

INDONESIA AFTER SOEHARTO: Civil or Military Rule?

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Working Paper 12/98

Synopsis

This paper examines the place of elites in Indonesia and how they are presently positioned to influence the outcome of this period of traumatic transition. It reflects on the history and nature of the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI), the most powerful of these elites, and its role during the transition from the "Guided Democracy" Soekarno through to the "New Order" of Soeharto.

It reflects on the place of ABRI and the '*dwi fungsi*' policy in Indonesian society in the past and in the present, and suggests some possible courses along which these might evolve in the near to medium term. The role and status of Islam, the middle class, the Presidency, and the deliberate depoliticisation of Indonesian society are discussed.

It proposes the thesis that there has been a long-standing interdependency between ABRI and the other elites, interdependency that has continued through into the post-Soeharto era. The paper concludes with some possible scenarios for the future of Indonesia, and the qualified prediction that managed change will see a Government more civilian in character emerging.

About the Writer

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Centre for Strategic Studies
Victoria University of Wellington
1998

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ISSN 1173-5473

A Personal View

The views and opinions expressed in this paper are entirely my own and in no way reflect the position of the New Zealand Ministry of Defence.

Perhaps at the expense of other important actors in the evolving socio-political transition in Indonesia this paper concentrates on the role of the *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* (ABRI), the Indonesian Armed Forces. I make no apologies for this. National stability and cohesion when coupled with economic stability are the most important factors in guaranteeing managed transition to the post-Soeharto era. These have been and continue to be underwritten by ABRI.

I start by making some comments about the history and evolution of ABRI, its constitutional position and role in society, the status and role of the President and civil administration, and the great mass of the 200 million plus people that make up Indonesia. I do so because I believe that the interdependency of these three groups, or perhaps more correctly the elite subgroups within them, are the keys to the future character of Indonesian society. I conclude with some probable and possible scenarios, and some predictions.

Observers of rapid political, economic and social transition in any nation need to remain objective and to carefully weigh those recent historical events and pressures that have served to bring about change. Not to do so invites judgements based largely on intuitive reactions to rapidly evolving political and economic events. Invariably such superficial judgements prove flawed.

Contemporary and future Indonesia is no different. In the case of Indonesia it is necessary to examine ethnic and cultural influences, and the political influences of Soekarno's 'Guided Democracy', and Soeharto's 'New Order'. These have had, and will continue to have, a profound effect on Indonesia's contemporary and future political, economic, and social landscape.

The unitary nation-state of Indonesia is balanced on a tripod as it has been throughout the Soeharto era, and perhaps longer. ABRI is the most crucial leg of this tripod. The other two legs are represented by the elite of the civil executive headed by the President, and the elites within the general population. These elites include the key elements of the predominant religion Islam, and the entrepreneurial Chinese, which, until May this year, owned eighty percent of registered companies and nearly seventy percent of the three hundred largest conglomerates. While the individual power and influence of these supporting legs will change from time to time, should one become too weak and for any reason break, the tripod itself would collapse, and along with it the state.

Such collapse has been avoided by employing a centrally controlled government authority which has the capability to control internal disorder and maintain the cohesion of the state. As in the immediate past, the only authority in Indonesia that can assume this mantle is ABRI.

While my crystal ball is no more highly polished than anyone else's I have not shrunk from being predictive. In these times of predictable unpredictability, and with a fragile civilian Government in Jakarta, I qualify my prediction that a government more civilian than military in character will rule post-Soeharto Indonesia. Predicting any political developments in Indonesia is perhaps foolish, being similar to driving at night along an unfamiliar back country road without either a map or headlights. A challenging task, and one not to be avoided merely because it is a hard question.

ABRI and Indonesian Society

Indonesia is not governed by the military. The constitution precludes this. However, it is beyond dispute that ABRI has had, and continues to have a very significant influence on how the

country is governed. ABRI continues to believe that it is the 'People's Army' and relies on the support of the people for its self-perceived role as the guardian of national security and interest.

ABRI is the product of a revolutionary army which fought with the Indonesian people for independence against the Japanese occupation, and against the attempted post-WWII re-colonisation by the Dutch in what has become known as *perjuangan* (the struggle). The Indonesian National Army, *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI), was formed in 1947, and during the turbulent 1950's military commanders in many areas came to exercise wide civilian and military powers; the result of a lack of appropriately qualified personnel and a wealth of inept civilian officials.

The venerated 'Generation of '45' held military skills in high esteem and believed absolutely in the Javanese feudal ethos of "*satria*" (knight of the Javanese tradition)¹ and the connected mystical-religious concepts essential in Javanese society. The eleven leadership principles taught as doctrine in the military academies and staff colleges², and consequently passed on to the next generation, are expressed in Javanese phrases based on traditional mythology and "*wayang*"³ characterisations. The 'Generation of '45' believed also in the transferability of this ethos and military skills into civil and commercial administration. In essence the military became an almost separate caste.

While officers of this generation have now retired, they still retain a residual influence over some aspects of ABRI's ethos and traditions. The present generation of officers, while better educated compared with their predecessors, both in military and academic institutions, retain an arrogant contempt for civilians and their abilities. As explained below this contempt appears to be subdued at present, not because the ethos has changed, but because recent events have conspired to thrust change upon accepted ABRI attitudes.

ABRI's belief in its legitimacy and ability spilled over from Soekarno's 'Guided Democracy' into Soeharto's 'New Order'. In 1966 the military moved to political centre stage having answered, in its view, the 'people's call'. More serving and retired military officers were introduced into civil administrative and policy making positions.

Gradually, with greater internal and regional stability and economic growth, military personnel withdrew from positions in non-military related enterprises, such as plantations, timber and transportation. However, many chose to continue their commercial careers through strategic state-owned enterprises. These commercial enterprises continue to contribute directly or indirectly to the national defence budget. Others, through preferment, retired into (invariably) senior appointments in the civil administration (KORPRI).

Contemporary estimates put between four and six thousand military officers presently employed in government and semi-government posts. In other countries such positions would be filled by civilian officials. These posts include 75 seats in the 500 member House of Representatives (MPR), about half of the 309 *bupati* (district heads) and a little more than half of the 27 provincial

governors, as well as an average of nine positions on each of the 45 main district and regional councils. Nationally the civil service plays very much a secondary role to ABRI in terms of status, power, and political influence.⁴ Additionally, a significant number of retired generals act as Indonesian ambassadors, cabinet ministers, heads of government departments and government-sponsored enterprises, and leaders of political parties such as the ruling party, Golkar.

ABRI, “*Dwi Fungsi*”⁵, and the Presidency

While *dwi fungsi* operated during the period of ‘Guided Democracy’ it was the ‘New Order’ that formalised Jenderal Nasution’s concept of direct socio-political involvement by the military at all levels of society. In addition to filling key positions in central and provincial government, commerce, and industry, ABRI developed a public affairs network which operated through charities, wives’ associations, schools, boy scouts, and cultural and religious groups. This continuing policy has provided ABRI with a much more comprehensive view of the nation than any other part of the government apparatus.

To make up for relatively small numbers, the Department of Defence and Security (DEPHANKAM) and ABRI have developed and refined both Social Political (SOSPOL) and Territorial (OPSTER) policies and associated doctrines. The ABRI approach adopted in recent years, most demonstrably during the May 1998 riots in Jakarta, is to act far less as a blunt instrument than heretofore. Existing policies are designed to involve ABRI socio-politically at all levels using the principle of *gotong-royong* (mutual co-operation and help) rather than coercion. ABRI uses the term *Operasi Bhakti*⁶ for these operations.

To manage security and national development at a local level, ABRI has a nation-wide system of army warrant officers who live and work within the local community alongside the village headman. These warrant officers are responsible to the military sub-district (KORAMIL) commander for implementing national security and development policies within his village or group of villages. Additionally ABRI remains in control of national land, sea, air and electronic communications, and has a well-resourced national information and intelligence gathering apparatus down to *kampung* level. It maintains a mirror administration to the civil administration at provincial, district and *kampung* level. Should the civil administration fail the parallel military administration can (and does) move in immediately to continue the business of government at all levels.

Under *dwi fungsi* ABRI has come to be accepted as a dominant influence in Indonesia’s socio-political life, while the civil administration remains generally unresponsive, inefficient and overtly corrupt. ABRI acts as a major tool for the development and implementation of government policies, and as a dynamiser and facilitator of national development. ABRI too has underwritten the central authority of this ethnically plural state by owning not only the guns, but also the constitutional authority, and the presidential ear. Previous calls for a re-examination of the ABRI *dwi fungsi* role have traditionally fallen on deaf ears; contemporary calls are more strident and have gained

encouragement from a wide constituency. Reform is in the air and *dwi fungsi* is seen as overdue for either elimination or radical transformation.

While some ABRI officers have questioned the validity of the *dwi fungsi* policy since at least 1989, it is only the present socio-political circumstances that have raised the level of internal debate. It appears that there is an emerging realisation among some in the senior echelons of ABRI that *dwi fungsi* has to be seen to be changing and, superficially at least, ABRI has to pull back from socio-political involvement. While a minority view at present, there are some powerful supporters emerging among the senior officer corps. What may well emerge from this unusual self-examination is a new ABRI doctrine on aid to the civil power, with more inclusive language to satisfy the reformers. The more likely reality will be a policy of dressed up socio-political involvement, similar in effect to the present *dwi fungsi* policy, but designed to satisfy domestic calls for reform.

ABRI has maintained and cultivated close links with the Presidency, and support for, and loyalty to the Presidency continues to be reinforced. Close links also were forged with the *cukongs* (Chinese-Indonesian businessmen) before the advent of the 'New Order'. From the start of the Soeharto era these businessmen provided Soeharto (and now Habibie) with the business acumen and finance to create the national wealth on which national stability was built throughout the 32 years of Soeharto's 'New Order' governments. There are those among the elites who regard as a betrayal the recent actions of these Chinese-Indonesians in expatriating their funds and expertise.

Islam

Islam, which has continued to grow in influence, has been cultivated by ABRI as a protective measure, and the smaller more radical elements sidelined. The pervasive power of moderate Muslims and Muslim groups was also used by Soeharto as a tool with which to balance domestic power and influence between the elites. An example is the creation of the Habibie led ICMI (Group of Muslim Intellectuals) as a counterbalance to the power and influence of ABRI. But the more radical groups continue to be regarded with suspicion (and perhaps fear) by the elites. Adam Schwartz, former Jakarta correspondent of the Far Eastern Economic Review comments:

But many Indonesians, including non-Muslims, nominal Muslims, the Chinese business community, and some important elements of the military, continue to harbour doubts about whether the Islamic consensus behind *Pancasila* [the five principles of national philosophy] is genuine. The usually unstated accusation is that once Islamic groups attain political power they will reveal themselves to be, in the New Order lexicon, anti-Pancasila. This prospect revives old fears of national disintegration, an explosion of Muslim-Christian enmity, and the demise of Indonesia as a secular state.⁷

Schwartz was prophetic. The proliferation of a large number of Islamic based political parties since May 1998 has caused disquiet, not least among the more moderate 'mainstream' Muslim groups such as Amien Rais' Nahdlatul Ulama, and of course the largely non-Muslim Chinese community.

Development and National Security

The lynchpin of national development policy has been domestic stability; stability built on the deliberate depoliticisation of society, a strong and growing economy and heavily orchestrated political activity – all of which combine to bring relative prosperity for all Indonesians. Thus, for more than thirty years, domestic security and stability have been based on central control of the archipelagic periphery, consensus, traditional (Javanese) values, burgeoning economic development (an average of 6%), and an erroneous belief held by the elites of a trickle down effect to the broader population.

Security, stability, and economic growth have been underpinned by the elimination of any coherent political alternative through a web of all-encompassing internal controls. By directing ABRI from the ‘centre’ Soeharto achieved a deft balance between Muslim and political groups, institutions, ABRI itself, the bureaucracy, business groups and the Presidency. Soeharto balanced deftly this *trioka* of the small elites drawn from the executive (as enshrined in the President and civil administration), the military, and the people. Ably assisted by Mme. Tien before her death, he displayed throughout his presidential years a highly-developed ability to manage this power balance.

Indonesia has enjoyed a new political freedom since May 1998. This is characterised by the emergence of about 76 parties, most of which are local single issue, or narrowly religious based. Because Parliamentary legislation to regularise this situation has yet to be drafted and presented to the Parliament, these parties are illegal and could become a cause for official attention, and may have already done so. Inappropriate action against them by ABRI security elements, perhaps directed by political opponents, could cause a religious or ethnic backlash and, ultimately, internal instability.

The Middle Class

From the late 1980s the economic and social stability of the ‘New Order’ provided impetus to the growth of a newly affluent, well educated, and economically and politically ambitious middle-class, which counted among its ranks senior civil administrators, businessmen, senior and middle ranking ABRI officers, and others not connected directly with an elite inner circle.

How to clearly define this middle class is unclear, but a rough rule of thumb used by some commentators before the economic crisis was those with a monthly income of Rp. 500,000. How significant the influence of the middle class was, and is, remains unclear. Arief Budiman suggested in a Jakarta Post article that Indonesia’s middle class, which he estimated as 2.5 millions, was too dependent on the state and the *status quo*, too weak and feeble and overshadowed by the military to join forces and be agents of change. Juwono Sudarsono, Vice-Governor of the National Resilience Institute, commented in the same article that, only by forming alliances among themselves would the middle class produce a wider penetration of well-educated people across different sectors.⁸ Certainly no obvious alternative political leader has emerged from its ranks, and like conservative middle

classes everywhere, the Indonesian middle class has tended to be a follower rather than a leader in political change.⁹

The middle class believed, and believe still, that their expertise and key contribution to the phenomenal economic growth of the nation merit both economic and political rewards. Some received modest economic reward in the shape of increased salaries, some seized opportunities for establishing their own entrepreneurial business interests, and some capitalised on opportunities for profiting from corrupt practices in government and commerce. What they lacked was a political voice. No system existed, other than government approved 'parties', through which they could effectively contribute to the shaping of the future Indonesia, a future which they believed they had earned a right to help shape. Frustration resulted and sympathy grew for students, and others who demanded political change.

Thus the political and economic ambitions of many have been thwarted because wealth and political influence remain firmly in the hands of a small ruling elite firmly rooted in Javanese mythical-religious tradition and practices: an elite disinclined to share the spoils of unparalleled economic growth, or dispense patronage.

This situation bears a marked similarity with the former Javanese sultans and their courts, where central control, collusion, corruption, nepotism (KKN), and patronage were the norm. Javanese sultans never consciously considered the public interest, and the concept of regal succession as a constitutional process under the law was completely absent. Soeharto, in a speech to GOLKAR in October 1997 after re-election as a party President, articulated his succession philosophy as "*lengser keprabon, madeg pandito*"¹⁰. This is an interesting concept as it appears to owe more to the *wayang* theatre philosophy than to the '*Babad Tanah Jawi*', the Javanese court chronicles which represent the real history of the Javanese dynasties. The *wayang* is filled with noble people, noble deeds and morality while the chronicles are filled with deceit, betrayal, *coup d'Etat*, and cruelty. Whenever a new sultan appeared it was either on the basis of blood relationship, or by violence. What Soeharto failed to do throughout his 32 years was to address the vital question of presidential succession. He was incapable of doing so because he was hostage to his own Javanese culture.

As with Javanese sultanates alternative opinions, political or otherwise, were unwelcome in Soeharto's Indonesia. However, following a long period of crackdowns on 'subversive' opposition during the late 1980's there was something of a thaw which allowed middle class people and others to voice some of their political and economic frustrations and ambitions. *Keterbukaan* (openness) first surfaced in 1990 during Soeharto's national day speech in which he promised a much more liberal climate. Middle class expectations rose, and while authorities did relax previous strictures on free expression, the regulatory framework to suppress liberalism when government tolerance had been exceeded could have been reinstated quickly and arbitrarily.

At present Indonesia is a nation in which many of the large, predominantly Chinese-owned conglomerates, moderate Islam, academia and the media have all, to a greater or lesser degree, been partially integrated into the state apparatus. These disparate groups, comprised of middle class

citizens in the main, owe their individual and collective survival to the preservation of a socio-political and economic climate increasingly tied to their own elites, and the increasing dependence of these elites on their influence with the President.

A vital part of this equation is ABRI's demonstrated ability and willingness to apply force in support of ruling elites, elites which not only want to maintain political stability and the economic *status quo*, but also, and above all, its own elite status. This ability to use force has also served to preserve the position and newly found affluence of the middle class, of which ABRI is a part. This coincidence of interests has created interdependence among the elites which have an inherently entrenched aversion to change. Significant shifts in political and economic power and culture will have to occur for this interdependency to change markedly in the near term.

Indonesian administrations – captives of Javanese mindset – have emasculated any divergent political voice and, more importantly, failed to prepare Indonesia for the inevitable transition to the post-Soeharto era. They ignored the Javanese proverb “*Sedia payung, sebelum hujan*” (have and umbrella ready before it rains). Consequently there are no political rallying points or alternative leader or leaders, and none appears to be on the horizon with the possible exception of a coalition between Megawati Soekarnoputri and Amien Rais. In addition, the number of political parties has increased from 3 to 76 in the five months since May 1998, largely based on single issues, and without widespread popular political appeal or support.

ABRI and The Presidency

The military is commanded by the President. There has been continuing reliance on ABRI to underwrite Presidential authority, and the authority of the administration. Soeharto's performance was, in part, a reflection of the legitimacy of ABRI's role as perceived in society, or at least by the elite in society. As the President seemingly became distanced from ABRI, even more so after the death of Mme. Tien, issues of corruption, collusion, nepotism, and favouritism brought his government into increasing disrepute, even with the military elite.

It was no secret that many senior ABRI officers viewed the succession of Habibie as extremely undesirable. There was never any love lost between Habibie and ABRI since the formation of ICMI as a counterbalance to ABRI influence and power, and the East German navy ship purchase fiasco. However, wiser and calmer ABRI heads saw that acting responsibly and constitutionally, and coincidentally furthering ABRI's enshrined place in the life of Indonesia, was the only way to preserve internal stability.

In May 1998 the central question was how ABRI would position itself in the instability surrounding the succession. We now know that, with the support of the people, ABRI defended the constitution and successfully contained a potentially calamitous slide into widespread domestic instability and violence. Had ABRI chosen to act outside the constitution, it may have either, seized power immediately, or allowed security to degenerate to a point where the elites implored it to take

over. In the event, the office of head of state was defended and guaranteed by the military acting within the Constitution.

THE FUTURE

Quite clearly Indonesia is a nation-state in political, economic and cultural transition. It is likely to remain preoccupied with the currency and debt crisis for at least the next five years and as a result will remain largely introspective. Life will go on for the vast majority of the population, but comfort levels will continue to fall as food prices and unemployment rise, and political and economic uncertainty start to become ingrained. These problems are far worse than acknowledged by the Habibie administration.

Many areas, rural Java particularly, have reported increases in crime which will only escalate with predicted shortages of food and water. More positively, other outlying provinces appear to have benefited from the recent good harvest. Violent disturbances, many directed against ethnic Chinese and their interests, have been widespread. 'Chinese flight', both capital and expertise, is continuing with estimates of \$US60 billion having left Indonesia already¹¹.

Instability and uncertainty in the political and economic future, combined with these factors will make the short and perhaps the medium term a period of unusually high tension.

.....for the economy

As economic realities begin to bite further (ILO estimates place 100 million people below the poverty line [daily \$US0.80 rural and \$US1.00urban] this year), and annual inflation at 78%, the poor and the not so poor who are deprived of basic foodstuffs and services are likely to become more militant and demonstrative. ABRI will become an even more critical instrument to maintaining and enforcing internal order as domestic security and stability are likely to be further threatened. In the *dwi fungsi* role ABRI's contribution to maintaining an efficient food distribution system will be equally critical, particularly with the emigration of many of the Chinese traders who have managed the unofficial but efficient system to date. Should disorder occur, the international economic bailout package for Indonesia is likely to be placed in jeopardy.

.....for ABRI

ABRI enhanced its domestic and international reputation by playing a responsible and restrained role in the May 1998 transfer of power. Exposés of ABRI's involvement in a variety of extrajudicial activities since then has seriously damaged this carefully fashioned image. The Trisakti shootings, the targeting of Chinese owned businesses during the demonstrations, rapes of Chinese women in Jakarta, the discovery of mass graves in Aceh, and the emerging allegations of past excesses in other provinces have seen ABRI's reputation fall to the lowest point in years.

Internally ABRI remains split between the ‘professional’ soldiers who do not want to retain the *dwi fungsi* role, and the majority ‘nationalists’ who believe that retention is essential. While the latter view prevails for the present, the current ABRI leadership is committed publicly to political and constitutional reform including redeveloping ABRI and an examination of the rationale for continuing with the *dwi fungsi* policy. As mentioned earlier, while the concept may not markedly change, in order to satisfy the calls for reform *dwi fungsi* may be repackaged, separated from ABRI, with perhaps the Police (POLRI) being made responsible for the ‘new’ policy.

Probowo Subianto is a prominent example of ABRI’s commitment to reformation. There are those who, possibly quite correctly, have styled his court hearing and punishment as a whitewash, but it must be remembered that he is only the second Indonesian Army General to be so punished¹². While further action by court martial or civil prosecution remains unresolved, it is looking ever more likely.

Like the nation-state it serves, ABRI is in transition. Under the command of a much more enlightened and politically sensitive leadership in Wiranto and Yudhoyono, it is changing, and is likely to change further. But internal reform, and adjusting to the ‘new Indonesia’ presents ABRI with significant difficulties. The ‘New Indonesia’ has yet to be defined, and until it is ABRI will be preoccupied with maintaining law and order, internal stability, and national cohesion: major structural and systemic reforms will remain on the back burner.

.....for “society”

In his National Day speech this year, Habibie articulated his vision of a civil society founded on justice, transparency, and democracy – significantly he appeared to play down concern for domestic stability and law and order. Such a vision is unrealistic as law and order, political and economic stability and security are all prerequisites for justice, transparency and democracy.

.....for Habibie

A majority of Indonesians and ABRI believed when Habibie was installed as President, and believe still, that he has no capacity to manage the economy successfully, engender the necessary international confidence in his ability to manage the economy and lead the nation, or successfully divorce himself from the influence of the ‘old man’. In the view of many, Soeharto remains the *dalang*¹³.

While there are tentative indications that he may wish to remain in office after the elections planned for May 1999, Habibie is widely regarded as a transitional President. His mercurial and sometimes eccentric behaviour cause considerable concern both in Indonesia and, perhaps more importantly, overseas. In spite of some initial success in restoring a degree of stability, he and his government not only lack domestic and international credibility, but also have questionable constitutional legitimacy. Both have become significant obstacles to vital economic rebuilding. The

perception of a weak, indecisive, and unpredictable President is not what Indonesia and the region need just now.

Habibie remains in power because ABRI acted responsibly, and he knows that he is there only because ABRI supports him. An ABRI weakened for any reason, equals a weakened President. A disaffected ABRI equals a very unstable administration. Significantly, the role of the civil administrators has hardly figured in the succession equation, and although they appeared to support Habibie too, it is ABRI that has been regarded domestically and internationally as the 'power broker' in the crisis. Thus ABRI, the elites, and the civil administrators supported the office of the President, rather than the person of the president. Should any part of this supporting tripod weaken or be removed there are likely to be far reaching results, perhaps fatal, for Indonesia.

Scenarios

At the beginning of this paper I stated that I would present some scenarios for consideration. All are plausible, but some more than others.

The first scenario involves an economic trigger leading to a crisis of political confidence, and the assumption of power by an authoritarian administration.

As the economy does not begin to recuperate in the short term, domestic instability threatens national security. Inability to develop and implement a series of economic reforms designed to restore stability and growth leads to a crisis of confidence in Habibie's government, domestically, regionally and internationally. A clear alternative leader does not exist, nor does an alternative government, and none has been groomed to take over. In such an event there are those who will seek to replace Habibie with a strong, decisive and credible leader acceptable to the key domestic and international constituencies. A reprise of 1965 perhaps. In such a scenario a nationalist leader sympathetic to the growing influence of moderate Islam, such as Megewati Sukarnoputri, may emerge as a force, perhaps in coalition with other. Alternatively, and more likely, a respected military officer with ABRI and other political backing, probably Muslim and Javanese, may well surface as the national leader.

Such an administration is likely to be more military and perhaps autocratic in character. This is likely to cause international concern over infractions of human rights, lack of progress on constitutional reform towards 'democracy', a re-examination of economic support packages – all of which will likely lead to internal disorder which will be ruthlessly suppressed. National recovery will be unlikely until the medium to long term.

The second scenario involves the introduction of rapid and ill-considered political and economic change; the rapid erosion of ABRI's political power; the 'civilianisation' of the national Police; and the promotion of Islamic values over all others. This leads to a situation of escalating and

eventually uncontrollable racial and religious violence which, in turn, leads to a loss of investor confidence, and severe national instability.

Habibie retains power and pushes ahead quickly with populist constitutional reforms, including the erosion of ABRI's political and operational power base by 'civilianising' the National Police. ABRI itself may fracture into opposing factions. He seeks political and mass popular support by promoting more Islamic values and reducing the influence of the Chinese conglomerates, and promoting *pribumi* economic interests. There will be those who will oppose any such move, predominantly ABRI acting to protect the constitution and to preserve its own position, together with the remaining *cukongs* and non-Muslims.

Chinese investment and financial expertise are integral to the economic recovery to Indonesia. A more overtly Islamic and anti-Chinese Indonesia will remain unattractive for Indonesian-Chinese investment to return, other regional investors, and international financial organisations responsible for financial support packages. Regional states will be very alarmed at the prospect of persisting economic uncertainty and the associated negative impact on domestic stability and national cohesion.

Racial tensions will rise and maybe get out of hand because the role of ABRI and the Police have been recast, and only the now civilian controlled Indonesian Police are left to maintain internal law and order and national stability. Overseas funds will dry up, widespread famine may occur because the *dwi fungsi* distribution system has been dismantled, economic collapse is likely, and severe national instability results.

The final scenario revolves around increasing calls from outlying provinces for more autonomy. Unsatisfied, these calls become stronger and regional instability increases leading eventually to these provinces breaking away from Jakarta-governed Indonesia.

Calls for greater autonomy from the resource rich outer provinces, such as Aceh, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi are ignored by Jakarta and centralist policies continue. Regional grievances grow as the economic returns from the exploitation of these natural resources go to Jakarta and Java at the expense of the local people. Dissent increases and instability in the regions reaches a point where ABRI can no longer impose the rule of Government.

Calls for greater autonomy change into calls for independence from the 'Javanese Colonialists'. Secessionists form local militias to fight for freedom from the central government (e.g. 'Aceh Merded') and archipelagic instability and insecurity results. Regional states in the Asia Pacific become very alarmed and urge the Indonesian government to either restore order or reach a settlement with the secessionists. All attempts at mediation fail and Indonesia fractures into a number of smaller nation states.

These are just three of many, many, plausible scenarios that can be postulated. The certainty of uncertainty when considering the future of Indonesia is a common feature.

Conclusions

There is nothing to replace ABRI – yet, and an ABRI opposed to the Presidency and the executive makes any future Indonesian government, at central, provincial, district, and *kampung* level, untenable.

Equally an ABRI enjoying neither the confidence nor support of the President and the elites, is more likely to be a force for instability rather than for national unity. The Indonesian Police, even if ‘civilianised’ and no longer part of ABRI as is presently proposed, will be professionally incapable of maintaining law and order and internal stability.

The priority for Indonesia is for economic recovery, including the provision of basic foodstuffs, followed by structured constitutional and systemic change. To attempt to tear down the existing structures and institutions with no consideration of replacement and before people have food and basic services is fraught with danger of failure.

Indonesia is set to experience a lengthy period of economic and political instability, and recovery. Without clear direction and leadership this instability could well manifest itself in severe and possibly ethnically directed internal disorder. In the short term at least, direction and leadership most likely will come from the existing elites and established institutions.

In time, managed societal and cultural change will occur, resulting in less power for these entrenched interests, and greater devolution to the provinces. But until then the nation needs a framework in which to operate – however flawed and tarnished the image of that framework may be.

Transition needs a framework too. The only framework that exists in Indonesia, and works, is that inherited from the ‘New Order’. However distasteful some elements of that framework may be, it cannot be replaced immediately, and any attempt to do so will be disastrous.

.....tentative predictions

I am confident that the longer term prospects for Indonesia are positive. While the Indonesian people do not have unlimited resilience, they do have sufficient resilience to recover from the present crisis.

Economic problems will be resolved in time, and the constitutional and political landscape will be reconstructed. The caveat is: that this transition must be in the form of ‘managed change’, and

it must be managed from within, rather than imposed from without. Elite interdependency will continue in post-Soeharto Indonesia, and with much the same military/civilian participation in government, largely the result of a cultural overhang from a long Javanese heritage.

Any future President in the near to medium term will be, in my view, reliant on the support of the interdependent tripod of elites I have mentioned. Of the legs of this tripod he will be in greatest need of ABRI.

In the medium to long term the evolution of a more 'civilianised' government is likely, with ABRI remaining the sole guarantor of domestic stability and security.

ENDNOTES

¹ Britton, Peter; "The Indonesian Army; 'Stabiliser and Dynamiser', in *Nature of the Indonesian Experiment*, ed. R. Mortimer, pp. 83-98.

² *Vadimikum SESKOAD*, Cetakan Ketiga, 1987, pp. 174-178.

³ Traditional Javanese puppet play based on the Ramayana.

⁴ McBeth, John. "Dawn of a New Age", in *Far Easter Economic Review*, September 17, 1998 p.26

⁵ *Dwi Fungsi* or dual function of ABRI is enshrined in the Indonesian constitution. The principal function is maintaining the security of the state from external aggression and guarding against internal instability, the second is active involvement in "nation building" through participation in all facets of social and political life (SOSPOL), and territorial operations (OPSTER). In return for lack of franchise ABRI presently has 75 seats in the MPR (to be reduced to 55 in new constitutional proposals).

⁶ *Vadimikum SESKOAD*, 1987

⁷ Schwarts, Adam. "A Nation in Waiting – Indonesia in the 1990's", Allan & Unwin, 1994. P. 163

⁸ *Jakarta Post*, 14 December 1996, p.2

⁹ A 1996 survey conducted by the magazine KOMPAS concluded that the Jakarta middle class wanted political and social change but did not want to take risks. They apparently cared more about economic growth than political freedom.

¹⁰ Javanese: meaning to step down as king and become a priest.

¹¹ Kissinger, Henry. *International Herald Tribune*, 12 October 1998.

¹² The first being Sintong Panjatan after the Dili shootings in 1991.

¹³ Bahasa Indonesia: narrator and puppeteer of traditional shadow plays; mastermind, power behind the scenes.

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