticisms of the regime by students, intelligentsia, and retired generals since the early 1970s and—as has been discussed in the previous chapter—such criticisms intensified during the 1980s. These criticisms have questioned the New Order's legitimacy on the basis of its corruption, the excessive role of ABRI in civilian offices, its unevenly- distributed economic outcomes, and its lack of democratic procedures. However, Sundhaussen also acknowledges that,

it appears that as long as a growing proportion of the population enjoys the fruits of Soeharto's economic policies and remembers the economic and political chaos of the pre-Soeharto days, his legitimacy may be

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<sup>23</sup> Huat, "Looking for Democratization....," p. 139.

questioned but his critics will not gain enough elite and popular support to endanger his tenure of office.<sup>24</sup>

What can be deduced from this phenomenon is that as long as the economic performance is observable, the New Order's strategy of depoliticization appears to be defensible. It also strengthens the notion that only strong central government characterized by technocrats working in tandem with the military can deliver the economic goods. Moreover, in the memory of elderly Indonesians, the economic failure of the pre-Suharto Indonesia has been associated with ideologically fragmented civilian governments and the liberal democracy that produced them.

### **C. Manifestations of the Political Culture**

After discussing what can be considered as sources of post-Sukarno Indonesian political culture, it is now possible to consider how that political culture is manifested in domestic politics and foreign policy.

#### **1. Political Culture and Domestic Politics**

Influenced by the Javanese traditional value system, Indonesian politics tends to revolve around patron-client relationships. In the Suharto era the tendency for Indonesian politics to develop along the lines of patron-client relationships has been greater than before, and this can be attributed to the way the New Order elite developed its power base. In line with the 1945 Constitution which, as mentioned earlier, provides for the possibility of a dictatorial president, the power structure has been hierarchically arranged so that the executive or government has considerable power over other state

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<sup>24</sup> Sundhaussen, "Indonesia: Past and Present...", p. 456.

institutions. The power structure in the executive itself follows the same pattern so that the power of the president is practically unchallenged. Given the patron-client structure which underpins the president's position, it is not difficult to conceive of the relationships between the president and his subordinates as having been strongly influenced by the former's personality.

Born and brought up in a family with a strong Javanese background, Suharto with his Javanese style of leadership has encouraged the Javanese patron-client culture to permeate every level of the political structure. It affects the way the officials at the top of the hierarchy develop their relations with those at the lower levels of the hierarchy. It also characterizes the relations between those who are closer to the centre of power and those who are farther away from the centre, either within or outside the establishment.<sup>25</sup>

It is worth mentioning that in Indonesian politics the relationship between a superior and his immediate subordinates is rather complex. As Pye has argued, in many cases the initiative usually comes from below so that subordinates "are striving to gain the recognition of higher officials" and, as a result, it is not uncommon that a patron finds it difficult to dismiss his subordinate from office. The patron himself needs subordinates as his clients since it is they who give meaning to his position as a patron. In such a situation "it is not at all certain whether it is the few patrons or the many clients who are manipulating the relationships."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See Lucian W. Pye, Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), especially pp. 111-20 and 303-11.

<sup>26</sup> Pye, Ibid., pp. 117-8.

The prevalent tendency for Indonesians to perceive their environment as hierarchically structured also can be observed in the elite-mass relationships. Not only has such a tendency been influenced by the Javanese values, but also by two other factors related to the ways the New Order manages the country. First, the New Order's policy to adopt the concept of floating mass discussed earlier has bolstered the dividing line between the elites and the masses. Hence, the elites tend to claim that they know everything, including what is the best for the masses, just like a *bapak* or father claiming that he knows what is the best for his children. The masses, on the other hand, tend to—or more precisely should—be passive, leaving all difficult issues and problems to be solved by those who are higher in the hierarchy.

At times when the burden of being passive becomes unbearable and the masses express their protests (through student demonstrations or worker strikes for instance), the New Order elite usually will respond with the argument that a third party has inspired and organized the masses to achieve its own interest. It is highly unlikely, from the elite's point of view, that the masses—who are *masih bodoh* or still stupid and unenlightened—are able to organize themselves and resort to expressing their concerns in such ways. Muslim fundamentalists and former PKI members are those who have often been blamed for student demonstrations, worker strikes, and social unrest among the poor although, in most cases, the government failed to show concrete evidence to support its accusations.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> It is quite interesting to note that such a way of thinking of the New Order elite is in consonance with Davies' argument that "socioeconomically deprived poor people are unlikely to make a successful rebellion, a revolution, by themselves. Their discontent needs the addition of the discontents developing among individuals in the middle class and the ruling class when they are rather suddenly deprived (socioeconomically or otherwise)." See James Chowning Davies



Another factor influencing the nature of elite-mass relationships in the New Order era was the unprecedented strengthening of the financial power of the government and the weakening of the political influence and civil rights of the masses, especially in the period between 1973 and 1980. This phenomenon originated from a continuous inflow of massive foreign aid and loans that from 1967 onwards went directly and exclusively to the central government, coupled with the dramatic rise in the state's oil revenues in 1973-1974 and 1979-1980. With large sums of money at its disposal, the government was increasingly able not only to implement the politics of repression and co-optation, but also to make the society economically dependent upon the state.<sup>28</sup>

In such circumstances the elite-mass relationships have naturally tended to resemble the Javanese patron-client ties. The elites perceived themselves as *bapaks* or fathers,

the bringer of development....[T]he claim to power is legitimized and the exclusion of social forces from participation in the political process justified, on the grounds that the state possesses the scientific means for determining and implementing the common good.<sup>29</sup>

The masses, on the opposite side, occupied the position of *anak buah* (children, clients) who are not only weak and still unenlightened, but also "must...wait for a 'gift' (*anugerah*) from [their] superiors"<sup>30</sup> or *bapaks*.

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(ed.), When Men Revolt and Why: A Reader in Political Violence and Revolution (New York: The Free Press, 1971), p. 133.

<sup>28</sup> Richard Robison, "Class, capital and the state in New Order Indonesia," in Richard Higgott and Richard Robison (eds.), Southeast Asia: Essays in the Political Economy of Structural Change (London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 306.

<sup>29</sup> Robison, "Culture, Politics, and Economy...", p. 135.

<sup>30</sup> Hadad, "Political Culture...", p. 131.

What results from a combination of the prevalence of such patron-client relationships and other sources of post-Sukarno Indonesian political culture discussed in the previous sections is a culture that holds certain beliefs, perceptions, values, and norms as follows. First, stability is a--if not *the*--prerequisite of economic development. Special attention is paid to the maintenance of order and stability so that economic development--the major source of the regime's legitimacy--can be pursued. The desirability of maintaining order and stability underlies the political system in which civilians must work hand in hand with the military--even if this means limiting political participation of the masses. Superiors and subordinates, elites and masses, have to be in their right places, regular, predictable, and without disturbance. Expressing dissatisfaction and demanding changes by means of demonstrations and rallies are considered harmful to the public order which is necessary for the continuation of national development.

Second, criticism levelled against the elites of the New Order--particularly Suharto--should not be expressed in a rough, direct way, as children in a Javanese family will never directly criticize their father. Not only is it because the elites believe that they know everything and--by implication--they are unworthy of criticism, but also because they believe that overt criticism will undermine the social order and harmony. Direct and open criticisms made either by students, workers, intelligentsia, colleagues, or parliamentarians against the government are least likely to gain the desired response from the elites. Conversely, as Pye succinctly puts it, "a questioning of one of [their] decisions which is so elegantly phrased as to seem a compliment can bring an

instant response, and more likely than not an adjustment in the desired direction."<sup>31</sup>

Third, the New Order of General Suharto has made it clear that it wants all political debate to be limited by the framework of the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila ideology. Indeed, the New Order has stressed its strong commitment to implement the constitution and ideology (as reflected in the dubbing of the present political order "Pancasila Democracy" and of the economic system "Pancasila Economy"). It has become one of the New Order's standard practices to label its critics as "anti-Pancasila" if they do not make clear references to the constitution and the ideology in articulating their criticisms. Consequently, government critics have increasingly become aware that they should remain within the sphere of legitimate debate and should thus base their criticisms on values contained in the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila.<sup>32</sup> Criticizing the New Order by citing other values will gain very little support from the masses, and is intolerable to the government. Even worse, criticizing the government and Suharto has increasingly been interpreted by the president as criticizing the 1945 Constitution and the Pancasila ideology—a stance that has invited retired generals and student activists to criticize the president even more since the early 1980s.<sup>33</sup>

Fourth, given the central role of Suharto in Indonesian politics, it is he who has the real capacity to decide on how, when, and how far political changes will and can occur. Having said this it does not mean that the

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<sup>31</sup> Pye, "Asian Power....," p. 116.

<sup>32</sup> Morfit, "Pancasila Orthodoxy," p. 49; and Hadad, "Political Culture....," pp. 57-138 *passim*.

<sup>33</sup> Jenkins, "Suharto and His Generals....," pp. 157-173.

importance of other members of the Indonesian elite as well as the masses can be put aside in understanding Indonesian politics. Rather, in line with the Javanese patron-client culture, initiatives may come from the masses up to the elite circle, and debate, actions, and minor changes may take place without the president expressing his wishes. However, if he perceives that the debate, actions, and changes will affect the life of the nation and especially the supremacy of the New Order, it is highly likely that the president will express his wishes, making clear his preferences as to which direction and how far things should and can go. His subordinates, then, will take every measure to fulfil the wishes of the president—if necessary beyond his literal words.

## **2. Political Culture and Foreign Policy**

It is striking to note that, consistent with the Javanese value system, Indonesian political elites since the inception of independent Indonesia in 1945 have perceived the outside world as essentially a world of conflicts. In this respect, the foreign policy elites, either in the Sukarno or Suharto eras, basically held and still hold the assumption of international relations as a continuing power struggle in which weak nations are constantly in jeopardy of subjugation by more powerful ones. This assumption has been reinforced by the fact that many Indonesians believe that their country's strategic location and abundant natural resources have historically led, and still will attract, foreigners to take advantage of Indonesia.<sup>34</sup> The country's unevenly scattered population,

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<sup>34</sup> In the early years of the New Order, Weinstein conducted research on the elite perceptions of the outside world. One of his findings still holds true today: that many Indonesian leaders see their country's position in the world as analogous to a pretty maiden who is constantly being approached by men who want to take advantage of her. See Franklin B. Weinstein, "The Indonesian Elite's View of the World and the Foreign Policy of Development," *Indonesia*, No.

widely dispersed islands, fragile economy, and ethnic and cultural diversity, on the other hand, have created among elites and masses alike a sense of vulnerability to foreign domination.

It is plausible, then, to hold that Indonesian foreign policy under the Sukarno and Suharto leaderships has been directed to achieve basically the same goals. These goals are (1) safeguarding Indonesia's independence and sovereignty, (2) maintaining the territorial integrity of the archipelagic nation-state, and (3) safeguarding Indonesia's economic interests. What distinguishes each regime's foreign policy from the other are the priorities and the strategy adopted to achieve these goals.<sup>35</sup> We will return to this issue later. But, first, we need to look briefly at what can be considered as the guiding principles of Indonesian foreign policy.

As defined in the preamble to the 1945 Constitution, the first principle of Indonesian foreign policy is anti-colonialism. In September 1948, Mohammad Hatta, the first Vice-President and then Prime Minister, formulated the other principle which, in fact, re-affirmed the first one. In addition to anti-colonialism, Hatta argued that Indonesia should adopt an independent and active foreign policy (*politik luar negeri bebas-aktif*). This principle was put forward as an Indonesian response to the rivalry that grew between the Soviet-led communist bloc and the American-led capitalist bloc in world politics, and as a

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12, October 1971, pp. 97-131; and his Indonesian Foreign Policy and the Dilemma of Dependence (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), especially pp. 42-110.

<sup>35</sup> Donald K. Emmerson, "Continuity and Rationality in Indonesian Foreign Policy: A Reappraisal," in Karl D. Jackson, Sukhumbhand Paribatra, and J. Soedjati Djiwandono (eds.), ASEAN in Regional and Global Context (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986), p. 90. See also Rizal Sukma, "The Evolution of Indonesia's Foreign Policy: An Indonesian View," Asian Survey, Vol. 35, No. 3, March 1995, p. 311.

manifestation of a widely held belief that, in Anwar's words, "a newly emerging country was little more than a pawn in super-power politics."<sup>36</sup> It is true, however, that the adoption of the principle was also intended to mitigate conflicts between the competing elites at home. By declaring Indonesia's equidistance in an increasingly bipolar world, Hatta tried "to prevent the ideological rivalry between the world's superpowers from aggravating the acute political differences within the country's political leadership."<sup>37</sup>

After the official transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands in December 1949, Sukarno began to employ an independent and active foreign policy. As Sukarno replaced liberal democracy with Guided Democracy in 1959, however, Indonesian foreign policy became more active at the expense of independence. At first, Sukarno was disappointed with the lack of a radical stance on the part of the newly formed Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Sukarno then envisioned a new world divided between the Old Established Forces (OLDEFOS) which consisted of the protagonists of the Cold War, and the New Emerging Forces (NEFOS) which consisted of the less developed, newly independent states. Later on, after winning the military campaign against the Dutch in Irian Jaya and then facing the perceived Western encirclement strategy through the Malay Federation plan, Sukarno's foreign policy to confront the OLDEFOS became more active and radical. The PKI, trying to take political advantage of the situation in its confrontation against the army, strongly

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<sup>36</sup> Dewi Fortuna Anwar, "Indonesia's Foreign Policy after the Cold War," in Daljit Singh (ed.), Southeast Asian Affairs 1994 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), p. 146.

<sup>37</sup> Sukma, "The Evolution....," p. 308.

supported Sukarno's decision to ally with the People's Republic of China as a tactic to topple the supremacy of the OLDEFOS in the region and beyond.

As stated earlier, when he came to power Suharto was well aware that rehabilitating the economy was his primary task. He also realized, however, that to reinvigorate the economy there was no choice other than to cooperate with the prosperous countries of the West, including Japan. Hence, Suharto abandoned Sukarno's confrontational foreign policy and adopted instead a more cooperative one aimed at securing aid and attracting foreign investors from the West. For Suharto and the newly emerging elites around him, aid was considered necessary for economic development, and development—rather than political romanticism—was a means of giving substance to independence.

It does not mean, however, that by adopting a more benign foreign policy Indonesia's Suharto has disposed of its desire to take an active role to change the world order in which—from the Indonesian perspective—the rich, industrialized nations continuously threaten the independence and sovereignty of the less developed, newly independent states. Rather, as mentioned earlier, what we see are changes in the strategy and priorities of Indonesia's foreign policy, not its long-term goals nor its underlying principles. Explaining the new course of Indonesian foreign policy, Suharto asserted in 1969 that "we shall only be able to play an effective role [in international affairs] if we ourselves are possessed of a great national vitality."<sup>38</sup>

Close economic relations with the West proved to be decisive in spurring the national economy, especially during the first five years of Suharto's rule.

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<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Michael Leifer, Indonesia's Foreign Policy (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), p. 112.

However, suspicions of the Western countries' intentions in giving aid to Indonesia still prevailed among Indonesians, reflecting their enduring perception of the outside world as essentially an exploitative order. From the outset Suharto was cautious not to compromise Indonesia's independence and sovereignty in dealing with the West. Indeed, in a speech in August 1969, he "placed great stress on Indonesia's determination to refuse aid if strings were attached."<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps Suharto's concern about Indonesia's independence and sovereignty from foreign domination is best illustrated by what Leifer has termed the country's "regional entitlement." To begin with, Suharto came to power at a time when the regional environment was dominated by the scale of US military intervention in Indochina. At the same time, there was an urgent need for Jakarta to restore Indonesia's credibility, both in the region so as to create a more friendly environment, and in the wider international community in order to secure financial support from the Western countries. While Indonesia obviously shared with the US a fear of communist expansion in the region, US massive military interference in Vietnam and the presence of American military bases in the region represented extreme examples of the superpowers' apparent natural intention to dominate small countries. And Indonesia was strongly opposed to this in principle.<sup>40</sup>

It was partly to deal with these competing pressures that Indonesia—rather than joining the existing pro-Western Association of Southeast Asia

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>40</sup> Although the New Order is unquestionably anti-communist, Jakarta perceived the Vietnam War as basically an independence war. Because of this Jakarta tended to be sympathetic towards Vietnam rather than supportive of the US.



(ASA) in which Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand were the members—took an active role in 1966 and 1967 in forming the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In fact, as Leifer and Anwar note, the creation of ASEAN in August 1967 was very much influenced by Indonesia's desire to establish a regional organization which would be free from any major power's interference. This was to be done without directly and unilaterally challenging the US presence in the region, for the Americans had become the principal external benefactors of the country.<sup>41</sup> The formulation of the concept of Southeast Asia as a zone of peace, freedom, and neutrality (ZOPFAN) in 1971 and its formal adoption as an ASEAN framework for political co-operation in 1976 were also strongly influenced by Indonesia's anxiety about the presence of a powerful external force in the region. Seen in a wider context, this is what the confrontation with Malaysia in the first half of 1960s, Indonesia's active role in ASEAN throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the incorporation of East Timor in 1976, and the border trouble with Papua New Guinea in the 1980s have in common: perceived external threats to the independence, sovereignty, and integrity of the Republic.

It is also intriguing to note that, given the paternalistic nature of the country's political culture, there has been a recurrent tendency for Indonesia to search for a leadership role in regional as well as global politics. A line of argument may be put forward that such a tendency results from the reality that "Indonesians are fully aware that theirs is the fifth largest nation in the world, and that they deserve respect for that fact alone."<sup>42</sup> It is also plausible to argue,

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<sup>41</sup> Leifer, "Indonesia's Foreign Policy," pp. 118-36 *passim*; and Dewi Fortuna Anwar, Indonesia in ASEAN: Foreign Policy and Regionalism (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), pp. 49-56.

<sup>42</sup> Sundhaussen, "Indonesia: Past and Present...", p. 467.

however, that the patronage political culture that has prevailed in Indonesian politics from Sukarno well into the Suharto era is also responsible for the persistence of such a tendency.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, in 1955 Indonesia held the renowned Asian-African Conference in Bandung, partly as an effort to mitigate the conflicting views among elites about the realization of an independent and active foreign policy, but also as a means of elevating Indonesia's place in world politics to the position of a leader of Asian-African countries. Six years later Sukarno, together with Tito of Yugoslavia, Nasser of Egypt, Nkrumah of Nigeria, and Nehru of India, formed the NAM with the intention of keeping the newly emerging countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and a few countries in Europe out of the Cold War. In August 1963, Sukarno became more active in projecting Indonesia as a leader of the oppressed nations by introducing the concept of NEFOS versus OLDEFOS. In November 1963 Indonesia held the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO), an event that, by hosting athletes from developing countries in Jakarta, was intended to challenge the international sports establishment, but also carried with it a message to the outside world that Indonesia had supporters to challenge the OLDEFOS.

The first two decades of the New Order government saw the lowering of Indonesia's profile in international relations. Throughout the 1970s and up to the mid-1980s, Indonesia focused its attention primarily on the regional cooperation in a belief that Southeast Asia as Indonesia's immediate environment should be dealt with first. Projecting a nonthreatening, cooperative,

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<sup>43</sup> Leifer does mention this phenomena, albeit in less than a paragraph. See Leifer, "Indonesia's Foreign....," p. 143.

low profile in the region, Indonesia put ASEAN as the cornerstone of its foreign policy. This does not mean, however, that the inclination to search for a leadership position has disappeared from the minds of Indonesian foreign policy elites. What we see in this period is basically a strategic retreat to allow Indonesia to work internally to regain its national vitality and to try externally to build an image of a good neighbour and friendly actor in international relations which is worth supporting financially.

Once the national vitality was observable (as reflected by its internal political stability combined with the steady economic growth), the tendency to search for a leadership position regained its strength. Of course, there were objective factors that have prompted Suharto to adopt a more assertive foreign policy from the mid-1980s onwards. Seen from a political culture perspective, however, it can be said that the paternalistic nature of Indonesian foreign policy has had a renaissance.

Thus, in April 1985, Indonesia commemorated the 30th anniversary of the Asian-African Conference in Bandung. This event, in Sukma's words, "served as a reminder that Jakarta used to play a leadership role in the Third World and now began to reclaim that position."<sup>44</sup> This was followed by Indonesia's initiative to solve the Cambodian issue outside the ASEAN forum in 1987 and, in 1990, to embark on the so-called dual-track diplomacy to help find a solution to the conflicting claims over the Spratly Islands in South China Sea, despite Indonesia not being one of the claimants.

Then, after being defeated in 1989 by Nicaragua in a bid for the chairmanship, Indonesia was eventually elected to lead the NAM in 1991 for the

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<sup>44</sup> Sukma, "The Evolution...", p. 313.

1992-1995 term. This was followed by securing support to occupy the chairmanship of APEC for the 1994-1995 term. It is through these forums--the NAM and APEC--that Indonesia sought to rejuvenate the issue of OLDEFOS versus NEFOS in its more widely accepted term, that is, the North-South dialogue, and to create a just new world order. Indonesia moved further when it was elected one of the non-permanent members of the UN Security Council in October 1994 and tried to set an agenda for reducing the domination of major powers in the Council.<sup>45</sup>

The list could be longer, but suffice it to say that these developments reflect the persistence of both the perception among Indonesians of the outside world as essentially an exploitative, dangerous environment, and the culturally-driven tendency for Indonesia to seek a leadership role in international relations.

To conclude this chapter, then, it can be said that Indonesian political culture and the elites of the New Order play a decisive role in determining the characteristics of the country's domestic politics and foreign policy. At home, a combination of factors--traditional values, historical legacies, the traumatic events of 1965, and efforts taken by the elites to simultaneously secure their interests and create a stable, wealthier society--have created a distinctive sociopolitical system. The system may allow changes towards a more democratic government to take place only if they allow for a gradual and cautious development, do not disturb the harmony and predictability of the society, and leave ample space for the ruling elite to secure its core interests.

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<sup>45</sup> This effort was unsuccessful as it overshadowed by such more pressing issues as civil war in Bosnia and suspected nuclear weapon plants in North Korea.

In the international arena, the same combination of factors has created an Indonesian foreign policy that holds at least two values. First, it should be based on *bebas-aktif* principle. But, due to the prevalence of Javanese paternalism, *aktif* has been interpreted as actively searching for a leadership role in international relations. Second, the principal task of Indonesian foreign policy is to serve national interests defined largely in terms of national economic interests, integrity, independence and sovereignty, and—we should add—elites' interests. In this regard, foreign criticisms of either Indonesian officials or aspects of the New Order government may only reinforce the Indonesian perceptions of the outside world as essentially an exploitative order. This, of course, bodes ill for the success of international forces to impose democratization on Indonesia.

It would be premature, however, to assume at this point that pressure for change discussed in the previous chapter has a limited impact on current and future developments of Indonesian politics. As one of strongest supporters of the New Order sees the matter, "The way we do things today may have been appropriate for the situation 20 years ago.... But [now] we should be more open for change and improvements."<sup>46</sup> Even then Minister of Interior, General (retired) Rudini, openly urged a group of students to promote democratic life, and emphasized that "We should not close ourselves to the development of democracies outside Indonesia."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> "Constraint on reform," Far Eastern Economic Review, June 15, 1989, p. 30, quoting General (retired) Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo.

<sup>47</sup> "Succession talk: Suharto's comments fuel increased political debate," Far Eastern Economic Review, April 27, 1989, p. 28.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **INDONESIA IN THE 1990s AND THE PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRATIZATION**

After discussing Indonesia's national and international changing environments, its political culture, and the interests, actions, doctrines, and the teachings of the New Order elite, it is now possible to explain current developments in Indonesian domestic politics and foreign policy, and to assess the prospects for democratization in the country. To begin with, many observers and analysts hold a pessimistic view regarding the current developments and the future of Indonesian politics. Vatikiotis, for instance, wonders whether all the talk about political openness in Indonesia since the late 1980s "was just another illusion."<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, Crouch points to the prevalence of traditional Javanese attitudes among the elites and the masses, and Indonesia's ability to play on the economic interests of the West to defuse foreign pressure for democratization, as two of the main obstacles to drawing an optimistic conclusion about Indonesia moving to democracy in the near future.<sup>2</sup>

Although it is indeed difficult to draw any conclusion about Indonesia, it will be argued that current developments in Indonesian domestic politics and

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<sup>1</sup> Michael R.J. Vatikiotis, "Party and Parliamentary Politics 1987-1993," in David Bouchier and John Legge (eds.), Democracy in Indonesia 1950s and 1990s (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1994), p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> Harold Crouch, "Democratic Prospects in Indonesia," in Bouchier and Legge, Ibid., pp. 123-6.

foreign policy essentially reflect the on-going "prolonged and inconclusive political struggle," to borrow Rustow's phrase.<sup>3</sup> It is a phase in which elites and the politically active citizens try to formulate democratic alternatives to the existing system as a response to Indonesia's changing environments, national and international. Theoretically speaking, as suggested in Chapter One, political culture and the elites' interests play decisive roles in this phase. Hence, the current political struggle will lead to democratization that proceeds gradually and cautiously, a process that is congruent with Indonesian political culture and allowing the parties involved enough time to reach some political compromise. Due to the generally negative perceptions of the West in Indonesia, foreign direct interference may not hasten but distort the process and encourage Indonesia instead to become more active on the international scene.

This chapter will be divided into three sections. The first section will discuss Indonesian domestic politics in the 1990s. Included in this section are discussions of the actions and the teachings of the Suharto government, and the national political discourse in the last six or seven years. The second section will then discuss Indonesian foreign policy in the 1990s, with special reference to the country's assertive posture in international politics and its response to foreign pressure for democratization and human rights observance. The concluding section, then, will briefly assess the democratic prospects in Indonesia by taking into consideration all discussions in the previous chapters and the first two sections of this chapter.

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<sup>3</sup> Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model," Comparative Politics, Vol. 2, April 1970, p. 352.

## **A. Indonesian Domestic Politics in the 1990s**

### **1. Recent Actions and Teachings of the Suharto Government**

It can be said that elite politics in Jakarta in the 1990s has been dominated by, among other things, perceived tensions between the president and military officers under the influence of then Minister of Defence and Security, General Murdani. Given his advantageous, constitutionally-secured position, his mastery of playing on the Indonesian patron-client political culture, and his relative successes in presiding over the country which enables him to command the respect of the majority of the people, Suharto faced practically no challenge to his reaffirmation of control over the armed forces (ABRI). Indeed, by all accounts, Suharto's position in the national power structure was, and still is, unchallenged.

As the Supreme Commander of ABRI, Suharto managed to intervene in the military sphere to weaken Murdani's networks. This was achieved by accelerating the promotions of relatives, former adjutants, and those who seemed to be committed to military professionalism. The military massacre of dozens of young East Timorese in Dili on 12 November 1991 gave Suharto additional leverage to control the ABRI.<sup>4</sup> The president rejected the sanitized version of the killings publicized by the ABRI headquarters, and ordered instead a high-level official inquiry into the incident. As a result, two generals closely associated with Murdani were sacked, and some mid-level ABRI commanders found that their association with Murdani began to damage their own careers.

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<sup>4</sup> See "Current Data on the Indonesian Military Elite: 1 July 1989--1 January 1992," *Indonesia*, No. 53, April 1992, pp. 93-97; "Current Data on the Indonesian Military Elite: 1 January 1992--31 August 1993," *Indonesia*, No. 56, October 1993, pp. 119-26; and "Current Data on the Indonesian Military Elite: 1 September 1993--31 August 1994," *Indonesia*, No. 58, October 1994, pp. 83-7.



Outside the military circle, Suharto undermined Murdani's influence and ABRI's overt presence in politics. In fact, the first half of the 1990s has witnessed ABRI's withdrawal from some important positions although, as an institution, it continues to play an important role in Indonesian politics. On the one hand, Suharto—judging from the events prior to the abortive coup of 1965—rejected any idea of sealing off the ABRI from the national political life "because it might resort to a coup."<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Suharto encouraged more civilians to take active roles in politics.

Thus, in December 1990 the president broke the ABRI's unwritten rule that Muslim support should not be mobilized for it would undermine the regime's commitment to upholding Pancasila as the only national ideology. Against the advice of high-ranking military officers, Suharto sanctioned the formation of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* [ICMI]) led by his favourite civilian minister, B.J. Habibie. This was followed by appointments of more civilians—notably from the ICMI—to key bureaucratic and ambassadorial posts which previously had gone to military officers.<sup>6</sup> However, other blows to seniors ABRI officers were yet to come.

In March 1993, Suharto ended Murdani's tenure of the Minister of Defence and Security. Murdani then retired completely from official life, thus ending further speculation about the 'tug-of-war' between he and the president. Late in the year Suharto intervened in the supposedly democratic election of the

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<sup>5</sup> "Closer to power," Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER), August 6, 1992, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> See "One more time: Suharto seen likely to stand again for president," FEER, August 15, 1991, p. 15; "The Sixth Development Cabinet Announced March 17, 1993," Indonesia, No. 5, April 1993, pp. 167-76; and Harold Crouch, "Indonesia: An Uncertain Outlook," in Daljit Singh (ed.), Southeast Asian Affairs 1994 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), p. 126.

general chairman of the government-backed party, Golkar, to ensure that his loyalist civilian Minister of Information, Harmoko, filled the job. This meant that for the first time in the New Order's history Golkar was led by a civilian, and since the post may become crucial during the presidential succession in the near future, this development prompted some senior officers to feel quite nervous. In 1995 Suharto moved further to reduce the military representation in the parliament (DPR), which will eventually lower the number of ABRI's seats by 25 percent before 1997. The ABRI officers generally felt no threat as the cut of military representation in the DPR does not directly affect the military 'dual-function' doctrine.<sup>7</sup>

At first glance, such developments could lead to the impression that Suharto's movements were intended to regain control over, and to compensate for his deteriorating relationship with, the ABRI. However, a closer examination suggests that current developments can also be seen as Suharto's response to Indonesia's changing environments. Some points can be put forward to support this argument. First, Suharto's decision to form a high-level official inquiry in 1991, which resulted in the sacking of officers close to Murdani, was essentially his response to international criticisms.<sup>8</sup> Suharto could not ignore criticisms coming from the international community which damaged his image at a time when he was elected chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. By ordering an independent investigation, he tried to impress national and international opinion that he is committed to improving human rights conditions in Indonesia.

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<sup>7</sup> "Strategic retreat: Lost seats in parliament no threat to army," FEER, May 18, 1995, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew MacIntyre, "Indonesia in 1992: Coming to Terms with the Outside World," Asian Survey, Vol. 33, No. 2, February 1993, pp. 204-6; and Michael R.J. Vatikiotis, Indonesian Politics under Suharto: Order, Development, and Pressure for Change (New York: Routledge, 1994), rev. ed., 187-8.

Second, Suharto's firm endorsement of ICMI was not influenced merely by his intention to compensate for the loss of strong support from factions in the military. It is true that, not long after its foundation, the ICMI was used to bolster the political position of the president vis-a-vis ABRI. It is also true, however, that Suharto's decision to extend his hand to Muslim intellectuals was influenced by his re-assessment of changes brought about by socioeconomic development in Indonesian society, particularly among middle class Muslims. After steadily marginalizing them in the 1970s and 1980s, the president realized that the time has come for the government to allow the increasingly critical, more-educated Muslims some legitimate space to participate in the national decision making process.<sup>9</sup> In the eyes of ICMI activists, this opportunity was long overdue. It is not surprising, therefore, that for the government's critics who joined the organization, "the legitimate, unmolested right" accorded to them "to contribute to political discourse...appears...to far outweigh the 'price' of being coopted by Suharto."<sup>10</sup>

Suharto's interference in the selection of a civilian to lead Golkar, and the downsizing of military representation in the parliament, also can be seen in the same light. Certainly, the president wanted to allow more civilians to play dominant roles in politics and for the government to better adapt to Indonesia's changing environments. This may be considered as a continuation of then Vice-

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Robert W. Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class," *Indonesia*, No. 56, October 1993, especially pp. 12-35; and Naimah S. Talib, "When the state co-opts Muslim intellectuals," *The Business Times*, February 24-25, 1996 (weekend edition), p. 11. It is worth noting that some prominent ICMI activists have been government's critics for long time. One of the ICMI founders, Dr. Imaduddin Abdulrahim, was jailed in 1978-1979 because of his criticism of Suharto regime.

<sup>10</sup> Douglas E. Ramage, "Pancasila Discourse in Suharto's late New Order," in Bouchier and Legge, *Democracy in Indonesia...*, p. 161.

President Sudharmono's policy, started in the early 1980s, of appointing more professional civilians to the bureaucracy and the Golkar. However, Suharto's civilianization in the 1990s is more important in that it affected top positions in the government circle. Moreover, it came at a time when many Indonesian intellectuals felt that ABRI's hand in politics is anachronistic. Commenting on Suharto's decision of allowing more civilians to hold key positions in Golkar and the government, an Indonesian academic was quoted as saying that "The military has played too dominant a role and [Suharto] wants to strike a balance where civilians will play an equally dominant role."<sup>11</sup>

It can be said, then, that entering the 1990s Indonesian political landscape has been changing. In the 1970s the military more or less constituted the government. In the 1980s, following a growing gap between the military and the palace, more civilians from Golkar were allowed to occupy an increasing number of official posts, especially the economically strategic positions in the bureaucracy. During the decade, the ABRI still dominated the national elite, including the leadership positions in Golkar, and continued to enjoy a considerable degree of institutional autonomy. In the 1990s the picture has changed slightly. As Aspinall puts it:

Although the military as an institution remains powerful, government is increasingly legitimated by civilian mechanisms, more civilians have been moving into its top levels, and the institutional interests of the military less and less occupy a central part in policy formulation.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "Party patron: Suharto's party picks first civilian leader," *FEER*, November 4, 1993, p. 14; see also "Father knows best: Suharto's civilianisation push raises military hackles," *FEER*, November 25, 1993, pp. 25-6. It should be added, however, that some civilians who have currently been elevated to key positions in government and Golkar come from the Suharto family, groups that are close to Suharto family, and the families of other senior bureaucrats.

<sup>12</sup> E. Aspinall, "Students and the Military: Regime Friction and Civilian Dissent in the Late Suharto Period," *Indonesia*, No. 59, April 1995, p. 22.

Such developments in Indonesian politics have contributed to a growing pluralist tendency in the elite circle. It is now becoming more difficult to conceive of the New Order as monolithic in nature. The elite factions—the ABRI, the Golkar, and high-ranking civilian bureaucrats associated with the ICMI—often manoeuvre for their own tactical advantage. Meanwhile, the president appears stronger than before by playing them off against each other. This, in turn, has its own consequences.

At worst, the current trend towards pluralism in the elite circle tends to perpetuate the patron-client political culture. Now that Suharto appears stronger than before and promotions to virtually all key positions in the Golkar, the bureaucracy and the military are subject to Suharto's personal approval, the would-be candidates for prized posts as well as the incumbents compete with each other to win the president's ear. Consequently, while we witness a process of political opening (which will be discussed below), we also see that the government's intolerance of dissenting opinions more or less remains in place. This is so because high-ranking officials and officers continuously strive for recognition from their superiors, and especially the president, by taking actions—mostly on their own—which can be seen as securing the positions of their patrons.

In particular, the military and some members of Indonesian elite have resorted more and more to cultivating the Dutch-inherited law of *haatzaai artikelen* as a means to threaten the government's critics and the press. The law allows the government to arrest those who spread hatred of the government, offend high-ranking officials, and especially insult the president. Hence, the New Order elite makes it perfectly clear that, while its policies may be criticized,

criticisms should be addressed in a polite, indirect way so that no one—particularly the president—would feel personally harassed. This is why Soemitro, a pro-democracy retired general, reminds his fellow democrats that "Criticism is all right, go ahead. But , if possible, avoid mentioning names."<sup>13</sup>

Vatikiotis' observation that the more enlightened elements of Indonesian society now feel that the New Order elites have become "too feudal" is correct.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, these elites tend to capitalize on the superior-subordinate relations not only to secure their tenure, but also to show to the president—the highest patron of the whole system—that they remain his loyal followers who will take every measure to ensure that no one would insult, or would stay free after insulting, the president. Of course, such an atmosphere contradicts the government's self-proclaimed commitment to political openness.

On the other hand, current developments have also created more political space for advocates of democracy inside and outside the establishment to express their concerns. So as to prove their commitment to greater political openness, the military and the palace allow NGOs to grow in number and student activists to demonstrate as long as any demonstration is held in a peaceful and polite manner. Meanwhile, it has become common to find reports in the media that members of the parliament (DPR) from Golkar and the ABRI—to differing degrees and in different ways—distanced themselves from the government on some issues. The security apparatus, acting to its own

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<sup>13</sup> "Criticize govt, not president, says Soemitro," *The Jakarta Post*, June 24, 1995, p. 2. See also reports on recent government actions to punish those who have violated the law, in "Stop press: Media ban stymies politics of openness," *FEER*, June 30, 1994, p. 17; "Bambang Warih Koesoemo misbehaved," *The Indonesia Letter*, No. 298, February 1995, p.1; and "Breach of discipline: speaker refuses to back firing of outspoken MP," *FEER*, March 16, 1995, pp. 17 and 20.

<sup>14</sup> Vatikiotis, "Indonesian Politics under Suharto....," p. 215.

advantage, also intermittently loosens its control. As a result, there has been increasingly open public debate on a range of policy matters, public protests have become an everyday occurrence, and many critical and dissenting groups have attained previously unthinkable public exposure. The press, while forced to apply self-censorship, could find ways to carry items that would not have been tolerated a decade ago. These include conflicts within the cabinet, as well as opinions from progressive members of the cabinet that support the idea of democratization. All this, in turn, invites more critics of the government to air their grievances, thus further fuelling the national debate on the need to improve the present political system.

## **2. Pancasila Discourse in the 1990s**

Most pro-democracy activists, groups, and NGOs in Indonesia are aware that they should avoid a losing strategy and opt instead for a strategy that remains within the sphere of legitimate debate. Therefore, they opt for articulating their concerns in the language of the state ideology, Pancasila. Certainly, there is good reason for doing this other than simply as a strategic choice. While admitting the universality of basic democratic ideas, advocates of democracy—with extremely few exceptions—strongly maintain that the realization of these ideas should be adjusted to the Indonesian social and cultural context. In his study on the relationship between international diffusion of democratic ideas and democracy discourse in Indonesia, Uhlin comes to an interesting conclusion. He argues that:

Indonesian democrats influenced by some Western democratic ideas certainly do not adopt everything from the West....[They] are highly selective in their adoption of ideas from abroad. Many ideas are totally rejected. The reason might be fear of repression..., but often it seems to

be a matter of ideological conviction, as when certain liberal ideas are rejected.<sup>15</sup>

It should be added that there are some basic democratic norms and ideas that have been adopted from the West by Indonesian democrats. These include demands that general, free, secret and fair elections be held, that the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government should be independent in relation to each other, that civil servants must be free from compulsory membership in any political party, that popular organizations, the press, and universities must be autonomous and free from government interference, that there must be equal access for all to justice, and that the term of office of the president should be limited to a maximum of two five-year periods.

Contrary to scholarly claims about the incompatibility of Islam and democracy, Indonesian Islam today has also become an important source of democracy discourse. Briefly put, the younger generations of Indonesian Muslim leaders and intellectuals have abandoned the idea of an Islamic state, because Indonesia's religious, regional, and ethnic diversity makes such an idea unrealistic. They maintain that "[t]he looking to the past and the sticking to tradition should be replaced by an orientation to the future, by a new creativity in dealing with life on earth."<sup>16</sup> For them, Islam should strive for tolerance,

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<sup>15</sup> Anders Uhlin, "Transnational Democratic Diffusion and Indonesian Democracy Discourses," Third World Quarterly, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1993, pp. 536-7. It should be added that Uhlin also finds that Indonesian democrats have difficulties in adapting liberal ideas to the Indonesian context. Part of the answer lies in the fact that liberalism is strongly associated with the Western world, and the West is not generally seen as a good model in Indonesia. According to him, "this is a result both of experiences during Dutch colonial rule and the confrontation between Islamic and Western cultures." See, p. 540. We may add that recent "clash" between the East Asian cultures and Western values also influences political thought in Indonesia.

<sup>16</sup> Cees van Dijk, "The Re-actualization of Islam in Indonesia," Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs, Vol. 25, Summer 1991, p. 77.



liberty, social justice, and the rule of law, and therefore Indonesian Muslims should take "a pluralistic, inclusivistic stance towards others."<sup>17</sup> There is no need to contradict Islam with democracy because, as Abdurrahman Wahid, the leader of 35-million strong *Nahdlatul Ulama* (the Awakening of Islamic Teachers [NU]) and perhaps the most important Muslim leader outside the establishment, argues:

according to Islamic political culture, no one is higher than the others. In pursuit of that an accountable government should be developed. We should reject any dictatorship. But also since Islam stresses the principle of deliberation, the way we uphold democracy is by deliberation, not by confrontation.<sup>18</sup>

Wahid and many other prominent independent Muslim leaders and intellectuals strongly hold that, in the Indonesian context, democracy can be realized if the New Order government is consistent in implementing the Pancasila. For them Pancasila is not an ideology but a political compromise among Indonesia's diverse religious, regional, and ethnic groups. Proper interpretation and implementation of Pancasila, so the argument runs, would encourage such values in Indonesian society as tolerance, liberty, social justice, and the equality before the law, which are essentially the pillars of genuine democracy.

Most critics of the government, both from Islamic and non-Islamic camps, share the same opinion that Indonesian democracy should be based on Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and take into consideration unique Indonesian social and cultural conditions. Of course, reflecting highly diverse religious,

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<sup>17</sup> Greg Barton, "The Impact of neo-Modernism on Indonesian Islamic Thought: the Emergence of a New Pluralism," in Bouchier and Legge, *Democracy in Indonesia....*, p. 148.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Uhlin, "Transnational Democratic Diffusion....," p. 529.

social, and educational backgrounds, Indonesian democrats differ from each other in expressing ideas on democracy and democratization. Consequently, they also offer different paths to democracy. Nonetheless, they believe that the regime has manipulated the ideology and the constitution for its own advantage at the expense of democratic principles.

Indeed, as has been discussed in Chapter Three, Pancasila has been used by the New Order government to advance its own interests. Throughout the 1980s and especially by holding the *P4* courses (courses on the Directives for the Realization and Implementation of Pancasila), the New Order elite has sought to impose its own interpretation of Indonesia's past experience, its own present perceptions, and its own aspirations for the future. Official interpretation of Pancasila has also tended to down play the notion of individual, class or other group rights in society. And, "[r]ather than accepting such rights and mediating in the conflicts which would thus arise, it has tended to deny that any such conflicts can exist."<sup>19</sup> This has been exacerbated by the fact that the military insists that only the government's interpretation of the ideology is valid, thus giving the Pancasila an instrumental character "that it is a convenient tool employed at the discretion of the government and only in the government's own interests."<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, Indonesian society has been experiencing socioeconomic changes at home and facing a new international environment in which human rights and democracy have become a major issue. This, in turn,

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<sup>19</sup> Robert Cribb and Colin Brown, Modern Indonesia: A history since 1945 (New York: Longman, 1995), p.145.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

makes the government's interpretation of Pancasila and its implementation through the 1945 Constitution appear to be irrelevant to real life. To recall part of our discussions in Chapter Two, young generations of Indonesians now tend to be critical of the government, the urban working class adopts more and more capitalist values, class consciousness grows in cities and urbanized rural areas, and the Indonesian middle class is expanding and because of this some of its members begin to strive for more active participation in politics. Added to these changes in the society are the abuses of power committed by high-ranking officials--military and civilian--particularly the fact that they take advantage of their positions in the bureaucracy to enrich their families. All this eventually creates the impression that not only is the New Order's interpretation of Pancasila irrelevant, but also the elite is inconsistent in terms of its own words. One of the implications of these contradictions is that people, especially those from the lower class, feel that their trust in leaders and government has been betrayed.<sup>21</sup>

This is not to say, of course, that Indonesians generally regard the present government as doing nothing good for the country. Our discussions in the previous two chapters have made it clear that apart from its shortcomings, the Suharto government has recorded some successes that even its strongest critic must be willing to acknowledge. Rather, the point to be made here is that in the political life of the country, a growing number of people from middle and lower classes feel that there is something wrong with the Pancasila democracy as has been unilaterally interpreted by the New Order elite. In this respect, Ramage is correct that:

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<sup>21</sup> "Social dynamite," FEER, February 15, 1996, pp. 20-2.

Dissatisfaction towards the government today is rarely directed at the Pancasila itself. Indonesians are no longer disputing *whether* Pancasila should be the basis of the state. The current debate is over Pancasila's meaning and its implications for the political structure and the participation of citizens in the political process.<sup>22</sup>

It is now becoming more difficult for the New Order elites to defend their cause on purely ideological ground. In demanding democracy, the government's critics—again, with very few exceptions—base their arguments on interpretations of the Pancasila ideology that seem to be more relevant to Indonesia's changing environments. Thus, while offering democratic alternatives to the present authoritarian system, they keep themselves within the boundaries of permissible political debate. The elite, on the other hand, finds no strong reason to bring a heavy hand down on its critics—individuals, groups, and NGOs—as long as they continue to argue in the Pancasila language and do not personally insult government officials and their families. It does not mean, however, that pro-democracy activists, groups, and NGOs could easily dictate the national political agenda to re-interpret Pancasila in a more democratic fashion since there is another factor at work; that is, the president.

Crucial to the outcomes of national political discourse on Pancasila is the Suharto factor. The president himself seems to be ambivalent about the Pancasila debate and tends to take advantage of situations. In 1990 and 1991, for example, and under growing criticism of the New Order's undemocratic political and economic systems, Suharto delivered public speeches that clearly gave a green light to re-interpret the ideology so that it could accommodate changes in society, including increasing demands for democracy. He

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<sup>22</sup> Ramage, "Pancasila Discourse...", p. 156-7. Emphasis in original.

maintained, among other things, that "We must view differences of opinion as dynamic."<sup>23</sup> On another occasion he stated that "We have...asserted that Pancasila is an open-minded ideology. This means that we ensure an ongoing process of renewal and regeneration that serves to refresh our understanding and perceptions."<sup>24</sup> Such assertions have been restated from time to time, but it is clear that the president also supports ABRI's position on the debate, especially if he perceives that the debate would get out of hand, threaten the supremacy of his government, or put his family members in an awkward position.

In the past few years the involvement of senior ABRI leaders in the debate has been--and still is--essentially defensive in nature. The military has intervened in the debate by repeatedly warning of the threat posed by liberalism, Western interpretation of human rights, and Muslim fundamentalism. The military leaders have also frequently put forward the argument that social unrest, student protests, or labour strikes have been engineered by a third party, by which it usually means either former members or sympathizers of the outlawed Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), or Muslim fundamentalists.<sup>25</sup>

We may suspect that such a practice simply reflects an effort by the military to secure and promote its own interests. By playing on the public's fear of communism and religious fundamentalism, the ABRI can make arrests,

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<sup>23</sup> "Wisdom of the elders: Suharto seizes initiative and reasserts leadership," FEER, August 30, 1990, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> "Documents Relating to the Forum for Realizing the True Sovereignty of the People," Document 3, Indonesia, No. 53, April 1992, p. 144.

<sup>25</sup> Ramage, "Pancasila Discourse...", pp. 163-5; and "Ghosts of the past: Is the army chasing communists or shadows?" FEER, February 15, 1996, p. 23.

prevent the Pancasila debate from threatening its doctrine of dual-function, and highlight the need for Indonesia to have a military that takes an active role in politics so as to prevent the country's enemies from infiltrating the national policy-making processes. However, we also need to view such a tendency from a different angle. The military-backed New Order government has been built against the background of the collapse of state authority, economic stagnation, and political and social chaos of the 1960s. And, after nearly thirty years under the New Order government, one still could plausibly argue that Indonesia is a difficult country to govern. For this reason, there are strong grounds to maintain that ABRI's participation in Pancasila discourse is also linked to its institutional ideological threat perceptions. In fact, the ABRI leadership has long perceived communism, Muslim fundamentalism, and Western liberalism as *the* major threats to the state, which are synonymous with perceived threats to Pancasila.

It is now becoming difficult to draw a clear dividing line in the Pancasila discourse. With regard to the existence of ICMI, for example, senior ABRI leaders share with Abdurrahman Wahid and other prominent Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals the opinion that the organization poses a threat to Pancasila. For them, the ICMI phenomena contravenes the New Order's own Pancasila path—that is, the path of de-linking religion from politics to avoid a repetition of fragmented politics of the 1950s. On the other hand, it is possible that Wahid and other Muslim leaders tacitly support the ICMI as a strategy of democratization through demilitarization under the protection of Minister Habibie. Yet, on another issue, the ABRI and the ICMI tend to go hand in hand in attacking Abdurrahman Wahid, Adnan Buyung Nasution of the Legal Aid Institute (LBH), and other pro-democracy activists and NGOs on the grounds

that they derive their concepts of democracy from Western liberalism.<sup>26</sup> It remains to be seen how long this prolonged, inconclusive political struggle will last and in what form it will materialize. But two things are certain. Firstly, as long as Suharto remains in office, significant changes can be made only under his terms. Secondly, in the long run, moves towards a more democratic political system are inevitable.

## **B. Indonesian Foreign Policy in the 1990s**

### **1. Towards a More Assertive Foreign Policy**

Indonesian foreign policy in the 1990s is basically a continuation of what the country started in the past decade. To recall our discussions in Chapter Three, since the mid-1980s Indonesia has been striving to regain its status as an active player in world politics. Such a turn from a low to a high posture in foreign policy was driven primarily by two factors. The first factor is a growing desire among Indonesians—the elite and the masses—to distance themselves from the West. After twenty years of adopting a low profile foreign policy and developing friendly relations with the West, Indonesians have not altered their perceptions of the more developed countries as always tending to take advantage of developing countries, including Indonesia. By adopting a more assertive foreign policy, the New Order elite accommodates the aspiration of the people with regard to Indonesia's proper position in international relations. It is essentially "the purification of the implementation" of an independent and

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<sup>26</sup> Ramage, "Pancasila Discourse...", pp. 158-67, *passim*.

active foreign policy (*politik luar negeri bebas-aktif*)—a principle which is highly valued by virtually all Indonesians.<sup>27</sup>

Second, the turn towards a more assertive foreign policy in the mid-1980s has also been driven by a combination of two political culture factors. The first factor is widely shared pride that Indonesia is the world's biggest archipelagic and fourth most populated state, for which Indonesians believe they deserve respect from other countries.<sup>28</sup> The other factor is a tendency to search for a leadership role in international relations. As has been argued in Chapter Three, this tendency is a by-product of the paternalistic nature of Indonesian political culture, which tends to perceive the world as hierarchically structured and to search for a higher position in that hierarchy. Such a tendency had been submerged during the period between 1966 and the mid-1980s in the belief that before it could competently claim a leading role in the world, Indonesia should concentrate on internal political and economic reconstruction, and restore its image abroad by projecting a non-threatening, friendly posture, as opposed to its image during the Sukarno years.

Now that the Cold War is over, Indonesian policy-makers find themselves compelled to take a much more active role in world politics. There are at least two major concerns in Indonesian foreign policy thinking following the end of the Cold War. First, reflecting the enduring perceptions of most Indonesians of the outside world as essentially an exploitative order, it was—and still is—believed that conflicts between the rich and developed North, on the one hand, and the

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<sup>27</sup> Rizal Sukma, "The Evolution of Indonesia's Foreign Policy: An Indonesian View," Asian Survey, Vol. 35, No. 3, March 1995, pp. 310-3.

<sup>28</sup> Ulf Sundhaussen, "Indonesia: Past and Present Encounters with Democracy," in Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour M. Lipset (eds.), Democracy in Developing Countries: Asia (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1989), p. 467.



mostly poor and developing South, on the other hand, would dominate the post-Cold War era. From the Indonesian perspective, the North now is in an advantageous position because the present international economic system is a carry-over from the earlier colonial system in which the North could easily exploit the South. To better press the North to set an agenda for creating a just, new international economic order, Indonesians believe that the South must work together to strengthen its bargaining position. It is in this context that, by securing the chairmanship of the organization for the 1992-1995 term, Indonesia transformed the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) "from a mostly political organization that had often been at odds with the West into a basically economically oriented movement, serving as a vanguard for North-South dialogues."<sup>29</sup>

Indonesians are also cautious not to confront the Western economies directly for it may generate deleterious effects on Indonesia, whose economic development is highly dependent upon a good relationship with the West. For this reason and taking the NAM as the starting point, the Indonesian government has tried to lead attempts to promote a dialogue between the North and the South "on the basis of a spirit of interdependence" rather than confrontation.<sup>30</sup> Indonesia's determination to chair the 1994-1995 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum clearly signifies Jakarta's belief that there must be a constructive dialogue between the North and the South if the discrepancies in economic relations between the two are to be solved.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Dewi Fortuna Anwar, "Indonesia's Foreign Policy after the Cold War," in Daljit Singh (ed.), Southeast Asian Affairs 1994 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), pp. 157-8.

<sup>30</sup> MacIntyre, "Indonesia in 1992....," p. 207.

<sup>31</sup> "Irrelevant no more: Non-Aligned Movement speaks up for the South," FEER, November 11, 1993, p. 22.

The other concern in Indonesian foreign policy thinking in the 1990s relates to the issues of regional security and sovereignty, which are closely tied to Indonesia's own perceptions of national security and sovereignty. As indicated by its strong adherence to the concept of Southeast Asia as a zone of peace, freedom, and neutrality (ZOPFAN) throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the government in Jakarta finds it necessary to reassert its commitment to preventing the external powers from dictating regional politics once the Cold War is over. In fact, as Donald McCloud argues, "Indonesia has consistently expressed a preference for finding regional solutions to problems as a way of limiting opportunities for external power to influence and manipulate the situation."<sup>32</sup>

It is partly for this reason that Indonesia decided to take a much more active role in regional politics beyond the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) framework. The normalization in 1990 of Indonesia's relations with the People's Republic of China, which had been suspended since 1967, can be considered as Indonesia's first step towards realizing its concept of regional self-resilience beyond the ASEAN scope. The normalization is certainly a bilateral matter, but it also and more importantly has regional importance.<sup>33</sup> It allowed Indonesia to, among other things, help search for a solution to the conflicting claims in the South China Sea and prolonged conflicts in Cambodia, and to break the isolation of Vietnam in terms of regional political and economic relations. For the same reason, Indonesia actively promoted the establishment

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<sup>32</sup> Donald G. McCloud, Southeast Asia: Tradition and Modernity in the Contemporary World (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), p. 255.

<sup>33</sup> Donald K. Emmerson, "Indonesia in 1990: A Foreshadow Play," Asian Survey, Vol. 31, No. 2, February 1991, pp. 180-1.

of the ASEAN Regional Forum in 1993, the only Asia-Pacific-wide regular forum for political and security consultations between ASEAN countries and Japan, the US, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Canada, Russia, China, Vietnam, Laos and Papua New Guinea.

Different arguments may be justifiably put forward to explain Indonesia's more assertive foreign policy in the 1990s. These include an argument that it reflects the government's efforts to divert public attention at home from democracy issues and at the same time to polish its international image so as to secure foreign aid, or that Suharto was simply "following, subconsciously, in the footsteps of his predecessor, Sukarno."<sup>34</sup> However, the above discussions allow us to explain the phenomena under scrutiny from another perspective; that is, it indicates the persistence of Indonesian perception of other countries, the West in particular, as posing threats to Indonesia's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and economic interests. This is especially true with regard to foreign pressures for human rights and democracy.

## **2. On Human Rights and Democracy**

As has been discussed in Chapter Two, approaching the end of the 1980s and after being persuaded by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and top-ranking officials from the presidential palace, Suharto realized that Indonesia should adopt a conciliatory approach to international opinion. This means that, internally, more attention should be paid to the issues of human rights and democracy. Externally, Indonesia should be more active to present its views to the West. It is in this context that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Alatas,

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<sup>34</sup> Frank Ching, "Indonesia struts world stage," FEER, January 26, 1995, p. 32.

stated in late 1990 that "it is time that Indonesia addressed this issue (of human rights) in international forums in a more active way, and not in a reactive or defensive fashion."<sup>35</sup> As if to prove his words, Indonesia joined the United Nations' Commission on Human Rights in Geneva on 1 January 1991. This was followed by efforts at home to persuade the ABRI to be more respectful of human rights.<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile, the end of the Cold War in Europe and the 1990-1991 Gulf Crisis in the Middle East—two major international events after World War II in which the Western democracies came up victoriously—set off alarms in Jakarta. Such developments were interpreted in Jakarta to mean that more Western pressure on Indonesia and other developing countries on the basis of human rights and democracy issues could be expected. And, consistent with Indonesia's general perceptions, this aggravated Indonesia's feeling towards the West.<sup>37</sup>

The New Order's position on the issues of human rights and democracy in international relations has remained the same over time. Suharto and his government strongly hold that no strings should be attached to foreign aid and trade, and no country should impose its concepts of human rights and democracy on other countries. In an interview with Philip Bowring and Adam

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<sup>35</sup> Vatikiotis, "Indonesian Politics under Suharto....," p. 168, quoting Indonesian Foreign Ministry End of Year Statement, December 1990, p. 34.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 169.

<sup>37</sup> While firmly opposed to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, many Indonesians—the elite and the masses—quietly praised Saddam Hussein of Iraq for his determination to stand up against the West, especially the US; see David McKendrick, "Indonesia in 1991: Growth, Privilege, and Rules," Asian Survey, Vol. 32, No. 2, February 1992, p. 110. During the crisis there were sporadic mass demonstrations in the front of the foreign ministry's office and the US Embassy in Jakarta, condemning what the demonstrators called "the US arrogance" in world politics. And months after the crisis, Saddam Hussein T-shirts were still big sellers among urban youth.

Schwarz of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Alatas explained his government's position with regard to the human rights issues.<sup>38</sup> Alatas said that:

[Indonesia has] no problem with people discussing and trying to resolve these issues. We have always said that human rights have a universal relevance. But,...there is a degree of national competence in the expression and interpretation of human rights.

In Jakarta's view, there are various types of human rights, not only civil and political, but also economic, social, individual and the rights of society. What Jakarta wants if the Western countries are to evaluate Indonesia is that they "do it on the totality, not just civil and political rights."

As far as democracy is concerned, the New Order's position is that, while admitting that there are universal democratic ideas, the implementation of those ideas should be adjusted to conditions unique to each country. Alatas explained that:

[Indonesians] are all for democratisation, not just within countries but also between countries—democratisation of international relations. Democracy has certain universal values but we reject the notion that there is only one form of democracy, the Westminster or American style. That flies in the face of another right—of a people to choose their own political and social systems. We cannot accept the proposition that just because we are not a Westminster type democracy we are not democratic.

Fortunately for Indonesia, other ASEAN members—perhaps with the exception of the Philippines—basically hold the same position. One of the indications of this is that, at the end of its Ministerial Meeting in Manila in July 1992, ASEAN declared with regard to human rights issues that:

ASEAN believes that human rights should be promoted and advanced in all their dimensions—economic, social, cultural, civil and political....The

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<sup>38</sup> "Live and let live," *FEER*, July 11, 1991. The quotations that follow are from pp.12-3.

pursuit of economic, social and cultural rights are just as important as the pursuit of civil and political rights.... [And] [i]n pursuing human rights in their comprehensive entirety, the ASEAN countries—as indeed all countries of the world—will be guided by the consideration of the unique blend of factors that condition and constitute each country's total environment, namely its history, demography, culture, economic condition, social situation and political evolution.<sup>39</sup>

Consistent with its decision to become more active in presenting its views and defending its interests, the Indonesian government used the occasion of the NAM summit in Jakarta in September 1992 to highlight beyond the ASEAN forum its position on the issues. Prior to the summit, Indonesia managed to build consensus among the participants to give a special emphasis to human rights and democracy issues in their final declaration. Thus, paragraph 18 of the Jakarta Declaration of the NAM maintains that:

*We welcome the growing trend towards democracy and commit ourselves to cooperate in the protection of human rights. We believe that economic and social progress facilitate the achievement of those objectives. No country, however, should use its power to dictate its concept of democracy and human rights or to impose conditionalities in others.*<sup>40</sup>

Although not as vocal as the governments of Malaysia and Singapore, in the following years the Suharto government continued to actively present its views on human rights and democracy in international forums. In 1993, for example, Indonesia hosted an informal Asia-Pacific workshop on human rights. In the same year, Indonesia was a dominant participant in the Asian Regional Meeting on Human Rights in Bangkok, and—along with its counterparts in the ASEAN and from China—was active in presenting the Asian interpretation of

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<sup>39</sup> Jusuf Wanandi, "Human Rights and Democracy in the ASEAN Nations: The Next 25 Years," The Indonesian Quarterly, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1993, pp. 17 & 18.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 21. Italic in original.

human rights during the UN-sponsored Second World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.

It is, of course, very difficult—if not impossible—to assess accurately in what ways and to what degrees pro-democracy and human rights activists, groups, and NGOs in Indonesia differ from their government in interpreting and responding to foreign pressure. However, to the extent that earlier discussions about Pancasila discourse and assertive foreign policy are a guide, it can be said that Indonesian democrats and human rights activists would agree with their government that no foreign country should impose its concepts of democracy and human rights on Indonesia, and no conditions should be attached to foreign aid to, and trade with, Indonesia.

The picture may be different, however, if the discussion is about basic democratic principles and gross violations of human rights. In this respect, advocates of democracy and human rights in Indonesia appear to be tending to cultivate and capitalize on international criticism if it is about such basic ideas as fair elections, freedom of the press, and equality before the law, or gross violations of human rights. But, it should be emphasized that it seems that most Indonesian democrats and human rights activists would decline to support the Western countries' strategy of linking aid and trade with human rights and democracy issues for it would affect the lives of innocent people and run contrary to the popular feelings about the West. Supporting such a strategy clearly would damage the credibility of pro-democracy and human rights proponents in the eyes of ordinary people, and give the government strong grounds to arrest them on the basis of conspiring against the state. In other

words, it is a losing strategy for critics of the government to support Western countries' tactic of attaching political conditions to foreign aid and trade.

Perhaps the international controversy following the Dili incident in 1991 best illustrates the government's and its critics' positions in this issue. The ABRI's shooting of unarmed demonstrators in 12 November 1991 in Dili invited harsh criticisms both from the government's critics at home and from the international community in the West. At home, criticisms came from members of the parliament (DPR), retired officers, and NGOs.<sup>41</sup> Some of these NGOs—notably the Legal Aid Institute—also cultivated international opinion to press Jakarta to handle the incident in a fair and transparent way. The International Association of Legal Aid Associations, the Asia-Watch, Amnesty International, and the International NGOs Forum on Indonesian Development—four international NGOs with which the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute has strong ties—responded fast by filing notes of protest with the Indonesian authorities. As a result, Suharto ordered that a high-level commission of inquiry into the incident be formed. In the New Order history and in the context of Indonesian political culture, such a step was quite “surprising and dramatic.”<sup>42</sup>

Rather than waiting for the commission to complete its tasks, Western countries began to exert more pressure on Jakarta by suspending bilateral aid to Indonesia. The Netherlands and Canada were the first to suspend their aid in December 1991, especially on projects used to assist directly the central government in Jakarta. The US and Denmark then followed suit—also on a

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<sup>41</sup> See, for example, “Documents Relating to...,” Document 5, p. 148.

<sup>42</sup> Christopher J. Dagg, “Human Rights and Aid: A Canadian Perspective,” The Indonesian Quarterly, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1993, p. 47.



bilateral basis—while the Japanese Ambassador to Jakarta “only” warned that the incident may affect Japanese overseas development assistance to Indonesia.<sup>43</sup> Suharto tried to settle the problem bilaterally by sending his ministers to each country. Partly because of fear of state repression, but also due to the fact that they do not support the use of foreign aid and trade to press other, weaker countries, Indonesian NGOs began to distance themselves from their foreign partners.

However, Jakarta responded decisively when the Netherlands began to lobby other members of the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI, the Netherlands-led international aid consortium to Indonesia) to suspend the consortium’s 1992 aid programs until human rights conditions in East Timor and other parts of Indonesia had improved. On March 25 Indonesia announced that it would not accept any further aid from the Dutch, and it simultaneously dissolved the IGGI (soon to be replaced by the Consultative Group on Indonesia [CGI] under the auspices of the World Bank which includes all former members of IGGI except the Netherlands).

Such a decision on the part of Suharto regime was—perhaps to Western countries’ surprise—highly praised in Indonesia. As MacIntyre puts, “it was a popular move domestically” since “a growing number of Indonesians were becoming irritated by Western, and particularly Dutch, sermons on human rights and the associated moves to attach political conditions to aid.”<sup>44</sup> Most

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<sup>43</sup> Vatikiotis, “Indonesian Politics under Suharto...,” pp. 187-8.

<sup>44</sup> MacIntyre, “Indonesia in 1992...,” p. 206. See also a Dutch perspective on this international incident, in Allert P. van den Ham, “Development Cooperation and Human Rights: Indonesia-Dutch Aid Controversy,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 5, May 1993, pp. 531-9. For Indonesians, the Dutch have no credibility to condemn any independent Indonesia’s government for the Dutch had colonized Indonesia for three and a half centuries, and caused wide spread casualties during Indonesian independence war of 1945-1949.

Indonesian NGOs also supported Suharto's decision although they stressed that it does not mean that Indonesia can continue to tinker with human rights problems in the future. It clearly indicates that, on some points, the New Order government and its critics could or would share the same position towards the West. In fact, early in 1992, before Indonesia decided to reject the development assistance from the Dutch and dissolve the IGGI, one of Indonesian NGOs—the Forum for Realizing the True Sovereignty of the People—wrote a memorandum to the DPR (parliament). It stressed that “the East Timor incident is an internal matter that must be resolved by us, the citizens of Indonesia alone.”<sup>45</sup> There were, of course, NGOs that viewed Suharto's decision to halt the Dutch development programs to Indonesia in rather a different light, but it was primarily due to the fact that the decision also curtailed all transfers of financial aid from Dutch NGOs to their Indonesian counterparts.<sup>46</sup>

That is not to say, of course, that foreign pressure has no effect whatsoever on the problems of human rights and democracy in Indonesia. The foundation of the National Commission for Human Rights in June 1993, which is aimed at raising the credibility of the government in human rights issues, is a clear example that a concerted effort by national and international actors may bring changes in Suharto government's policies. The case of the Indonesian Prosperous Labour Union (SBSI) also offers another example. The SBSI is an independent labour union formed in 1992. Its rival, the government-sponsored All-Indonesian Worker Union (SPSI), is recognized by the UN International

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<sup>45</sup> “Documents Relating to...,” Document 7, p. 150. One of the Forum's leader, H.R. Dharsono, was jailed for 6 years in the 1980s for taking part in a wave of bombings in Jakarta and Magelang in the early 1980s. He was a retired general and former ASEAN Secretary General.

<sup>46</sup> See Adnan Buyang Nasution, “Defending Human Rights in Indonesia,” Journal of Democracy, Vol. 5, No. 3, July 1994, p. 120.

Labor Organization (ILO) but not by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The SBSI, on the other hand, is recognized by both organizations, thus enjoying more international support. Because of this, while not recognizing it officially, the Suharto government is also cautious not to disband the SBSI as an alternative labour organization. This was also one of the issues surrounding the US trade pressure on Indonesia in 1993-1994, when Washington threatened to curtail Indonesia's GSP privileges (Generalized System of Preferences, by which a country is allowed to export to the US on reduced tariffs), unless Jakarta improves local labour conditions. As a result, there have been some improvements with regard to labour rights in Indonesia since 1994, although there are much more to be improved.<sup>47</sup> The same can be said about the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI, formed in 1994), which won much more international support than its rival, the government-sanctioned Indonesian Journalist Union (PWI).

It seems that for the time being, the overall New Order's policy towards the West would depend upon one man—Suharto. He was quoted recently as saying that "some [foreign] countries want to divide the Indonesian people...by raising issues such as worker and human rights, and democracy."<sup>48</sup> Referring to the divide and rule strategy used by the Dutch in their 350-year colonial rule in Indonesia, the president "called on Indonesians not to make the same mistake again and to remain united." He also maintained that "Indonesia has its own

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<sup>47</sup> Andrew MacIntyre, "Indonesia in 1993: Increasing Political Movement," Asian Survey, Vol. 24, No. 2, February 1994, p. 117; "Deadline looming: Jakarta tinkers with labour rules to avoid US retaliation," FEER, February 24, 1994, p. 28-9; and Voice of America, No. 2-186155, October 1, 1995.

<sup>48</sup> Voice of America, No. 2-182386, July 22, 1995. The following quotations are from the same source.

concepts and will never adopt or copy Western models," implying that Indonesia has determined its own destiny.

### **C. Prospects for Democratization**

After discussing current developments in Indonesian domestic politics and foreign policy, this concluding section will briefly assess the prospects for democratization in the country. We will begin by, first, highlighting major vulnerabilities of the New Order that can be exploited by Indonesian democrats to improve the present system in a democratic direction. Second, we will outline some developments that tend to facilitate the process of democratization. Then, some obstacles to—or, to use a better term, determinants of—democratization will be identified.

Despite its successes in developing the economy and stabilizing the nation's political life, the latest New Order system has at least four major vulnerabilities or "soft spots."<sup>49</sup> The first soft spot is a widening gap between the words and the deeds of the leaders. This has prompted members of the urban middle class—which continue to grow in number—to realize that there is indeed something wrong with the government's interpretation and implementation of the Pancasila ideology. There are signs that this spot has begun to undermine the New Order's ideological stance.<sup>50</sup> The second soft spot is the tension between the two main (but very unequal in power) coalition partners in the regime—the military and the civilian bureaucrats. To be sure, the tension cannot

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<sup>49</sup> The term is from R. William Liddle, "Indonesia's Democratic Past and Future," Comparative Politics, Vol. 24, No. 4, July 1992, p. 453.

<sup>50</sup> See an interesting discussion about Pancasila as "a double-edged tool," in Chua Beng Huat, "Looking for Democratization in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," Contemporary Southeast Asia, Vol. 15 No. 2, September 1993, especially pp. 152-6.

be regarded as a struggle between authoritarianism and democracy, but it can be exploited by the proponents of democracy inside and outside the establishment.

The third soft spot is related to the second one, but it is better seen separately; that is, the rifts within the regime's inner circle. Following O'Donnell's and Schmitter's argument, democrats can push their political agenda if there are some rifts within an authoritarian regime. In our case, these rifts are between the ABRI, the Golkar, and civilian bureaucrats associated with the ICMI. Finally, the fourth regime's vulnerability is its nepotism and corruption, especially in the form of favoritism in lucrative businesses. Domestic and foreign professional economists appear to be at one in the view that the present practices of favoritism must be abolished if Indonesia is to survive the increasingly competitive international trade, and that to do so the present political system needs to be reformed.<sup>51</sup> Business people close to the palace may think otherwise and they are in an advantageous position to maintain the existing system. In the long run, however, it will become much more difficult for these prime beneficiaries of the New Order to defend their cause.

Meanwhile, a number of factors are now at work—factors that lessen the future tenability of New Order authoritarian rule and tend instead to facilitate changes towards democracy. At the national level, these factors include the expansion of the middle class, professional, and working class groups more generally; the emergence of networks of human rights and pro-democracy NGOs, some with international connections; the increasing competence of

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<sup>51</sup> James C. Abegglen, Sea Change: Pacific Asia as the New World Industrial Center (New York: The Free Press, 1994), pp. 162-4; and Steven Schlossstein, Asia's New Little Dragons: The Dynamic Emergence of Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1991), pp. 94-5.

younger educated civilians to manage the economy, social organizations, and politics; the absence of the ideas of an Islamic state among members of the now large Muslim middle class; and the extensive acceptance of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution as the national political platforms upon which a more democratic Indonesia should be based.

At the international level, there are at least three encouraging developments that may help facilitate changes towards democracy. First, there are growing pressures from external actors for human rights observance and democratic governance. Second, the threats of international communism have disappeared, and this fact may weaken one of ABRI's claims to be the dominant actor in the present political system. And third, it becomes much difficult to deny the fact that more and more Third World countries are now in the process of either struggling for, or establishing and consolidating democracy, and that despite its shortcomings democracy becomes more attractive.

Based on what have been raised so far, it can be said with some confidence that there is a very good prospect that Indonesia will democratize in the future. And it should be emphasized here that what we expect is a democracy that takes into consideration the country's unique social and cultural conditions; it is not a Westminster or American democracy, but an Indonesian democracy based on better interpretations and implementation of the Pancasila ideology and the 1945 Constitution. In fact, as Liddle suggests,<sup>52</sup> some forms of democracy are already in place and what is needed now is to fill them with democratic content.

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<sup>52</sup> Liddle, "Indonesia's Democratic Past...", p. 456.

However, arriving at the ideal form of Indonesian democracy as desired by Indonesian democrats is another enterprise. Hence, we should take into account two main determinants of democratization in Indonesia. These are the country's political culture and the interests of the New Order elites. Our discussions in Chapter Three and part of this chapter have made it clear that Indonesian political culture dictates that—among other things—evolution is preferable to revolution, political dialogues must be conducted in a polite way, and it is better not to confront openly and harshly those who are near the top of the hierarchy. There is also a common understanding among the elite and the masses that bloody political transfer should be avoided, the national unity should be retained, and all the economic achievements that have been attained so far must be preserved.

Meanwhile, the persistence of the elites' interests should also be considered carefully. In general, what the elites essentially want is that their core interests in staying in office and continuing to play dominant roles in politics are not challenged. However, as long as Suharto remains in power, it is plausible to maintain that it is he who has the real capacity to decide on who can play in politics, as well as how, when and how far significant changes in politics towards a genuine democracy will and can occur. Through his patronage, the president will continue to maintain the balance between the ABRI, the Golkar, and civilian bureaucrats, both to ensure that the political stability is guaranteed and to serve his own interests.

It can be concluded, therefore, that while a movement towards a more democratic government is inevitable, the process of democratization will be initiated from the top and proceed gradually and cautiously. Not only is such a

process congruent with Indonesian political culture, but also it will allow the elites and their democratic opponents time to reach some compromise and to set a common political agenda. This can take place if Suharto himself takes the initiative. However, given the fact that the president benefits from the present system, it is unlikely that significant changes in democratic directions will take place as long as he stays in power. It is even highly unlikely that someone else would and could initiate further political openings for it will be interpreted as challenging the president—the man with an unchallenged control over the Indonesian elites and who has the historical-moral resources to command the respect of the people both as the saviour of the country and the bringer of development.

The prospect looks brighter once Suharto leaves office. The new president will not possess the same degree of power and control over the Indonesian elites, and the same quality of historical-moral resources to command the respect of the people, as does President Suharto. Given the new challenges posed by Indonesian changing environments—national and international—it is highly likely that the next president will resort to democratization as a means of building new legitimacy for himself. Hence, criticisms from the West on the basis of human rights violations and democratic governance may help Indonesian democrats to urge the post-Suharto leaders to set a political course for democratization.

However, given the negative perceptions of the West, foreign interference in the form of attaching political conditions to aid and trade may only cause deleterious impacts on democratization in Indonesia. That is, by playing on public's fear of foreign, and especially Western, domination, the



office holders can legitimately postpone the process of democratization, arguing that strict political control is needed to allow the government to better stand up against Indonesia's enemies coming from outside. Besides, as Schlosstein admits,<sup>53</sup> Indonesians know that somehow, in some way, their country should democratize, but it should democratize on its own terms, not on Western terms. Therefore, pressing them too hard would make Indonesians more reactive against the outside world.

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<sup>53</sup> Schlosstein, "Asia's New Little Dragons...", p. 129.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

This thesis has argued that given the country's changing national and international environments, Indonesia will move towards a more democratic society. On the other hand, the unique Indonesian political culture and the persistence of elites' interests mean that the country will democratize gradually and cautiously, and on Indonesia's own terms, not on Western terms. To support such an argument, pressure for change and its major consequences have been identified, and the Indonesian political culture and the elite of Suharto's New Order government have been discussed at length. It has also been shown how those factors have intertwined so as to influence Indonesian domestic politics and foreign policy in the 1990s. Out of these discussions it may be concluded that Indonesia is now entering a process of "prolonged, inconclusive political struggle"<sup>1</sup> towards democracy. However, the process will advance gradually and cautiously, congruent with Indonesian political culture and allowing the elites and their opponents enough time to reach a political compromise. This chapter will summarize the discussions from the previous chapters and underscore the point that they support the central argument of this thesis.

Strong pressure for democratization in Indonesia is coming from two sources. These two sources are, first, progress in socioeconomic development

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<sup>1</sup> Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model," Comparative Politics, Vol. 2, April 1970, p. 352.

at home, and, second, the international promotion of human rights and democracy. Following the logic of Lipset's classic argument, which sees a strong correlation between progress in socioeconomic development and democracy, it has been demonstrated that after fifteen years of economic development under the Suharto government, Indonesia has been experiencing major changes. Some of these changes include the expansion of middle class, professional, and working class groups, more opportunities for people from the lower class to afford tertiary education, easier access to mass media, and the adoption by urban and urbanized rural population of capitalist values such as profitability, competition, efficiency, self-reliance, and self-responsibility. In other words, the social fabric of Indonesian society has been changing, and the nation is gradually but surely entering the Huntington's zone of transition, in which traditional, authoritarian forms of rule become increasingly difficult to maintain. One of the implications of these changes is that the Suharto government faces increasing demands from people—especially from young generations of lower and middle class backgrounds—for more democratic, participatory procedures in politics.

Added to the pressure arising from the New Order's own economic successes is a growing trend among the Western industrialized countries to promote human rights and democracy in other countries. Of course, demands for democratization in Indonesia arise primarily from domestic causes, but they do not take place in an international vacuum. However abstract, issues and events in international relations have inspired Indonesian democrats inside and outside the establishment to raise their concerns about democratization. In addition, Indonesia's encounters with international criticism during the 1980s

have prompted some members of Indonesia's foreign policy elite to realize that it is important for Jakarta to maintain good relations with the West by paying closer attention to, and not exacerbating, the problems of human rights and democracy in Indonesia.

Together, progress in socioeconomic development and increased attention of external actors to the issues of human rights and democracy have generated strong pressure on the Suharto government to democratize. This pressure has aggravated cracks in the elite circle—a *sine qua non* of democratic transition, according to O'Donnell and Schmitter—and allowed a process of political opening to take place as the conflicting elite factions began to compete with each other to impress the public with their democratic commitment. Some figures within the Suharto government began to realize that their interests may best be secured by accommodating popular demands for democracy.

A preliminary conclusion can be drawn at this point that Indonesia will democratize because it becomes increasingly difficult for the present authoritarian regime to manipulate politics. The question, then, is how will Indonesia democratize? As our discussions about theoretical frameworks indicate, we should be careful not to follow a linear explanation that socioeconomic progress and international pressure for democratization alone will lead to the fall of Suharto's regime and the rise of a more democratic government in Jakarta. Political phenomena surrounding the rise and fall of authoritarianism and democracy cannot be reduce to a simple, linear relationship. There are other factors that should be considered thoroughly before one can predict how and when authoritarianism will give way to

democracy. These factors are political culture and the role of the elite in the political process.

Chapter Three has laid out an understanding of the Indonesian political culture and the role of the elite in Indonesian politics under the New Order government. As far as the former is concerned, it has been argued that in the New Order era Indonesian political culture has been shaped by a combination of factors. These factors include traditional values drawn primarily from the Javanese culture, historical legacies (including Indonesia's uneasy experiences with liberal democracy and Sukarno's Guided Democracy), and the traumatic events of 1965. The elites also have played an important role in shaping the post-1966 Indonesian political culture. Through their actions, doctrines, and teachings, the New Order elites tried to simultaneously secure their own interests and create a stable, wealthier society.

As a result of such a combination of factors, Indonesian political culture tends to revolve around patron-client networks, especially in the government circle. It also tends to reject any move towards instigating a revolutionary, large scale, and foreign-influenced democratization process. It is widely believed that any abrupt change in the political system would disturb the harmony and predictability of the society highly valued in a Javanese environment, may bring the nation back into chaos comparable to the 1965 events, and—from the elite's perspective—will leave little space for the ruling elite to secure its core interests. In the field of foreign policy, the emerging political culture has meant that the outside world is perceived as essentially an exploitative order, and that Indonesia should seek a leadership role in international politics, especially as a leader of the developing countries—the South—in dealing with the developed

countries—the North. This, as has been noted, bodes ill for the success of external actors from the North in their attempts to exert pressure on Jakarta to democratize.

With such an understanding of Indonesian political culture and the New Order elite in mind, Chapter Four has sought to explain Indonesian domestic politics and foreign policy in the 1990s, as well as to assess the democratic prospects in Indonesia. Briefly put, the 1990s have witnessed a prolonged, inconclusive political struggle, in which some members of the elite and a number of politically active citizens try to formulate democratic alternatives to the existing system as a response to Indonesia's changing environments. This is essentially the pre-transition phase or, in other words, the beginning of an uncertain process of political change. In this phase, Indonesian political culture and the elite of the New Order play a key role in determining in which direction and at what pace Indonesian politics will evolve, and how the country will respond to international pressure for democratization.

At home, Indonesian politics has been moving backwards as well as forwards. On the one hand, Suharto appears stronger than before by playing off the elite factions against each other. And, as appointments to key positions in the military (ABRI), bureaucracy, and government-sanctioned party, Golkar, become more dependent upon Suharto's personal judgment, this situation tends to perpetuate the patronage nature of Indonesian political culture. Leaders of each elite faction—the ABRI, the Golkar, and civilian bureaucrats associated with the Habibie-led Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals—strive for the recognition of the president, sometimes by running counter to the increasing popular demands for more democratic procedures.

On the other hand, current developments in Indonesian politics also allow some space for the proponents of democracy to air their opinions about what democratic Indonesia should mean, and to criticize the regime on the basis of human rights violations and ignorance of democratic principles. This is made possible by two main factors. Firstly, while striving for recognition from Suharto, as the ultimate patron in Indonesian politics, the conflicting elite factions also continue to compete with each other to impress the public with their commitment to democracy. As a result, while political restrictions remain in place especially in terms of criticizing the president and high-ranking officials and encouraging hatred of the New Order regime, pro-democracy activists are allowed to criticize the government-as-an-institution, to develop networks of NGOs, and even to demonstrate or to hold rallies as long as they do not disturb public order.

Secondly, most government's critics now base their criticisms on values contained in the state ideology, Pancasila. Either as a strategic choice, or ideological conviction, or both, this tactic has made it difficult for the regime to bring a heavy hand down on its critics because they are still within the boundaries of legitimate political debate. The government's critics, on the other hand, gain more supporters—if only passive supporters—to the extent that they can safely highlight how undemocratic the Suharto government is by offering different, more democratic interpretation of Pancasila to the public.

The 1990s have also witnessed Jakarta's determination to continue its high profile foreign policy. In the previous decade the change from a low to a high profile foreign policy was driven by the recurrence of both Indonesia's traditional desire to change the exploitative world order, and the culturally-

driven tendency to search for a leading role in world politics once the national vitality had been restored. Entering the 1990s, ensuring the security and sovereignty of the Republic from foreign interference proved to be another incentive for Indonesia to adopt a more assertive foreign policy. While keeping alive its desire to change the world economic order by revitalizing the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and working through the APEC forum, Indonesia also focused its attention on regional politics to create an indigenous regional sense of unity and cooperation. Hence, the first three concentric circles of Indonesia's geopolitical environments were given special attention: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Southeast Asia, and Asia-Pacific more generally.

Meanwhile, maintaining Indonesia's sovereignty from foreign interference relates closely to the issues of human rights and democracy in international relations. Indonesia has used every possible forum—the NAM, ASEAN, APEC, international workshop and conference—to emphasize its point that no strings should be attached to foreign aid and trade, and no country should impose its concepts of human rights and democracy on others. For Indonesia, opting for an assertive foreign policy is the best way to simultaneously present its views on human rights and democracy and defend its strategic interests at a time when world politics is dominated by conflicts of interests between developed and developing countries. It is clear that the elites find this option benefits their own interests, but the masses also support such a foreign policy because the West is not generally seen as a good thing in Indonesia.

Of course, to some extent, foreign criticism of Suharto's authoritarian government can help Indonesian democrats to urge their government to give



proper attention to the problems of democracy in the country. But, if foreign actors act more aggressively by attaching political conditions to aid and trade, there is no guarantee that it will bring the desired results. At best, Jakarta will tinker with the existing rules and procedures to avoid foreign sanctions. At worst, the Suharto government will cultivate the nationalist sentiments and play on public fear of foreign domination to divert the popular attention from the real issue—that is, the problem of moving the country towards some forms of democracy.

All things considered, it can be concluded that Indonesia will become more democratic in the future, but the process will be initiated from the top and will proceed gradually and cautiously, congruent with Indonesian political culture and allowing the elites and their critics enough time to reach a political compromise. As has been discussed in Chapter Four, Indonesia will develop its own democracy, a new breed of Pancasila democracy, that takes into account the country's unique social and cultural conditions. This, in turn, also requires time for Indonesia to arrive at the ideal form of Pancasila democracy. However, one intriguing question remains: when will significant steps towards a more democratic government occur in Indonesia?

As has been argued that given the central role of Suharto in Indonesian politics and the fact that it is he who makes the most of the present system, it is unlikely that Suharto will initiate major political changes in a democratic direction. Nor can any of his subordinates gain wide support for taking the initiative without the president's blessing. Such a move would mean challenging the old man and thus running contrary to the paternalistic nature of Indonesian politics. Therefore, this thesis is of the opinion that significant changes towards

democracy are likely to occur once Suharto leaves the scene. The new president will need to build legitimacy for himself and, given the challenges posed by Indonesia's national and international changing environments, the least costly way available to do so is by initiating a genuine process of democratization. But, it should be stressed once again, Indonesia will follow piecemeal democratization which emphasizes caution, compromise, and moderation.

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