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INDONESIAN CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS: 
THE ARMED FORCES AND POLITICAL ISLAM IN TRANSITION, 
1997-2004

Marcus Mietzner
December 2004

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University.
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution.

To the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation.

(Marcus Mietzner)

5 December 2004
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A great number of people have assisted me in writing this dissertation, both in direct and indirect ways. Professor Harold Crouch has been a great influence on my scholarly and personal development since I began my candidature at the Australian National University in 1997. Used to the formal style of German universities and their teaching staff, I was overwhelmed by the warmth and dedication that Professor Crouch showed towards his students and his environment. His encouragement and support have guided me through the research and writing process, which stretched from the dying days of the Soeharto regime to the inauguration of Indonesia’s fourth post-authoritarian government in October 2004.

Dr Greg Fealy has also played a big role in the evolution of this thesis. His friendship and uncompromising scholarly advice have accompanied my life for the last seven years. I have grown into a great admirer of his strong academic ethics, his command of a precise but colorful language and his unique sense of humor. Special thanks are also due to Professor Merle Ricklefs, who continued to read my drafts after his departure from the Australian National University in 1998 and provided invaluable comments and insights.

Other scholars, journalists, diplomats and analysts have influenced this study through long discussions over breakfast, lunch, dinner or coffee, mostly in one of Jakarta’s formidable hotels or meeting places. Dr Edward Aspinall, Dr Rodd McGibbon and Sidney Jones have shaped my view on Indonesian politics to an extent that they are probably not aware. Dr Douglas Ramage, Dr David Engel, Ken Ward, Dr Andree Feillard, Greg and Sarah Moriarty, Major Jamie McAden, Col. Joe Judge, Ambassador Michael Green, Brig.Gen. Ken Brownrigg, Col. Alan Roberts, Major Dave Jensen, Dr John Subritzki and David di Giovanna have shared important information and analyses with me, and often hosted greatly entertaining gatherings that turned into heated debates on the ins and outs of the Indonesian political elite. John McBeth, David Jenkins, Adam Schwarz, Hamish McDonald, Jose Manuel Tesoro, Jeremy Wagstaff, Vaudine England, Erhard Haubold and Michael Vatikiotis contributed greatly to this study, both through personal discussions and their fine journalistic work. In addition, I would like to thank Professor Donald Emmerson, Dr Greg Barton, Dr Martin van Bruinessen, Daniel Ziv, Dr David Pottebaum, Geoff Forrester, David Blizzard, Michael Stievater, Terry Myers, Oren Murphy, Vishalini Lawrence, Ignacio Sainz and Dr Michael Malley for much needed assistance in the preparation of this study. I am also
humbled by the interest that some of the ‘elder statesmen’ of Indonesian studies have taken in my research, among them Professor Jamie Mackie and the late Herbert Feith.

This thesis would not have seen the light of day had it not been for the great patience of Indonesians who, despite their busy schedules, always find time to explain their country to outsiders like myself. The Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) was my host during much of my fieldwork in Indonesia. Clara Joewono, Dr Hadi Soesastro, Harry Tjan Silalahi and Dr Rizal Sukma made my stay at the Centre most enjoyable and productive. Other Indonesian scholars who have shared their knowledge and expertise with me included Dr Ikrar Nusa Bhakti, Andi Widjojanto, Dr Kusnanto Anggoro, Cornelis Lay, Dr Edy Prasetyono, the late Munir, Fajrul Falaakh, Hari Prihatono, Aribowo, Muhammad Asfar and Dr Riswanda Imawan.

In the military, several generals have devoted considerable time to answer my questions on their institution, most notably Let.Gen. Agus Widjojo, Let.Gen. Djadja Suparman, Maj.Gen. Sudrajat and the late Let.Gen. Agus Wirahadikusumah. Among the Muslim leaders and politicians who were always prepared to discuss the complexities of their religion and its political manifestations were Abdurrahman Wahid, Muhaimin Iskandar, Habieb Syarief Mohammad, Saifullah Yusuf, Djoko Susilo, Matori Abdul Djalil and the late Cholil Bisri.

At the Department of Political and Social Change of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Claire Smith and Bev Fraser have been of great assistance in overcoming the administrative troubles associated with being an overseas student. From the very first day at the Department, I felt at home, as have so many other students before and after me.

I am also indebted to my parents, Peter and Karin Mietzner, who have provided significant financial assistance to my studies. Without their help, I probably would have never made it to Australia. I am deeply grateful to them. Finally, I thank my partner Samiel Laury for his love and support. Despite his dislike for politics, he has been a source of constant encouragement and inspiration.
ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the development of civil-military relations in Indonesia after the fall of the authoritarian New Order regime in 1998. It argues that despite wide-ranging changes to Indonesia's political system, the armed forces continue to play a significant role in politics and society. Beside the opposition of the officer corps to substantial military reform, this study points to divisions within Indonesia's civilian elite as a major factor behind the stagnation in the current civil-military transition.

In order to explain Indonesia's problems in establishing democratic control over its armed forces, the thesis focuses on deeply entrenched socio-political structures, the character of the 1998 regime change and difficulties in the process of democratic consolidation. The analysis of these three areas makes it possible to locate Indonesia's position in comparative schemes of post-authoritarian civil-military-relations.

Discussing the historical legacy of military politics in Indonesia, the study exposes important structural and ideological features of the involvement of the armed forces in politics. Structurally, the territorial command structure and the practice of self-financing have nurtured a sense of institutional autonomy in the military that post-1998 governments found difficult to overturn. Ideologically, the feeling of entitlement to political supremacy, fed by highly derogatory views on civilian leadership qualities, has survived the fall of Soeharto and continues to shape the political mindset of the officer corps.

On the civilian side, long-standing divisions between major societal constituencies have hampered the development of strong political institutions and have offered the armed forces opportunities for intervention. This thesis discusses the cleavages within Indonesia's Muslim community, particularly between traditionalist and modernist groups, as one of the most important sources of conflict in the civilian realm.

The 1998 regime change also posed significant challenges to the civil-military reform process. Moderate military officers succeeded in negotiating an orderly transfer of power from Soeharto to his deputy, avoiding the complete breakdown of the authoritarian system. Consequently, residual elements of the New Order were able to extend their influence into the post-Soeharto polity and slow down initiatives for reform. The regime change also highlighted the inability of the oppositional civilian elite to seize upon the opportunities presented by Soeharto's demise. Deeply
divided and anxious not to alienate Soeharto, key civilian leaders failed to present a democratic alternative to the faltering regime. When the government finally collapsed, the non-regime elite found itself excluded from executive and legislative institutions for the first 18 months of the post-Soeharto era.

The conflict between Indonesia’s largest socio-political groups continued throughout the post-authoritarian transition, allowing the armed forces to repair their image damaged in decades of repressive rule under the New Order. The constitutional crisis of 2001, during which conflicts between the executive and the legislature paralysed political life, led to a surge in the reputation of the armed forces in society and the elite. Subsequently, retired officers emerged as influential actors in party politics and regional as well as national elections. Ultimately, the rise of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to the presidency in 2004 completed the successful adaptation of Indonesia’s armed forces and their personnel to the new democratic framework.
INTRODUCTION

MILITARY REFORM IN POST-AUTHORITARIAN TRANSITIONS: EXPLANATORY FRAMEWORKS AND THE CASE OF INDONESIA

“One of our greatest challenges is now to sideline the military from politics. They have dominated our political system, our society, our economy for too long. (...) It is now time for us civilians to take charge and reform the foundations of this nation.”

Amien Rais, June 1998

“My party cannot rule this country alone. I need a partner (...) with a wide network to win the people’s hearts, somebody strong and with charisma. He has to be from TNI. My second reason for choosing a military man to run as my vice-presidential candidate is to safeguard the national integrity of the whole of Indonesia’s wide territory. (...) We are really grateful to TNI.”

Amien Rais, September 2003

Indonesia’s political system has undergone dramatic structural change since the 1998 downfall of the New Order regime that had ruled the country for more than three decades. A multitude of political parties has replaced the tightly controlled three-party system; free and fair elections were held that resulted in three successive coalition governments with a weakening presidency; political power was transferred from the once omnipotent centre into the regions; the previously sacrosanct constitution was extensively rewritten; civil society organisations have mushroomed; and one of the most diverse media landscapes in Asia has emerged. One area that has seen some of the most significant changes is the security sector. Indonesia’s armed forces (TNI, Tentara Nasional Indonesia) had to give up their institutional engagement in politics, accept their removal from the DPR (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, People’s Representative Council) and the MPR

1 Amien Rais at a public rally in Bandung, 5 June 1998, personal notes by the author.
(People’s Consultative Assembly), and were mandated by law to reduce their role in domestic security affairs. The Police, formerly a part of the armed forces, were separated from the military and assigned the task of managing internal security.

The extent of institutional reform affecting Indonesia’s security sector has led many observers to the conclusion that ‘the civil-military balance has tilted against the military, and state-soldier relations are in the midst of substantial change’. In this view, the process of change is continuing and will lead to a further reduction of the military’s political influence. Such assessments tend to focus on formal changes made to the security sector, like the abolition of institutions attached to the old regime or the creation of new ones charged with exercising increased control over the armed forces. Yet statements like those cited above, issued by veteran politician Amien Rais, indicate that more than five years after the fall of the New Order, civil-military relations in Indonesia are far from being a classic case of gradual transition towards democratic control of the armed forces. It appears that TNI’s political powers in the post-Soeharto era, as eloquently highlighted by Amien’s courtship of military support of his presidential bid, consist of much more than just the residual authority of a previously powerful component of the fallen regime. Instead, evidence points to the possibility that Indonesia’s armed forces have assimilated successfully to the new political structures and maintained a great deal of their influence on elite negotiations and societal processes.

The complexity of the military’s new role in post-Soeharto Indonesia does not only pose difficult challenges to the process of further reforming the country’s political system, but also to the theoretical debate on democratic transitions in general. The existing literature on civil-military relations in post-authoritarian states has found it difficult to grasp the nuances of continued military influence on evolving democratic polities. Classic theories on military intervention in politics have largely focused on open interventions by the armed forces and the formal mechanisms of their political participation. They are insufficient, however, to describe the fluid

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3 The DPR is Indonesia’s parliament, while the MPR is nominally the highest institutional authority in the country. Under the New Order, the MPR consisted of the members of the DPR, regional representatives and functional groups. Every five years, it elected a president and vice-president, and issued policy directives for the government in the form of decrees and regulations that ranked higher than the legislation passed by the DPR. As a result of the constitutional amendments adopted in 2002, however, the MPR has lost its electoral powers and its legislative authority. It now comprises the members of the DPR and the DPD (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah, Regional Representative Council), a senate-like body consisting of representatives from Indonesia’s provinces. The post-2002 MPR only swears in the president elected directly by the people, and can be part of impeachment proceedings if initiated by the DPR.

power relations in emerging political systems, with militaries often using their non-institutional powers to gain access to political and economic resources. More recent models, on the other hand, have used a predominantly normative approach, proposing reform steps countries in post-authoritarian transitions have to introduce in order to establish democratic control over their militaries. Authors of this school have set the concept of democratic governance of the security sector as a normative ideal that allows them to identify diversions (and their causes) in particular countries. The ideal often proves difficult to achieve, however, with even some developed democracies failing to meet the benchmarks set up by the theorists. This creates problems in defining the very specific conditions faced by countries that have only recently emerged from decades of military-backed rule. Thus while both the classic and normative theories have captured some important aspects of the role militaries can play in post-authoritarian politics, it appears necessary to expand the existing models to tackle the complex case of Indonesia.

This thesis is a study of civil-military relations in post-Soeharto Indonesia. It will discuss the causes and consequences of the country’s problematic attempt to establish democratic control of the armed forces as a major agenda of its post-authoritarian reform program. The aim of this introduction will be to provide an overview of theoretical models of civil-military relations and evaluate their applicability to the case of Indonesia. The theoretical discourse will help to expose the strengths and shortcomings of the existing models and lead to three analytical propositions that will guide the composition and structure of the thesis. Most importantly, the crucial role of civilian politics and societal relationships in determining the outcome of civil-military transitions makes it necessary that the study divide its attention equally between analyses of military politics and developments in the civilian political sphere. Thus in addition to the discussion of military attitudes towards the transition, the study will look at the causes of the fractured state of civilian politics and its negative repercussions for military reform. This point will be illustrated by focusing on the divisions within Indonesia’s Muslim community as one of the most significant sources of political conflict. The second important element is the role of historical legacies for the evolution of post-authoritarian civil-military relations. Accordingly, the thesis will look closely at the level of entrenchment of military influence and civilian divisions in Indonesian politics. Finally, the importance of the character of regime change requires that this study provide a detailed analysis of the events preceding the democratic transition. Thus a large part of the thesis will discuss the 1998 transfer of power from Soeharto to his successor, and its consequences for the pace and quality of the post-authoritarian transition. The conclusions drawn from these three main discussions will ultimately allow the extension of existing theoretical models presented in this introductory chapter.
I. DEMOCRATIC VS CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE ARMED FORCES

Democratic control of the armed forces is one of the key factors in successful transitions from authoritarian rule to democracy. Militaries that have supported, participated in or dominated authoritarian regimes are likely to be crucial players in the transition, trying to preserve as much as possible of their previous political and institutional privileges. In order to minimise the military's influence on the shaping of post-authoritarian political structures, it is a major challenge for civilian forces to quickly initiate the establishment of constitutional mechanisms that put democratically elected, civilian state institutions in charge of all aspects of governance, including the security sector. While O'Donnell and Schmitter have asserted that it is 'civilian control' that is most important in democratic transitions, recent discussions put more stress on the quality of civilian control, and how it is achieved and exercised. Cottey, Edmunds and Forster, writing on transitional processes in Eastern European states and the former Soviet Republics, propose that what really matters is the

"control of the military by the legitimate, democratically elected authorities of the state. It thus concerns more than the simple maximisation of civilian power over the military, and is fundamentally about the democratic legitimacy, governance, and accountability of a state's civil-military relationship."6

Democratic control of the military is, therefore, best understood as an inter-institutional process in which legitimate state bodies authorise the structure, size, function and use of the armed forces.7 Civilian control, on the other hand, can be undemocratic if exercised by civilian forces not sufficiently legitimised through proper democratic procedures. In some cases, the establishment of civilian control by only one dominant civilian element in the post-authoritarian transition can reinforce the very manipulability of the armed forces that the regime change aimed to remove.

The distinction between 'civilian' and 'democratic' control of the armed forces will prove crucial in discussing the Indonesian case. The transitional process in Indonesia has seen several

presidents making attempts to use the armed forces in the competition with their political
opponents. Such examples underline the necessity of further defining what exactly democratic
control of the armed forces entails. The first level of explanation concerns the decision-making on
military policy. In a democratic state, such decisions are made by the democratically elected
executive in coordination with the legislature. By entrusting the decision-making process to an
institutionalised system of checks and balances, the possibility that a single political actor can
gain monopolistic power over the military is reduced. Parliamentary oversight of the armed forces
is the most crucial element on this level of democratic control, with the legislature approving
defence-related policies, adopting legislation and allocating the budget for the military.\(^8\)
Countries in transition often face difficulties in empowering their legislatures to exercise these
control functions properly, due to a variety of reasons ranging from lack of expertise in military
affairs to divisions within the political elite. The second level is related to the implementation of
decisions made by political authorities through the bureaucracy. As Edward Page has outlined,
the adequate implementation of political decisions made by state institutions is a major element of
functioning democracies.\(^9\) In the area of democratic control of the military, the Department of
Defence is the bureaucratic tool through which policy decisions are translated into concrete action
on the ground. In military-backed authoritarian regimes, armed forces officers who seek to retain
control of policy in military hands often dominate the defence bureaucracy. This deliberate
exclusion of civilian defence officials can lead to serious problems in the subsequent democratic
transition.\(^10\) Finally, the third level of democratic control highlights the importance of societal
scrutiny of the armed forces, largely exercised through civil society groups and the media. Their
participation in the management of defence policy and its implementation are crucial additions to
the traditional concepts of ‘civilian control’.\(^11\)

The extent of military adherence to these three levels of democratic control is determined by the
quality of the civilian institutions that oversee them. Successful empowerment of civilian leaders,
and effective cooperation between them, is likely to result in the acknowledgement of democratic

\(^8\) Hans Born (editor), *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: Principles, Mechanisms and


\(^10\) Yuri E. Fedorov, ‘Democratic Transformation of the Security Sector in Russia: A Sad Saga of Failure’,

\(^11\) This element of democratic control has been referred to as ‘horizontal control’, as opposed to the
‘vertical control’ exercised by formal state institutions. Hans Born, Marina Caparina and Karl Haltiner,
Series* No. 47, July 2002: 11.
control by the military leadership. On the other hand, problems in the establishment of civilian state and societal institutions, whether provoked by sabotage, inter-civilian disputes, indifference or lack of expertise, are almost certain to encourage the armed forces to disobey or ignore orders by civilian control authorities. This inter-connectivity between empowerment of civilian state institutions and democratic control of the armed forces has led most recent authors on the subject to integrate democratic control into the broader concept of 'security sector reform'. The inclusion of democratic control into the concept of security sector reform is important for the clarification of two major issues. First, it defines military reform as part of a larger process of reforming not only other security institutions (police, armed militias, forces of executive agencies), but the system of governance as a whole. It links the success of establishing democratic control of the armed forces with the levels of consolidation shown by both the democratically authorised state institutions and those security agencies charged with carrying out the functions previously monopolised by the military. Second, it clarifies that the 'key civil-military problem in the post-authoritarian state' is not only, as Alagappa put it, 'the need to curb the military's political power', but also to guarantee that this reform process does not result in an erosion of general security conditions. Such erosion is likely to undermine the project of democratic consolidation, and includes the possibility that the public will demand the retention of military powers unless other credible alternatives are presented.

The expansion of traditional theories on 'civilian control' to the more comprehensive concepts of 'democratic control' and 'security sector reform' carries significant methodological consequences for this study, and has played an important role in defining its scope. It suggests that the interaction between civilian forces, their struggle for control of the political institutions and the fora of civil society are as important to the outcome of the civil-military reform process as the classic concentration on corporate interests of the military. Accordingly, it will be one task of this study to analyse how the relationships and rivalries between civilian groups have affected the chances of establishing democratic control of the armed forces. On the other hand, the

application of the concepts will provide important normative evaluation tools regarding the reform steps Indonesia has taken in its process of democratic consolidation. Where the notion of 'civilian control' would fail to grasp the complexities of the relationship between the executive, the military and other civilian forces, the norms and standards enshrined in the model of democratic control are much more likely to identify those areas where the reform efforts have produced insufficient results to carry the process forward, and are therefore more useful in identifying Indonesia's place in the comparative scheme of civil-military transitions.

The discussion so far has identified democratic control of the armed forces as a crucial element of security sector reform and, ultimately, democratic transition. The literature on this topic is of a largely normative nature, with authors giving recommendations to countries in transition regarding reform measures they are expected to take and risks they should avoid. In contrast, the academic exchange on the causes and dimensions of military interventions in politics has been vast, and filled with numerous case studies from the 1950s to the 1990s. Samuel E. Finer argued that theories on military intervention in politics could be negatively applied in order to explain military non-intervention or 'extrusion'. While this is not entirely true, the description of the various causes of military intervention in politics, the different models of military-state relations, and the theoretical approaches to the downfall of military-backed regimes provide an important background for this study. Especially the analysis of the last area, the disintegration of authoritarian regimes, will demonstrate that the study of the transfer of power does not only deliver invaluable insights regarding the fall of the ancien regime, but also leads to important conclusions for the ensuing problems in democratic consolidation.

II. AREAS OF MILITARY INTERVENTION: POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, INSTITUTIONAL, SOCIO-CULTURAL

Before discussing the various models of military intervention in politics, it is important to introduce the political, economic, institutional and socio-cultural sectors of state organisation in which militaries traditionally seek to exert influence. The description of these areas, and the opportunities of intervention they offer, will make it easier to identify diversions from the normative model of democratic control of the armed forces, and will provide analytical tools for the analysis of the Indonesian case. First, and most important, is the participation of the military

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In countries where democratic control of the armed forces has been established, the military is part of the political process only in terms of submitting policy options if the civilian authorities ask for such advice, and implementing the policy militarily once the relevant decisions have been made. Military officers may, of course, exert political influence by voting in general elections, lobbying politicians, shaping public opinion by engaging with the media or aligning themselves with civil society organisations or think tanks. Such interventions remain, however, within the democratic political framework. In non-democratic states, on the other hand, militaries have not only tried to influence the decision-making process, they have used coercion to put pressure on state institutions, have pushed for participation in legislatures and executive bodies, and, in some cases, have taken over government. Koonings and Kruit have outlined two major motivations for military interventionism in political institutions:

"First, there is the notion that the military institution is exceptionally well placed not only to defend but also to define the essence of the nation by birthright and competence. Second, the military 'knows' that 'civilians', that is to say, civilian politicians, the institutional framework of civic governance, the actions of societal interest groups, and the overall political culture tend to be inadequate to address the needs of the nation." 16

These interventions transform the armed forces from an advisory and executive instrument of the state into a decision-making institution, with the corporate interests of the military becoming a major element in general governance. As a result, the institutional set-up of the state is fundamentally changed.

The second area where militaries tend to seek involvement is the economic sector. George Philip, for example, pointed to the importance of 'economic fiefdoms' for 'bureaucratically autonomous and politically interventionist' militaries in South America between 1925 and 1982. 17 In this field, analysts have differentiated between two types of intervention: first, the economic activities aimed at raising funds for the operational costs of the armed forces and the personal enrichment of its officers; and second, the engagement in national development projects, boosting the political legitimacy of the armed forces and institutionalising their role in governance. The first type of engagement includes military-owned businesses and cooperatives, stakes in large conglomerates that seek security and political protection in return, illegal activities such as

extortion, drug trafficking, backing of prostitution and gambling, and involvement in natural resource-extraction.\textsuperscript{18} The second type of socio-economic activity is of a developmentalist nature: the military participates in programs such as the building of crucial infrastructure, family planning and public health, management of sports and youth organisations, education in rural and remote areas, and disaster relief. These activities grant the armed forces access to non-military items within national and regional budgets, increase the participation of military personnel in governance, and help to legitimise political intervention in the eyes of society. The extent to which militaries are independent from financial resources provided by the state, and the level of socio-economic engagement of the military in civilian areas of governance, are reflective of the position the military can assume in its interaction with other state institutions.\textsuperscript{19}

The third field of military intervention is related to the institutional and organisational autonomy of the armed forces. Often the involvement of militaries in the two areas mentioned above, the participation in political institutions and the economy, are functions of the inherent tendency of the armed forces to protect and expand their institutional autonomy. Military officers are inclined to view issues of defence management, such as force structure and size, purchase of equipment, senior appointments and the development of military strategies, as matters of internal organisation rather than policy fields directed by civilian authorities. This belief is based on what Peter D. Feaver called the ‘information asymmetries in civil-military relations’, which points to a level of technical expertise of the armed forces in the ‘management of violence’ that civilian controllers do not possess.\textsuperscript{20} The drive for institutional autonomy can lead militaries to seek direct participation in or control of state institutions in order to limit their intervention opportunities vis-à-vis the armed forces.\textsuperscript{21} Equally, the involvement of militaries in the economic sector is often motivated by their desire to remain financially independent from the control institutions of the state. There are, however, two areas of institutional autonomy in which even participation in political institutions or budgetary independence can prove insufficient to prevent interference by civilian forces: first, the authority over senior appointments and second, decisions on major defence and security policies made by civilian state institutions. In many post-authoritarian states,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Eric A. Nordlinger, \textit{Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments}, Prentice-Hall 1977.
\end{itemize}
the control over appointments constitutes the only civilian bargaining power in the interaction with militaries that have preserved large elements of their institutional and organisational powers built up under the previous regime. The confrontation between civilian appointment authority and the institutional power of the military often leads to civil-military negotiations over the terms of the transition. These negotiations can result in alliances between civilian power holders and military leaders aimed at establishing new forms of semi-authoritarian rule. Alternatively, civilians may concede organisational autonomy to the armed forces in exchange for their support of the democratic transition.

Besides institutional autonomy, militaries also often seek jurisdiction over the formulation and implementation of defence and security policies. In his study on the armed forces of Chile, Gregory Weeks described this area as 'highly salient' for the military. Many militaries view it as their prerogative to manage the security of the state, insisting that civilians are politically too divided or do not possess the necessary skills to be left in charge of national security issues. In transitional states, militaries tend to utilise their organisational autonomy to obstruct decisions on security matters made by civilian authorities. Unable to influence the decision-making process itself, and aware that overthrowing the government is politically unfeasible, the armed forces may run counter-operations that undermine the goal of the policies set by the executive. In Indonesia, the armed forces formally endorsed the decision by the Habibie government to hold a referendum in East Timor, but immediately began to support the build-up of pro-integration militias assigned with sabotaging the process. In addition to the control of defence and security policies, militaries often demand legal jurisdiction over their own personnel. The extent to which the military has authority over legal investigations into its officers is a major issue of democratic consolidation. Militaries may insist on the autonomy of their legal systems in order to fend off demands for legal inquiries into crimes and violations that occurred under the previous regime. While such investigations are often essential for the success of democratic transitions, civilian authorities may find it necessary to reach compromises with the military, resulting in de facto amnesties for incriminated officers. The ability of militaries to sabotage and obstruct the implementation of government directives in other policy fields is the major consideration for such compromises, which in turn are important analytical indicators of the quality of civil-military relations in the country concerned.

The fourth area that militaries traditionally attempt to participate in or establish control over is the socio-cultural sector. Civil society and its socio-cultural expressions are important elements in stabilising or undermining political structures, and their control and manipulation is a major component of regime maintenance in authoritarian states. Not only does military surveillance of cultural activities dampen criticism of the regime, but the armed forces may also initiate or support religious events, literary works, ideological indoctrination courses, theatre plays, media features or concerts aiming to influence public opinion on policy issues in general or the role of the military in particular. The socio-cultural sector is in fact the most difficult to establish definite control over, and the decline of authoritarian regimes often begins with subtle manoeuvres by protagonists of cultural life to voice the very opposition towards the government that formal institutions were unable to express. Intellectuals, writers, artists and musicians have often had a larger impact on the fate of regimes than politicians, either in destabilising or legitimising them. The interaction of the armed forces with civil society and the cultural sphere is often overlooked in studies on civil-military relations, with the main focus remaining on state institutions and military participation in them. The widened concept of democratic control of the armed forces, however, acknowledges the importance of non-political actors in the civil-military equation, and looks critically at how socio-cultural factors either catalyse democratic consolidation, or, on the contrary, help the armed forces in preserving their privileges.

III. MODELS OF MILITARY INTERVENTION: PRAETORIAN, PARTICIPANT-RULER, GUARDIAN, REFEREE

After having identified the areas in which military intervention occurs, it is important to describe the various typological models that have dominated the discourse on civil-military relations in authoritarian states so far. Although they are less precise in analysing civil-military dynamics in transitional states, they are helpful in picturing the level of military intervention a particular state had to overcome when the democratic transition began.

The most extreme form of military intervention in politics has been termed as 'praetorian' rule. In praetorian models of governance, the military is the main component of the regime, and all

25 The following typology of states with different levels of military intervention is largely based on Perlmutter 1977 and Nordlinger 1977.
other forces and institutions are under its control. Executive, legislature and judiciary are either directly occupied by members of the armed forces or loyalist civilians. Praetorian regimes often rule under emergency regulations or legislation passed under its supervision. Many of the Latin American and African states that were the focus of the classic studies on military interventionism in the 1950s were countries under praetorian rule. In the 1970s and 1980s, South Korea and Thailand had praetorian regimes, and Burma and Pakistan still fall under this category today. Although Pakistan has officially returned to civilian rule, the elections that installed the new government were so heavily manipulated by the military, and powers so centralised in General Musharraf’s presidency, that the country still fulfils all criteria of a praetorian state. A second model is that of ‘participant-ruler’, describing countries with direct military participation in, but not full control of, government bodies. The armed forces may form alliances with or serve the interests of a particular civilian elite, and receive government participation and control over security policies in return. The Philippines under Marcos, Thailand for much of the 1980s and the majority of communist states were examples of this type of state-military relations. Communist leaders in particular may have calculated that the inclusion of the military in governance would not only bind the armed forces to the ruling elite and neutralise the potential for opposition, but also transform the military into one of the main pillars of the regime.

In the model of ‘guardian’ rule, on the other hand, militaries do not necessarily have to participate in or dominate the government. They have enough institutional powers to judge the performance of civilian governments and remove them if deemed necessary. Such militaries define themselves as protectors of national values and goals, whether it is to preserve the territorial integrity of the state or the adherence to a specific national ideology. Turkey has been a classic example of the guardian model, with the military now staying out of most government institutions, but still powerful enough to engineer the downfall of any government viewed as violating the principles of secularism or not doing enough to contain the Kurdish threat to Turkey’s borders. In contrast to this, the ‘referee’ model refers to the role of militaries in countries with high levels of political competition, where the armed forces act as ‘king makers’. The backing by the military may decide the power struggle in favour of a certain group, and the top brass will receive concessions for its support. Such concessions can have the form of regime participation or other privileges serving the military’s interests. More important in this model are the non-political powers possessed by militaries, whether based on coercion or collective

26 Gareth Jenkings has asserted that by ‘January 2001, the military continued to insist that the twin threats to Kemalism from Kurdish nationalism and radical Islam had been contained rather than defeated.’ See Gareth Jenkins, ‘Context and Circumstance: The Turkish Military and Politics’, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper 337, 2001: 84.
acknowledgement by civilian forces. The notion of the military as a ‘referee’ suggests, however, that the armed forces are a neutral mediator in political conflict, which is rarely the case. Huntington therefore introduced the concept of a ‘praetorian society’ in which no single force is able to exercise full authority, including the military.

Most countries with long histories of military intervention have found themselves changing from one model into another at various stages of their development. Arguably, Indonesia went through all four paradigms since the 1950s. The role of the armed forces under parliamentary democracy conforms to the guardian model as the military helped to terminate the democratic system amidst threats to Indonesia’s territorial integrity. During the Sukarno regime of 1959-1965, the armed forces were participant-rulers, sharing power with the President and confronting the rising influence of the communists. The army intervened in 1965, establishing a praetorian regime with military control of all state institutions. By the early 1990s, however, the increasing stake of civilian elements in the New Order reduced the military’s role in state institutions again to that of a participant-ruler. The armed forces were increasingly critical of the more sultanistic aspects of the President’s rule, but withdrew their support only after a public uprising had cornered him. The ‘referee model’, finally, is able to describe some elements of the transition to post-authoritarian rule. It positions the armed forces as a power broker between the competing civilian forces, highlighting one of the main developments in post-Soeharto civil-military relations. The model fails, however, to grasp the nuances of this interaction. It remains debateable whether the military in post-New Order Indonesia still has the power to determine the composition of the government; international and domestic considerations make such forms of intervention rather unsustainable. Instead, the armed forces have received substantial concessions from both incumbent governments and oppositional forces in return for support in political crises. In addition, retired generals have played a key role in the democratic competition after 2002. Evidently, the existing models for military intervention are poorly equipped to explain these dynamics of post-authoritarian transitions.

27 Linz and Stepan defined sultanism as a form of government in which ‘there is high fusion by the ruler of the private and the public. The sultanistic polity becomes the personal domain of the sultan. In this domain there is no rule of law and there is low institutionalization.’ Linz and Stepan contrasted sultanistic rule with authoritarianism, in which ‘there may or may not be a rule of law, space for semi-opposition, or space for regime moderates who might establish links with opposition moderates (...).’ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London 1996: 52-53.
IV. REASONS FOR MILITARY INTERVENTION: PROFESSIONALISM, THREAT LEVELS, STRENGTH OF STATE INSTITUTIONS

The various models of military intervention in politics have been linked to different sets of explanations. The question why some militaries intervene in politics and others do not, and which factors influence the level of intervention, has been the focus of numerous case studies and theoretical discourses. Three approaches stand out as the most prominent ones, and they will be discussed shortly in this section: first, the classic Huntingtonian notion of professional militaries versus non-professional ones; second, the reference to internal and external threats as a major determinant of military engagement; and third, the linkage between the functionality and legitimacy of civilian institutions on the one hand and the intensity of military involvement on the other.

The proposition of a nexus between military professionalism and the involvement of the armed forces in politics has been challenged by new theories and contradicting evidence, but it remains a prominent school of thought in the study of civil-military relations. Huntington asserted that a professional military will maintain its neutrality and isolate itself from the temptations of political interference. Militaries that concentrate on the development of technical expertise and the fulfilment of their institutional responsibilities, said Huntington, are very likely to obey policy decisions made by civilian authorities. Professional militaries allow for what Huntington calls 'objective civilian control', a concept that in its substance comes close to what has been introduced above as 'democratic control' of the armed forces, but lacks its procedural understanding. Unprofessional militaries, i.e. those that do not focus on skills development, technological innovations, and improvement of strategic thinking; are prone to become interested in practical politics. David Shambaugh, commenting on the reform process of the Chinese PLA (People's Liberation Army), used Huntington's theory to describe the depoliticisation of the PLA in the second half of the 1990s:

"Senior PLA officers (...) are now promoted based on meritocratic and professional criteria, while political consciousness and activism account for little. The officer corps is thus becoming increasingly professional, in classic Huntingtonian terms. (...) The military's mission today is almost exclusively external, to protect national

29 Huntington 1957: 121.
security, rather than internal security. The role of ideology is virtually nil, and political work has declined substantially (...)" 30

Huntington’s model continues to be influential in the field of foreign military assistance to countries in transition, where many donors believe that professionalisation of the armed forces is a precondition for establishing democratic control. Accordingly, large parts of the available funds are being allocated for training officers in classic military courses, with the expectation that this may instil sufficient levels of interest in their military profession, which in turn will reduce the tendency to intervene in politics.

The problem with Huntington’s assertion lies, of course, in its definition of ‘professionalism’. The concept of ‘professionalism’ does not exclude the possibility that militaries acquire professional skills that may encourage intervention in politics. Stepan’s notion of a ‘new professionalism’ captures this possibility, and identifies internal security and national development as the two areas in which militaries have increased their professional skills, driving them into the political arena. 31 Stepan argues that the expansion of military professionalism into areas of non-military expertise, like economic management and community development, has increased the dependence of civilians on the advise of the armed forces in various fields of governance. In addition, a series of case studies has also questioned Huntington’s findings. In his study on the armed forces of Pakistan, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema maintained that the military ‘played a very important role in the Pakistani polity and no significant decision was taken, in domestic or security affairs, without the military’s input’. 32 Yet he also concludes that the armed forces are ‘disciplined and well-trained’. 33 Military professionalism in praetorian states? The majority of academic research suggests that such cases exist, casting doubt on the very linkage between professionalism and levels of military intervention that forms the essence of Huntington’s model.

Besides the issue of professionalism, the discussion on the causes of military intervention in politics has concentrated on internal and external threat levels in particular states. While there is agreement that high levels of internal threat (political conflict, social inequalities, ethnic rivalries,

33 Cheema 2002: xiii.
separatism, lawlessness) lead to increased political intervention of the armed forces, the literature remains divided on the consequences of high levels of external threat (wars, international terrorism, piracy). Some, like the proponents of the ‘garrison state’, have argued that the constant threat of war may lead to the institutionalisation of the military’s role in politics. 34 Others, like Andreski, have maintained exactly the opposite. They have explained that external threats keep militaries occupied and, therefore, out of politics. 35 Hunter, writing on civil-military relations in Latin America, even asserted that expanding the political relevance of external defence cooperation played a significant role in the post-authoritarian transitions of the 1980s and 1990s, compensating politicised militaries for lost terrain. 36 Further developing this argument, Michael Desch introduced a model that analyses the interplay between external and internal threats on the one hand and the quality of ‘civilian’ control of the military on the other. 37 He suggests that high levels of external threat and low levels of internal threat result in ‘stronger’ civilian control; high levels of external threat and high levels of internal threat lead to ‘poor’ civilian control; low levels of external threat and high levels of internal threat produce the ‘worst’ civilian control; and low levels of external threat and low levels of internal threat are likely to see ‘mixed’ civilian control.

Theories that link the levels of internal and external threat with the extent of military intervention in politics may have some descriptive value, but their explanatory strength is rather limited. They tend to view levels of threat as objective facts, established by scientific means and under conditions of political neutrality. The reality is, of course, quite different. There is sufficient evidence that militaries have not only created public perceptions of threat levels that consolidated their political positions, but have also actively engineered conflict situations that increased the levels of threat, both internally and externally. Threat levels are part of the political discourse within societies, and their interpretations are therefore informed by the vested interests of particular groups and institutions. 38 Militaries may give their assessments of threat levels not only based on objective facts, but also from the perspective of how such an analysis can generate additional funding and other institutional privileges for the armed forces. In the same context, militaries may stimulate, create or prolong conflicts, particularly in the domestic arena, if such

36 Wendy Hunter, State and Soldier in Latin America: Redefining the Military’s Role in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, United States Institute of Peace, Washington D.C. 1996.
acts of manipulation are deemed favourable to their interests. In Indonesia, many observers have argued that while the secessionist movements in Aceh and Papua have constituted serious threats to the state, their operations have been partly encouraged by elements of the armed forces in order to highlight their indispensability as guardians of national unity. This problem of manipulability exposes threat level theories to another analytical question: what has made militaries in a small number of states so powerful that they can control the public perception of threat levels, and even create conflict situations to increase them? With this, the threat level theories arrive back at the very question that they claimed to answer.

A third school of thought has highlighted the quality of civilian state institutions as an important factor in determining the extent of military involvement in politics. Samuel Finer laid the grounds for this model by asserting that countries with a ‘developed political culture’ are more likely to see strong civilian control over the military than those with low levels of societal respect for the governmental and legal institutions of the state. Militaries tend to seek political participation, and ultimately control, if state institutions lack the legitimacy and functional strength to run effective and stable administrations. The failure of civilian governments to maintain political stability, manage security threats, provide economic growth and uphold law and order has ‘forced’ militaries to intervene. Finer’s argument carries the risk of being tautological: military non-intervention does not only result from a developed political culture, it is one of its key features. The importance of Finer’s theory, therefore, is less based on its explanatory strength than its ability to shift the analytical emphasis from the military-focused professionalism and threat level theories to the discussion of political culture. For Finer, the key to understanding the reasons for involvement of the armed forces in politics lies as much in society as in the institutional interests of the military.

In this context, several authors have looked at levels of economic development as indicators for the likelihood of military intervention. Proponents of development-based theories have argued

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40 In some of his later works, Huntington, for example, has postulated a correlation between per capita income and the possibility of military coups. Countries with a per capita gross domestic product of $3000 or above are very unlikely to witness successful coups, while countries with per capita levels of below $500 are extremely prone to such forms of military intervention. Samuel P. Huntington, ‘Reforming Civil-Military Relations, in: Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (editors), *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy*, Johns Hopkins University Press, London and Baltimore: 9.
that higher levels of economic development produce new political actors with increased demands for participation in state institutions, challenging traditional players such as the bureaucratic elite, large business corporations and the military. The emergence of a new middle class in Asia in the late 1980s has been credited with the removal of the military from power in South Korea and Thailand. There, economically inspired demands for free markets, eradication of corruption, abolition of monopolies and the impartiality of the legal system formed the conceptual core of the oppositional movements. As one observer of Thai politics noted, the 1992 uprising was ‘not so much pro-democracy, as it is often claimed, but rather a movement opposed to the possibility of a new alliance of the military and business leading to a dictatorship.’

There are more complex examples, however. The military in Indonesia did not only survive three decades of economic growth without major challenges to its privileged position, but has drawn its political legitimacy from it. It was precisely when the economic boom ended, and the new middle class was thrown into crisis, that the armed forces had to accept Soeharto’s departure and the subsequent democratic reforms. It appears, therefore, that it is not always economic development as such that erodes military interference in politics. Rather, it is often the sudden downturn after long periods of growth that increases the likelihood of opposition by the middle class towards the very authoritarian rulers that facilitated its rise.

The theories that focus on society, the economy and institutions of the state as key indicators for military interventions in politics have considerable advantages over the models based on military professionalism and the various levels of threat. They establish an important (and so far missing) link between the quality of governance as a whole and the political intervention opportunities of militaries, and analyse the issue of civil-military relations in the wider institutional framework of the state. Substantial weaknesses remain, however. To begin with, the issue of weak civilian institutions cannot be debated in a political vacuum. Militaries may have the power to weaken institutions of the state in order to prepare their own rise to power. This is particularly relevant for countries in which political institutions are in an early stage of their development and thus vulnerable to outside interference. Daniel Lev, for example, has argued that the disintegration of Indonesia’s parliamentary democracy in the late 1950s, was the result of political manoeuvring by the army: ‘Why? In part because it could, but also because it had compelling interests in a quite different political system.’

Conceptually, the identification of weak civilian institutions as a

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factor in motivating military intervention in politics raises new questions related to the causes for such weaknesses, and the institutional interests of the military may well be part of the answer. A second problem is the omission of international factors. The shifts in policy priorities after the Cold War, the role of international donors and the increased importance of human rights since the 1990s have, however limited in scale, influenced the political aspirations of militaries in developing states. While insufficient to form a theoretical model on their own, arguments centred around international factors have to be taken account when explaining the elements that facilitate political involvement of militaries or force them to disengage.

V. THE FALL OF MILITARY REGIMES: ERODING LEGITIMACY, INTRAMILITARY FACTIONALISM, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

The discussion of the causes of political interference by militaries leads into the debate about their ‘extrusion’ from politics. Thus the following section will examine the reasons for the disintegration of military-backed or military-dominated regimes, and build analytical bridges to the study of civil-military relations in transitional states.

Some of the theories developed to explain the downfall of military regimes deal specifically with the unsustainable aspects of military rule, while others propose more general explanations for the end of authoritarian governments. The notion of an inherent non-sustainability of military rule has traditionally been based on the inability of the armed forces to explain their political engagement beyond the short-term legitimacy of emergency intervention. Militaries tend to intervene in times of political and economic crisis, claiming that civilian authorities have failed to protect the interests of the state. Such intervention may be popular for as long as the emergency persists, but becomes problematic once stability is restored and the role of the military is institutionalised. Some militaries can argue that their institutional engagement is necessary to prevent the reoccurrence of the very emergency situation that provoked it to intervene, but such situational frameworks of legitimacy are unlikely to sustain military rule for a longer period of time. Accordingly, militaries expanded their basis of legitimacy to include national development, the defence of particular ideologies or, more generally, the maintenance of national unity. The linkage of military legitimacy with the achievement of certain goals, however, has thrown the armed forces into what Huntington called a ‘performance dilemma’. If they fail to achieve their

43 Alagappa 2001b: 50-51.
self-set targets, societies are likely to seek a quick end to military rule; if, on the other hand, the goals are achieved, the reasons for continued military intervention may be questioned as well. Sustained economic growth, the unchallenged dominance of a particular ideology or the permanent neutralisation of threats to national unity remove not only the emergency context under which militaries came to power, but also erode the claim to institutionalised rule. Theories of disintegrating military regimes have therefore concentrated on the linear process of emergency intervention, expansion of legitimacy claims and subsequent erosion of the regime by either performance failures or, on the contrary, the long-term consequences of its successes. This erosion can facilitate a change of regime, and in some cases initiate post-authoritarian transition.

One important factor in limiting the life span of military regimes is the growing distance between those officers who staged the initial emergency intervention and assumed executive powers of government, and those who are in charge of the day-to-day management of the armed forces. In addition to these two major factions, Stepan emphasised the importance of military intelligence operators, or the 'security community', as a third group with specific interests. Military leaders in positions of political power may, like Indonesia’s Soeharto, try to create factionalism within the armed forces in order to prevent a challenge to their rule. These efforts of weakening potential rivals for political power are closely related to the issue of succession. Only very few military regimes have seen non-violent changes in leadership, with coups and internal elimination of competitors the most common way of transferring governmental authority. The ouster and arrest of Burmese Prime Minister Khin Nyunt in October 2004, for example, illustrated the non-institutional character of succession in military-dominated states. Equally, Thailand has seen a series of coups within its military regimes between the 1930s and the early 1990s. It was partly this prospect of being violently deposed and persecuted that has discouraged military-backed rulers like Soeharto from addressing the issue of succession at all. Instead, they tended to postpone the topic for so long that society began to turn not only against them, but against the system of military-based governance itself.

While there are some military-specific aspects in the downfall of regimes controlled or backed by the armed forces, most of the factors that lead to the erosion of such polities can be applied to other forms of authoritarian rule as well. Alagappa divided the possible explanations for the breakdown of authoritarian governments into two categories: international factors (war, 


conquest, changes in the global material and normative structure, changes in the global economy, changes in the foreign policy of major powers), and domestic factors (economic crisis, loss of legitimacy, conflict within the ruling bloc, growing public opposition, civil war, internal conflict).46 Apart from very obvious cases where regimes are overthrown by external military intervention (like the US-led invasion of Iraq and subsequent removal of Saddam Hussein from power), there seem to be only very few cases in which international factors played the lead role in bringing authoritarian reigns to an end.47 International economic crises, multinational alliances and development aid may, in fact, stimulate and sustain authoritarian interventions as much as they can help remove autocratic regimes. The role of international donors in the Indonesian crisis of 1998 is a case in point: while the credits extended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had the potential of saving Suharto’s rule, it was the President’s mishandling of the aid package that fueled opposition to the continuation of his government. It appears, therefore, that the major causes of the disintegration of authoritarian regimes lie in the domestic area. Regimes become vulnerable if they are no longer able to serve the interests of the societal groups that originally benefited from authoritarian rule, triggering a series of phenomena that ultimately cause the regime to fall: internal splits within the elite, the revitalisation of opposition groups through new power configurations, societal protest against the inefficiency of government and conflicts within the military. While all these developments take place within an international context, and may well be influenced by it, they follow the inherently domestic logic of the contested regime and the opposing forces it has produced.

As demonstrated in the course of this introduction, the literature on civil-military relations has been expansive on the areas in which militaries seek intervention; on the various models of military participation in politics; on the reasons that cause some militaries to intervene and others to stay disengaged; and, finally, on the explanations for the downfall of military regimes. Among the presented theoretical approaches and models, however, there were only very few that could capture the dynamics of the role militaries play in post-authoritarian states. The classic categorisations of military intervention (praetorian, participant-ruler, guardian, referee) have proven too general to describe the complexity of civil-military interactions in transitional states, and the various reasons linked to them (lack of professionalism, internal and external threat

46 Alagappa 2001b: 53.
47 Samuel Decalo, for example, doubts the effectiveness of the ‘economic deterrence of the West in case of military coups’. While it helped in the short term to create some of Africa’s ‘New Democracies’, its failures are clearly ‘visible in the pattern of mutinies and attempted coups that have punctuated the rhythm of political life in the 1990s.’ See Samuel Decalo, Civil-Military Relations in Africa, FAP Books, Gainesville and London 1998: 199.
levels, quality of state institutions) have only limited explanatory power. The theories on the fall of military regimes, on the other hand, do not extend to the residual powers the armed forces may use in post-authoritarian transitions, or the way they may assimilate to new democratic frameworks. According to Robin Luckham, the fluid contexts of political transitions have created ‘new problems for analysis, including how to decipher underlying shifts in military power relations when these are no longer flagged by open military intervention.’ 48 The following section will, therefore, look at the very limited number of studies that have attempted to describe the nuances of civil-military relations in transitional states, and will subsequently introduce a new model that may be of help to investigate the subject of this study, the civil-military relations in post-Soeharto Indonesia.

VI. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN POST-AUTHORITARIAN STATES: CLASSIC MODELS FOR NEW CONTEXTS

Most of the recent case studies on civil-military relations in post-authoritarian states have used classic models in order to explain the complexities of new contexts. This leads to problems in connecting the theoretical model with the empirical material, and may even result in inconsistencies between the model-based argument and narrative-based conclusion. Herbert C. Huser’s study on civil-military relations in Argentina, for example, uses the Finerian model of ‘political culture’ to explain the military’s exit from politics after 1983. Using Finer’s notion of legitimacy as the major element of a developed political culture, he maintains that

“Argentine politics may be characterized as different sources of legitimacy being advanced, simultaneously and exclusively, by groups in contest. In other words, democracy is not a given in the political culture, and a single rule of legitimacy does not apply; fragmented legitimacy and conflicts are apparent.” 49

In Finer’s model, such a diversity of competing legitimacies, reflected in a lack of respect for the existing institutions, would lead to increased military intervention. Yet Huser concludes that ‘the historical role of the military as an autonomous political contender appears to have run its course, as have the contests between the military and the civilian government for legitimate political

authority. Apparently, the evolution of civil-military relations in post-authoritarian Argentina was much more complex than Finer’s model would suggest; Huser describes the persistence of major differences between the civilian forces over the legitimacy of the political framework, but at the same time reports substantial progress in depoliticising the armed forces. This disconnect between theoretical assumption and the presented material points to the ineffectiveness of classic models in capturing the nuances of developments in transitional states.

Other authors have approached the problem of civil-military relations in post-authoritarian states in a very normative way. They identify democratic control of the armed forces as an important element of successful democratic transitions, and describe the conditions countries have to fulfil to achieve this goal. These conditions read like the reversed catalogue of the reasons classically given for military intervention: empowerment of civilian institutions of the state, reducing the use of coercion in managing political conflicts, installing democratic paradigms into the mindset of the officer corps, professionalisation of the armed forces and their concentration on external defence matters, restructuring of the security sector and isolation of the old top brass from the political process. There is some disagreement about the importance of reform initiatives taken in the early phase of the transition. O’Donnel and Schmitter have argued that the process of reforming the military is a generational project, and that initial institutional changes may have only limited impact. Aguero, on the other hand, has asserted that ‘the initial conditions are critical in shaping the first transition outcome.’ Among others, he names civilian control over the reform agenda as a crucial element of the transitional process. The widely held view that democratic transitions in general and establishment of democratic control of the armed forces in particular are long-term developments likely to proceed for decades, has discouraged most observers from analysing the early period of the transition in much detail. This study will argue that many of Aguero’s ‘initial conditions’ are determined by the character of the regime change from authoritarian rule to the new government, as well as by developments in the early days of the democratic era when the political landscape takes shape. This focus will help to identify the extent to which the normative conditions for initiating democratic control of the armed forces were addressed at an early stage, and where delays and omissions have caused serious problems in later phases of the transition.

50 Huser 2002: 196.
Besides the concentration on classic models and the proposition of normative conditions, another prominent approach has been the analysis of transitions as interplays of competing political and economic interests. Such a model, which authors like David Pion-Berlin have called a theory of 'strategic action',\(^{53}\) allows for a high extent of analytical flexibility, and calls for case studies to explain the specific situations of particular countries. The downside of this approach is, of course, that it is largely self-evident. There is little doubt that the scale and the outcome of the competition between interest groups over political privileges and economic resources have a major impact on transitional processes, including on the evolution of post-authoritarian civil-military relations. The strength of this model, therefore, lies more in its ability to concentrate its analytical focus on what it views as the primary source of conflict in transitions and draw attention away from secondary factors such as conflicting values and long-term structural change. Thus the interest-based approach is less an explanatory theory than a methodological guideline for the description of particular transitions. It is interesting to note that even proponents of structuralist explanations of democratic transition, while rejecting the interest-based model as narrow and ignorant of global dynamics of change, tend to describe the conflicts in transitional states as power struggles between old elites and new political forces, between 'predatory' and 'neo-liberal' interests. Richard Robison criticised the interest-based approach as the product of 'rational choice theorists' who explain democratic transitions as processes 'driven by the rational calculations of rising and declining elites facing rising costs of suppressing opponents and forced to seek a new political format that, while second best, is preferable to mutual destruction.\(^{54}\) He then continued, however, by analysing the Indonesian transition as 'the struggle to shape the institutions that define the new democracy', involving 'alliances and coalitions of state power and social interest' connected to the Soeharto regime on the one hand and the 'reformist camp' on the other.\(^{55}\) While contextualised in a framework of capitalist expansion, it appears that even structuralist approaches like Robison's rely heavily on the analysis of competing interest groups to make their case.

The multitude of theoretical approaches introduced so far has indicated that particular aspects of some models may be helpful in capturing the dynamics of civil-military relations in post-

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\(^{55}\) Robison 2002: 93.
authoritarian states. Some authors have tried, therefore, to combine the various theories into a single model that can address the specific conditions of democratic transitions, and explain why some civil-military reform projects succeed and other run into serious obstacles. Alagappa, for example, has amalgamated the most influential writings on civil-military relations into one inclusive ‘analytical framework’.\(^{56}\) The downside of such eclectic models is their vagueness and generality. Forced into a united theoretical approach, most of its components lose their sharp analytical edge and explanatory power. The following section will discuss one model that tries to integrate diverse aspects of the existing civil-military literature without insisting on their analytical combination. Andrew Cotney, Tim Edmunds and Anthony Forster, writing comparatively on civil-military relations in post-authoritarian transitions in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics of Central Asia, have designed a model that appears to be well equipped to explain the hybrid state of civil-military relations in post-Soeharto Indonesia.

**VII. CRITIQUE: THE TWO-GENERATION MODEL OF CIVIL-MILITARY REFORM**

The model developed by Cotney, Edmunds and Forster integrates normative and empirical elements into one comprehensive framework of gradually evolving civil-military relations of transitional states. They recognise the establishment of democratic control over the armed forces as a crucial component of democratic consolidation, and assert that the academic discourse on such issues has been misguided by its narrow focus on the circumstances, traditions, and histories of Western states.\(^{57}\) Traditional theories of civil-military relations developed in the West have often stressed the likelihood of the armed forces seizing political power, instead of explaining the wide spectrum of intervention levels between the extremes of democratic control and praetorian rule. Not only have most Western models proven ineffective in capturing the dynamics of civil-military relations in post-authoritarian contexts, they have already moved on to paradigms of a ‘post-modern military’. Analysts like Charles Moskos have characterised the post-modern military by its increasing ‘interpenetrability’ between civilian and military spheres; its internal modernisation in terms of gender equality and acceptance of different sexual orientations; its involvement in non-traditional operations such as peacekeeping; and its integration into supra- or multinational command structures.\(^{58}\) Obviously, such models have little relevance for transitional

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\(^{56}\) Alagappa 2001b: 29.

\(^{57}\) Cotney, Edmunds and Forster 2001: 2.

states struggling to build workable institutions of governance and reduce military intervention in politics. Cottey et. al. try to address the ineffectiveness of both traditional theories and post-modern models by developing an approach that fits the political circumstances of post-authoritarian transitions, and also allows for sufficient levels of analytical flexibility to establish differences between particular countries.

The explanatory focus of the model is directed towards security sector governance, the process of multi-level interactions through which democratic control of the armed forces is exercised. This approach investigates the relationship between state institutions (executive, legislature, bureaucracy), the security forces (armed forces, paramilitary forces, police, state-legitimised armed formations) and civil society (defined with Linz and Stephan as the arena in which 'self-organizing groups, movements, and individuals, relatively autonomous from the state, attempt to articulate values, create associations and solidarities, and advance their interests' \(^{59}\)). The quality of this relationship determines whether countries are successful in their attempts to establish democratic control over the armed forces, or whether problematic civil-military interactions become obstacles to further democratic consolidation. Specific indicators are the extent to which the democratically legitimised executive is able to formulate and implement policy decisions on foreign relations, the deployment and use of force, and defence management; the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight of the armed forces; and the involvement of civil-society groups with expertise in defence and security affairs (which make up what Cottey et. al. call the 'non-governmental security community') in informing the civil-military discourse.

The most significant contribution of the Cottey et. al. model to the debate on civil-military relations in post-authoritarian states is the introduction of a two-generation model of reform phases in democratic transitions. According to Cottey et. al., most countries that have initiated democratic reform after long periods of military-backed, authoritarian rule begin the transitional process with changes to their institutional framework: abolition of security institutions associated with the old regime, establishment of new civilian bodies to control the armed forces, changes to the command system, and empowerment of parliament. This first phase of institutional measures is what Cottey et. al. call the 'first generation' of civil-military reforms.\(^{60}\) The first generation of reforms is important for the dismantling of old power structures as well as for the definition of what the end goal of the democratic transition should be. It is insufficient, however, to address capacity problems of the newly created institutions, and to control residual powers the armed

\(^{59}\) Linz and Stepan 1996: 7-8.  
\(^{60}\) Cottey, Edmunds and Forster 2001: 5.
forces may be able to exercise through non-institutional political networks.\textsuperscript{61} Political institutions, as well as civil society groups, can only function properly if they have the capacity to fulfil their tasks. Lack of expertise, experience, funds, infrastructure, supporting staff, technology and information can cause even highly sophisticated institutional frameworks to collapse or simply become dysfunctional. Accordingly, the ‘second generation’ of reforms is crucial. The second generation consolidates the frameworks created in the first; it provides the democratic substance to the structures established by political decisions. The challenge of the second-generation reforms is centred around building capacity of both state institutions and civil society, and it concerns three main areas: first, the ‘development of working mechanisms for the implementation and oversight of defence policy’. Second, the establishment of ‘effective systems of security sector governance, which allows a country’s defence and security requirements to be adequately assessed, reassessed, and addressed’. And third, ‘the engagement of “civil society” as a core component of oversight and accountability in defence and security matters.’\textsuperscript{62}

Cottey, Edmunds and Forster have used their two-generation model to evaluate processes of civil-military reform in numerous states of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, most of which had highly politicised armed forces during decades of communist rule. Their assessment of the reform processes concludes that despite strong traditions of military praetorianism in most of the investigated countries, and despite the chaos of post-communist transition, none of the states has seen the recurrence of military rule. Instead, the majority of countries have experienced various degrees of progress in military reform, ranging from initial measures in first-generation reforms to consolidating steps in second-generation efforts. Cottey et. al. have developed four categories of countries, each defining the position of a particular state on the two-generation scale of civil-military reforms.\textsuperscript{63} The first group consists of states that have largely addressed the first-generation agenda, but in some cases have experienced problems in implementing second-generation reforms. In their research, Cottey et.al. have identified eleven states that belong to this group, among them Bulgaria, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Hungary. The second type is characterised by countries that have faced persistent problems with the first-generation agenda, although some civil-military reforms have been initiated. This group contains two countries: Russia and the Ukraine. The third group of countries is made up of states that have not even seen


\textsuperscript{62} Cottey, Edmunds and Forster 2001: 5.

\textsuperscript{63} A summary of the country classifications can be found in Graeme P. Herd and Tom Tracy, ‘Civil-Military Relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina: “Capacity Building” to Democratic Institutional Development?’, Unpublished Paper, 2003: 5.
first-generation measures of reforms. There are seven countries in this group, including Turkmenistan and Belarus. The fourth category, finally, describes states that have initiated both first and second-generation reform steps but were too weak to sustain them, leading to either stagnation or collapse of the reform process. This group includes seven states, among them Armenia, Georgia and Tajikistan.

In order to explain why some countries have progressed further than others in the process of civil-military reforms, Cottey et. al. have developed five explanatory propositions: first, the historical legacy of military engagement in politics under previous regimes can influence the pace and scope of military reform in post-authoritarian transitions. While transitions are not predetermined by historical contexts of the preceding regime, the persistence of its power structures may play an important role in the emerging democratic polity. Second, the state of civil-military relations is a reflection of the democratisation process as a whole. Countries in which alternatives to liberal democracy have largely been delegitimised have seen more significant moves towards establishing democratic control over the armed forces than states in which the principles of political organisation are still contested. Third, international incentives have had a major impact on the willingness of states to pursue civil-military reforms. The majority of Central and Eastern European countries have established democratic control over their armed forces as a precondition for acceptance into NATO and the European Union. The economic and political advantages offered by membership in these multi-national associations have even convinced the more conservative militaries in the region to comply with the normative standards of the organisations they sought to enter. Fourth, the depth of domestic institutional reform in the security sector can be an important factor for the state of civil-military relations. Consolidated institutional reforms reduce the vulnerability of civil-military relations towards the vagaries of domestic political change, while artificially implemented reforms are unlikely to be sustainable over longer periods of time. Fifth, specific ‘military cultures’ can support or obstruct the efforts of establishing democratic control. In this regard, the level of professionalism (understood as ‘the extent to which the military view their core mission as to undertake in a

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professional manner the military tasks defined for them by civilian political leaders') 66 is of crucial importance.

The Cottey et. al. model leads to important insights regarding the case of Indonesia. To begin with, it delivers an explanatory framework for the preliminary analysis that despite a series of institutional reforms, Indonesia’s armed forces have retained considerable political powers and, accordingly, democratic civilian control has not been successfully established. The model suggests that Indonesia has experienced serious difficulties in completing the first-generation reforms and/or initiating second-generation measures. The two-generation categorisation allows for a much more precise identification of Indonesia’s place in the comparative scale of countries with transitional civil-military relations than the traditional models of praetorian, participant-ruler, guardian and referee levels of military intervention. In addition, it also points to the wider context of democratisation in Indonesia, and particularly requires studying the correlation between institutional military reform and the political discourse on competing models of governance. Such a focus may help to discover the extent to which political disputes between major political forces may have obstructed the process of institutional military reform and, therefore, delayed its second-generation consolidation. Furthermore, the model highlights the absence of international affiliations and alliances that could have forced Indonesia to pursue military reforms faster and with more depth. Finally, the emphasis on institutional reform questions the extent to which the structures of Indonesia’s security sector were reformed after 1998. In this context, the persistence of the entrenched territorial command structure suggests that the process of institutional reform remains incomplete.

Despite its explanatory advantages over other models of civil-military relations, the Cottey et.al. approach shares one fundamental weakness with most of its counterparts: it says very little about the factors that obstruct the empowerment of civilians to control the security sector. Cottey et.al. tend to focus on the lack of technical expertise and infrastructure, and pay only secondary attention to the dynamics of post-authoritarian power struggles among civilian forces. They concede that there is significant ‘willingness of some civilian elites to try and draw the armed forces (or elements of the armed forces) into politics in order to gain their support in what are primarily civilian, domestic political conflicts.’ 67 This is an important assessment, and should deserve further analysis. In his study on the Nigerian military, ‘Emeka Nwagwu has focused on

tribalism and regional conflicts as the main reasons for military intervention in African politics. Equally, Indonesia’s social, religious and political landscape is a complicated web of long-standing alliances and rivalries, with the conflict over the role of Islam in politics standing out as one of the primary sources of tension in the civilian sphere. In fact, the impact of inter-civilian disputes on the pace and quality of civil-military reforms appears to be one of the most important explanatory components of the two-generation model, and should have been integrated into the typology of causes for successful, failed or stalled transitions. Instead, Cottey et al. mention the extent of institutional reform as a main indicator for the state of civil-military relations; this assertion runs the risk of circularity as the depth of institutional reform is in itself the result of the other four factors outlined in the model (legacy of the previous regime, legitimacy of democratic rule, international incentives, and specific military cultures). The aim of this study is, therefore, not only to test existing models in the context of civil-military relations in post-authoritarian Indonesia, but also to expand such theories with the lessons learnt from the Indonesian case. This expectation is reflected in the structure of the thesis.

VIII. LEGACY, TRANSITION AND POWER: THE STRUCTURE OF THIS STUDY

The discussion of the existing literature on civil-military relations has pointed to the strengths and weaknesses of the various theoretical models. It has also provided important suggestions as far as the focus and the structure of this study are concerned. In this context, there are three crucial conclusions that will guide the composition of the thesis. To begin with, the critique of the classic theories of military intervention in politics suggests that studies on the topic have to divide their attention equally between analyses of military politics and internal developments in the civilian political sphere. Accordingly, this thesis will focus as much on the role of key civilian groups in the democratic transition as on the interests, attitudes and discourses within the armed forces. The overview of theories has also shown that many authors pay much attention to the building of civilian capacity in military management, but have only marginally touched on the impact that conflicts between civilian groups can have on the quality and pace of civil-military reforms. The Indonesian case suggests, however, that such conflicts play an important part in explaining the problems of establishing democratic control over the armed forces. The working hypothesis of this study is that long-standing rivalries between key civilian constituencies have undermined efforts for effective military reform in the post-authoritarian transition. In this context, the

controversy within Indonesia's Muslim community over the role of Islam in political life stands out as one of the main sources of intra-civilian conflict. Historically, Muslims with secular-nationalist attitudes have been engaged in heated debates with more devout followers of the faith over the relationship between the state and religious affairs. Equally important, however, are divisions within the community of devout Muslims itself, with modernist and traditionalist groups split over doctrinal, social and political aspects of their religion. These conflicts have stretched from the colonial period over parliamentary democracy and two authoritarian regimes to the current democratic transition. Consequently, this thesis will analyse developments within the Muslim community as a case study of conflicts within the civilian political sphere and their repercussions for the process of civil-military reforms.69

The second crucial conclusion from the survey of theoretical models relates to the importance of historical legacies for the evolution of current civil-military affairs. Cottey, Edmunds and Forster asserted that in countries where military ideologies and power structures were imposed by historical coincidences and/or external force, their disintegration was fast and complete. The armed forces in such states found it easy to support post-authoritarian polities as their identification with the deposed power holders was artificial. If, on the other hand, military dominance of political institutions was deeply entrenched in society, transitional processes were much more problematic. Accordingly, this study will have to analyse in some detail the historical legacies of military involvement in Indonesian politics and the divisions within the civilian sphere that helped to sustain it. The third crucial proposition drawn from the theoretical discussion is concerned with the study of the character of regime change and its consequences for the transition outcome. Aguero’s emphasis on the ‘initial conditions’ suggests that the analysis of events that marked the transfer of power from the ancien regime to the post-authoritarian polity is essential for the understanding of civil-military transitions. The discussion of the 1998 regime change in

There are, of course, other important reasons for choosing Muslim groups as the main focus when studying conflicts in Indonesia's civilian sphere. First, Islamic groups represent the largest segment of Indonesian society, both numerically and in terms of political significance. The study of their interests, relationships and conflicts will reflect general patterns of political interaction in Indonesia. Second, the discussion of Indonesia's civil-military affairs between 1998 and 2004 will point to the critical relevance of the Abdurrahman presidency in the transitional process. Abdurrahman's rise and fall was closely related to the factionalism and alliance-building between Islamic groups, and facilitated intervention opportunities for the armed forces that ultimately consolidated the military's position. Third, the study of intra-Islamic relationships and conflicts will inherently extend to other socio-political segments. The central position of Islamic forces in Indonesia's political landscape makes them a main target for the build-up of cross-constituency coalitions. In fact, Islamic forces and secular-nationalist groups have cooperated more often than Muslim-based groups among themselves. The role of secular-nationalist constituencies is, therefore, an integral part of any study of the relationship between forces of political Islam.

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Indonesia will, therefore, form an important part of this study. It will show that the roles played by the armed forces and key civilian groups during the political crisis of 1997 and 1998 assisted elements of the New Order to extend their influence into the post-authoritarian era and obstruct efforts for wider institutional reform, including in the security sector. The discussion of historical legacies and the character of regime change will, finally, provide the analytical and empirical background for the explanation of civil-military developments in the post-Soeharto transition.

The three conceptual conclusions mentioned above are mirrored in the structure of the thesis. The study will be divided into three major parts, comprising two chapters each. The first part will focus on historical legacies that have had a profound impact on the state of Indonesian civil-military relations. Chapter 1 discusses the history of military politics, the structural entrenchment of the armed forces in society and ideological developments within the officer corps. Chapter 2, for its part, highlights the divisions within Indonesia's Muslim community as one of the primary sources of conflict in the civilian political sphere. The chapter will explain the religious, social and political gap between secular-nationalist and devout Muslims on the one hand and the conflicts between traditionalist and modernist Islam on the other. The second part of the study describes the regime change of 1998 and its impact on the civil-military transition after Soeharto's fall. Chapter 3 argues that moderate elements in the armed forces helped to negotiate an intra-systemic transfer of power from Soeharto to his deputy, avoiding a more radical break with the authoritarian past. The diverse attitudes of key civilian forces and figures towards the disintegrating regime are the subject of Chapter 4, with the main focus on the divisions between the largest Muslim groups. The inability of civilian elites to form a united front against the regime and assume control of the government facilitated the emergence of the student movement and popular resistance as the main vehicles of opposition. The collapse of the regime amidst violence and societal protest left a power vacuum that was filled by residual components of the New Order, with serious consequences for the democratic transition. The third part, finally, will discuss the dynamics of civil-military relations in the post-authoritarian transition after 1998. Chapter 5 will evaluate the process of military reform in the post-Soeharto period and explain the reasons for its successes and failures. Concluding, Chapter 6 maintains that the fragmentation of civilian politics during the transition created obstacles to the establishment of democratic control over the armed forces and facilitated the rise of former generals as key participants in the electoral competition.
FIRST PART

HISTORICAL LEGACIES, 1945-1997
CHAPTER ONE

DOCTRINE, POWER AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY: THE LEGACY OF MILITARY POLITICS IN INDONESIA

Cotcey, Edmunds and Forster have identified the historical legacy of the armed forces, especially their relationship with the previous regime, as one of the main factors determining the quality of post-authoritarian civil-military relations. In the same vein, other authors have stressed the importance of contradictory interpretations of the past for civil-military interactions in transitional states. Patricio Silva, writing on South America, maintained that

"(...) deep divisions between the military and the civilian world remain. The clearest expression of this lies in the existence of two conflicting and mutually excluding readings about the recent authoritarian past. On the one hand, the military and their civilian supporters in countries like Argentina, Uruguay and Chile argue that the armed forces actually saved their nations from complete chaos and disintegration. On the other, the left and human rights organizations blame the armed forces for having destroyed the old democratic system and for the systematic use of state terrorism against their opponents. The passing of time has definitely not reduced the enormous breach between these two interpretations." 1

There are five aspects of TNI's historical legacy that will be of analytical significance for the study of post-Soeharto civil-military relations. First, the military's perception of itself as a 'people's army' that - in contrast to civilian nationalist leaders - made no compromises in their fight against Dutch colonial forces and led the country to independence in 1945. This perception supported both a sense of entitlement to participate in government and an engrained disdain for civilian politicians. Second, the perception that democratic civilian rule in the 1950s failed to establish good government and led to regional revolts that threatened to bring about the disintegration of the nation. Third, the gradual evolution since the 1950s of a doctrine to justify military involvement in government, and the creation of an organisational format to support such involvement. This doctrine - later known as Dual Function (Dwi Fungsi) - and the accompanying territorial command structure provided the foundation for the New Order regime after 1966. Fourth, the deep penetration by the military into civilian institutions under the New Order between 1966 and 1998. The TNI's

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participation in government and society was so extensive that the post-authoritarian reform of civil-military institutions would have to go much deeper than in other countries with more elite-oriented regimes. Finally, the broadening of Soeharto’s power base during the late New Order and the increasingly sultanistic character of his rule led to a growing gap in the 1990s between the ageing president and the military. This gap had considerable consequences for the character of the 1998 regime change and the role of the armed forces in it, as well as for the development of civil-military relations in the post-Soeharto era.

I. INDONESIA’S ARMED FORCES AND THE FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE: BETWEEN IDENTITY, MYTH AND POLITICAL LEGACY

The Indonesian armed forces view themselves as a ‘people’s army’. The idea that the military was born out of a revolutionary struggle for national independence, and that its creation was mandated by the people rather than the authorities of the state, has been a central element in the civil-military discourse since the 1940s. Propagating the concept of ‘being one with the people’ (manunggal dengan rakyat), the military has invariably maintained that it was the decisive force in the fight for independence. The events during the guerrilla war against the Dutch between 1945 and 1949, or the military’s historiographical interpretation of them, have served to legitimise the armed forces’ claim that Indonesia’s civil-military relations are fundamentally different from those in other countries. In fact, some elements in the armed forces leadership have traditionally rejected the term ‘civil-military relations’ as a Western concept aimed at creating an unpatriotic ‘dichotomy’ between the military and its people. In 1999, the then Commander of the Armed Forces General Wiranto emphasised that

“ABRI views itself as the creation of the people’s army that gave birth to the state. (...) This was the situation that led to the character of ABRI’s roles and perceptions in society until today. The differences of opinion between TNI and the politicians in several historical events strengthened TNI’s perception that differentiated between armed struggle and political-diplomatic struggle. Out of this historical perception grew ABRI’s self-perception that Indonesia’s independence was more determined by armed struggle than by the diplomatic struggle.”


The belief that the armed forces 'gave birth' to the nation, and the claim of a direct mandate from the people, consolidated TNI's conviction that it was destined to guard the integrity of the nation state. This sense of historical mission, and its derogatory view of civilian achievements, are at the centre of TNI's political perceptions and interpretations. While the historical accuracy of these self-perceptions is secondary to their impact on Indonesia's civil-military relations today, it is nevertheless important to provide a brief assessment of the most crucial historical events that formed the nucleus of TNI's political identity.

The Indonesian armed forces were founded in October 1945 as TKR (Tentara Keamanan Rakyat, People's Security Force). The nationalist movement under Sukarno had declared independence in August 1945 after the Japanese capitulation, but Dutch colonial forces soon returned to Indonesia, where they were confronted by a wide range of local guerrilla forces. The TKR was tasked with coordinating the operations of these militias, but in reality it exercised little authority over them. The situation was further complicated by the fact that many of the militias were linked to political parties and charismatic local leaders. As rival groups struggled for power, civil-military conflicts were inevitable. For example, the leftist politician Amir Sjarifuddin, who became Minister of Defence in November 1945, attempted to enforce civilian control over the TKR. Wiranto's 1999 speech identified Sjarifuddin's moves as the beginning of TNI's 'involuntary' engagement in politics:

"TNI's involvement in politics began as a reaction against efforts by politicians to control or at least subordinate TNI, which since its founding had been relatively independent in its internal affairs, to their political influence. The efforts to control TNI became especially apparent when Amir Sjarifuddin became Minister of Defence (...) and established an armed wing of leftist groups..."
named TNI of the People (TNI-Masyarakat). He tried also to (...) create splits within TNI through all sorts of slander and intrigues.”

The determination of the armed forces to manage their own affairs and resist civilian intervention is a major concern of militaries everywhere, and has been described by authors like Nordlinger as a key motivation for military participation in politics. Evidently, Wiranto’s recollection of civilian interference in matters of military organisation was not disinterested historiography but intended as a military contribution to the civil-military debate in the post-Soeharto era. In the turmoil of the armed struggle against the Dutch, the armed forces had even defied the civilian government by electing its own Commander-in-Chief, the legendary Sudirman. Sudirman would remain the only TNI chief directly elected by his fellow officers, making him an iconographic reference point in TNI history. In 2003, the governor of Jakarta, himself a retired military officer, inaugurated a statue of Sudirman, overlooking the capital’s main boulevard named after the general as well. While widely considered a national hero for his contribution during the war of independence, for Indonesia’s military Sudirman has been primarily a symbol of military autonomy, heroic defiance of misguided civilian leadership and absolute self-sacrifice for the sake of the nation, beyond and above the intrigues of divisive politics.

Sudirman highlighted the institutional autonomy of the armed forces by frequently disregarding the political strategies set by the civilian government. The cabinet favored negotiations with the Dutch and continued diplomatic engagement with international powers as the best way to achieve independence. The armed forces, on the other hand, proposed the continuation of the military struggle at all cost. Neither of the two strategies appeared to be successful, however. Negotiated agreements with the Dutch were short-lived and regularly followed by Dutch offensives against the remaining Indonesian positions. The military, for its part, was unable to resist the growing military dominance of the Dutch, and the area controlled by the Republican government shrank rapidly as a result. Military officers were outraged at what they saw as the cowardice of Sukarno when the latter allowed himself to be captured by the Dutch, and regarded the civilian leadership as divided and ineffective. In the view of the armed forces, this contrasted sharply with their own determination to continue the fight. TNI’s limited, but internationally publicised attacks and the resistance of large parts of the population made it impossible for the Dutch to establish effective control over their

7 Wiranto 1999: 84.
former territory. In the end it was the international outcry over what increasingly looked like an anachronistic and brutal colonial war that convinced the Dutch to give in. At a round table conference in the Netherlands, Dutch and Indonesian negotiators agreed on the transfer of authority to the United States of Indonesia for late 1949.

The military rhetoric of unrivalled sacrifice could hardly hide the fact, however, that the armed forces had been just as weak and divided as their civilian counterparts. Most significantly, the government’s rationalisation program, which aimed at bringing the various militias and regional units under the control of the centre, led to conflicts within the ranks. In addition, regional sentiments created considerable tensions between military units operating in particular territories. There was little communication between local commanders, complicating larger operations that required cooperation beyond the boundaries of their designated areas. Finally, the endless string of defeats damaged the military’s reputation, and even triggered doubts about the armed forces’ capacity to continue the armed struggle. Kahin reported that Soekarno only agreed to sign a major agreement with the Dutch because field commanders had told him how bad the military situation was, especially in terms of ammunition supplies. Sudirman even felt the necessity to issue an official denial regarding such rumours. Episodes of internal fragmentation, regional splits, military shortcomings and implicit acceptance of the strategy of negotiations do not figure prominently in TNI’s official historiography, however. Instead, the major stress is laid on either TNI’s defiance of civilian orders to surrender (illustrated by Sudirman’s rejection of Sukarno’s order to remain in Yogyakarta after the 1948 attack), or its reluctant acceptance of policy directives (exemplified by TNI’s compliance with some of the agreements negotiated with the Dutch).

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11 The army had been reluctant to acknowledge the UN-sponsored negotiations with the Dutch, reminding the government of former agreements broken by the former colonial power. Sudirman wrote in April 1949 that if the negotiations were to be successful, the Indonesian side had to be represented by the ‘real fighters’ in the struggle, i.e. the army (‘orang jg benar2 berdjoeang pokoknja’). Instead, Indonesia’s delegation was made up of the very civilian leaders who, in the eyes of the military, had unnecessarily surrendered to the Dutch in December 1948. See Tjokropanolo, *Jenderal Soedirman - Pemimpin Pendobrak Terakhir Penjajahan di Indonesia: Kisah Seorang Pengawal*, Jakarta 1993: 253.
The extent to which the guerrilla war contributed to the defeat of the Dutch invasion has been the subject of intensive debates in Indonesia’s civil-military discourse. These controversies have little to do with an analytical assessment of historical facts, but more with the contested legitimacy of military participation in politics. President Soeharto, for example, insisted that the armed struggle was the key to independence, thus legitimising the political role of the armed forces in his regime. In fact, he considered the historiography of the 1945-49 period as such an important element of political legitimacy and regime stabilisation that he ensured that his own personal role in it was not overlooked. The Republican attack on Yogyakarta in March 1949, during which army troops managed to recapture the city for several hours, was re-interpreted by New Order historians to portray Soeharto as the main strategist and executor of the operation. Annual memorial services reminded the public of Soeharto’s role in the military campaign, and even the dates of political events were tailored around the anniversary of the attack. Only after Soeharto’s fall did relatives of the Sultan of Yogyakarta have the courage to credit Hamangkubuwono IX with the initiative for the military action, and describe Soeharto’s participation in it as rather marginal.

The role of the armed forces in the war of independence, despite its importance for the self-perception of the armed forces, does not, however, provide a strong explanation for Indonesia’s tradition of military intervention in politics. As Alagappa pointed out, ‘that a military did or did not participate in the struggle for national liberation or won or lost the war is by itself unimportant as an explanation’. He stressed that neither the Indian nor Pakistani military participated in the struggle for independence; yet the former has consistently stayed out of political affairs, while the latter has dominated politics for most of Pakistan’s post-colonial history. Equally, the Burmese military, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army and the Vietnamese People’s Army have all played crucial roles in their respective independence wars. But while the Burmese armed forces have run a series of praetorian regimes, the Chinese and Vietnamese militaries have remained subordinated to their communist leaderships. The reference to major historical contributions of militaries has, therefore, rather limited relevance in explaining the level of their intervention in politics. In combination with other factors, however, the claim to a unique historical role, often intertwined with corresponding missions and mandates, can consolidate and sustain military intervention in politics for a remarkable period of time.

17 Kahin, for instance, makes no mention of Soeharto in describing the attack. Kahin 1952: 411.
18 Most of the sessions of the MPR during the New Order, for example, would start on the 1 March, the date of the attack, and end on 11 March, the day Sukarno handed over power to Soeharto in 1966.
20 Alagappa 2001b: 63.
II. PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY: OVERTHROWN OR ABANDONED?

The interaction between the military and civilian authorities during the period of parliamentary democracy between 1950 and 1957 is of particular relevance to contemporary perceptions of civil-military relations. The failed experiment with liberal democracy in the early 1950s was Indonesia’s only experience of non-authoritarian rule before the fall of Soeharto in 1998. In comparative terms, the political dynamics of that period were similar in important respects to those emerging after the demise of the New Order, with unregulated activity of political parties, free elections, wide-ranging parliamentary powers, strong regionalism and a pluralist press. This period was therefore the only historical reference point for both the post-Soeharto leadership of the armed forces and civilian politicians in anticipating the character of civil-military relations after 1998. The period gains additional significance from the widely held view that parliamentary democracy did not fail due to its own weaknesses alone but was deliberately undermined by the armed forces. If true, the involvement of the military in bringing down a democratic regime comparable to that established after Soeharto’s resignation could constitute a critical historical precedent in the minds of military officers, and thus affect the ongoing process of democratic consolidation.

The armed forces leadership during the time of parliamentary democracy had manifold reasons to be dissatisfied with the political system. Nasution, Army Chief of Staff during most of the 1950s, blamed the rise and fall of a series of cabinets, anti-centralist sentiments in the regions and the spread of corruption on ‘the parties and groups (which) fought for all sorts of principles and goals, namely a variety of –isms’. 21 This aspect of the military’s political memory of parliamentary democracy has remained influential to this day. In his 1999 speech, Wiranto repeated Nasution’s interpretation of liberal democracy in an almost unchanged anti-pluralist thrust:

“The fear that the Republic could fall apart amidst the various conflicts between political parties motivated TNI in the 1945-57 period to take measures with political nuances, which were outside of its role as an instrument of defence and security. The events of 17 October 1952, when the military asked President Sukarno to dissolve Parliament and take over the government, form the most outstanding example of the anger of TNI officers over the manoeuvres of political parties, which they viewed as the main reason for the instability of the nation and the short-lived rule of several governments.” 22

22 Wiranto 1999: 85-86. The ‘17 October Affair’ had been triggered by a parliamentary motion criticising the armed forces for, among other things, their internal promotion system and the alleged
An equally important source of dismay within the armed forces, however, was their sense of political marginalisation. Nasution complained that ‘when we lived under the atmosphere of liberalism, TNI slowly but steadily lost its identity.’ According to Nasution, the military ‘operated in a very limited environment, namely only in the sector of its military duties, and was nothing more than a dead instrument like the previous KNIL.’ The civilian perception that the post-war military was merely a tool of the state to achieve military goals, and that in times of peace the armed forces had no particular political role to play, ran contrary to TNI’s self-perception. Finally, the military also felt that civilian leaders tried to subordinate the armed forces to the interests of political parties. In the view of the top brass, politicians formed alliances with individual officers for political purposes and threatened the unity of the officer corps as a result.

Civilian intervention in military affairs was not only driven by vested interests of politicians, however, but was also the result of internal divisions within the armed forces. The differences between officers concerned appointments and structural reforms. Officers who had been part of the former Japanese auxiliary forces claimed that a new promotion system discriminated against them by requiring educational qualifications that they did not possess. It was this dissatisfied group within the military that lobbied both politicians in Parliament and the President to overturn the recruitment regulations, providing a significant ‘pull’ factor for civilian interference from the side of the armed forces. In addition, the various factions within the military also disagreed over the general political direction of the country and the role TNI should play in politics. Some regional commanders toppled provincial governments in Central and South Sumatra in December 1956, and in Sulawesi in March 1957. The military leaders in these provinces demanded more rights for the regions, and the return of Vice-President Hatta, who had resigned over differences with Sukarno, to the helm of government. Nasution, on the other hand, sought more institutional powers for the armed forces but without a coup and without challenging Sukarno. Nasution, who had resumed his post as Army Chief of Staff in 1955, joined forces with the President to launch a military campaign against the rebellious officers in Sumatra and Eastern Indonesia, which


ended in mid-1958 with the complete victory of Nasution’s forces. The end of the regional rebellions consolidated Nasution’s leadership and strengthened his concept of institutional participation in politics without praetorian dominance.\textsuperscript{26} Furthermore, the political turmoil created by the unrest had produced a political landscape in which Nasution’s ideas were likely to find quick application.

The defeat of the regionalist forces was followed by a power-sharing agreement between Nasution and Sukarno that restored the presidential system under Sukarno and granted the military an institutional role in politics. In July 1959, Sukarno decreed the return to the 1945 constitution, with the armed forces represented as a ‘functional group’.\textsuperscript{27} The question of how much the armed forces contributed to the downfall of the democratic polity has not only been discussed by historians, but is also of importance for the theoretical discourse on the prospects of democratic control of the military in Indonesia. As mentioned earlier, Daniel Lev argued that the armed forces sabotaged liberal democracy simply because ‘it could’. Lev’s assessment was echoed by Jamie Mackie who stated that ‘the roles played by Sukarno and the Army in pressing for substantial changes in the political system, culminating in the 1958-59 drive to “return to the UUD 1945”, were crucially important in undermining popular support for the parliament and parties at that time.’\textsuperscript{28} Robert Elson, on the other hand, balanced the ‘destructive’ role of the military with the political context that made this destruction possible: ‘Together, Sukarno and the Army conspired to deliver the “death blow” to parliamentary democracy, in the face of only token opposition by the political parties – a sign of the flaccidity of party politics and the fact that, in their discredited position, they were no longer the pivot of politics’.\textsuperscript{29} Similarly, Herbert Feith asserted that ‘constitutional democracy was both overthrown by its opponents and abandoned by those who had earlier upheld it.’\textsuperscript{30} The diversity of views points to the problematic nature of theoretical models that view military intervention in politics as a direct result of failing state institutions; there appears to be equally convincing evidence for military-driven acts of sabotage against civilian bodies in state and society. Feith’s analysis suggests, however, that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive. Failing institutions do not necessarily lead to military rule unless the armed forces make use of the presented opportunity, while military sabotage

\textsuperscript{26} Crouch 1988: 33.
\textsuperscript{27} Sukarno had promoted the concept of functional groups as an alternative to the political party system. Douglas Ramage has noted that the army, on the other hand, saw the concept as a welcome ‘way to legitimize military participation in political life’. Douglas Ramage, \textit{Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance}, Routledge, London and New York 1995: 22.
of governments has a greater chance of succeeding when state institutions are already dysfunctional.

The period of parliamentary democracy in Indonesia constituted a failed post-authoritarian transition, and as such can be analysed by the comparative models introduced earlier to cope with the phenomena of the post-Soeharto era. Applying the model proposed by Cottee, Edmunds and Forster, Indonesia’s democratic regime in the 1950s belonged to the group of states in which first and second-generation reforms had been initiated, but failed due to the weakness of the state. Post-independence Indonesia had established the structures for effective democratic control of the military (civilian Department of Defence, parliamentary committees, free and critical press), but they disintegrated under the pressure of rapidly spreading political conflicts. Evidently, Indonesia failed to meet the conditions that Cottee et al. outlined as crucial for successful transitions. To begin with, there was a variety of alternatives to liberal democracy in circulation. The political spectrum reached from communism and nationalist authoritarianism to proposals for the establishment of an Islamic state. With only a few supporters left, liberal democracy proved unsustainable. Moreover, the political system had to deal with the legacy of military prominence during the revolutionary period. Ultimately, the transition from protagonist of the armed struggle to neutral instrument of civilian authorities proved too big a leap for a military unfamiliar with processes of political change. Finally, there was very little international support for the struggling democracy and, implicitly, the establishment of democratic civil-military relations. The Dutch refusal to transfer West Irian to Indonesia was one of the factors that fuelled the divisions within the political elite and encouraged military demands for a larger political role. The United States, on the other hand, supported the regional rebellions against the central government, expecting them to topple Sukarno. This policy, however, effectively provided the opportunity for the military to expand its influence and remove what was left of liberal democracy.

III. NASUTION, THE DUAL FUNCTION AND TERRITORIAL CONTROL: INSTITUTIONALISING MILITARY PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT

The evolution of what later became the military's ‘Dual Function’ (Dwi Fungsi) is the third central element in the collective memory of the armed forces. The growing alienation of the military from the principle of civilian-led democratic governance resulted in the formulation of a doctrine that could be used to justify military involvement in politics. Although the ‘Dual Function’ doctrine was only formulated in those terms after the military took full power in 1966, its origins went back to the ‘Middle Way’ concept proposed in the late 1950s.
Most importantly, the search for a suitable doctrine was accompanied by the development of the territorial command system that anchored TNI firmly in local politics.

The philosophical justification of military involvement in politics was authored mainly by Nasution during the political crisis of the mid-1950s, and it has impacted on the doctrinal thinking of military officers ever since. Nasution was influenced by the writings of Karl von Clausewitz, a 19th century military strategist from Prussia. Clausewitz’ notion of the inseparability of military affairs and politics provided the conceptual basis for Nasution’s drive for deeper political involvement of the armed forces, and developments in other countries served as useful reference points:

“In defending TNI’s position, I have strong arguments based on the history of struggle and the practice in Eastern European countries, where it is not the separation between the military and civilians that is being highlighted, but the totality of the participation of all elements of society and the people. (...) I lean towards the Eastern interpretation that (...) finally, the political, military, economic and cultural strategies have to come together into one concept of ‘great politics’ (...).” \(^{31}\)

Nasution argued that the military had to participate in politics in order to avoid coups like in South American and Middle Eastern countries. Suggesting that Indonesia might well be the next in line in terms of military take-overs, Nasution presented institutionalised power sharing with the armed forces as the only solution to satisfy the military’s inherent drive for political leadership. In November 1958, he finalised his ideas in the concept of the ‘Middle Way’ between a praetorian dictatorship on the one hand and the Western ideal of non-participation of the military in politics on the other. Nasution stressed the urgency of his proposal by outlining a threatening scenario: TNI had to be given its share in governing the country, he said, ‘because to hold it back is like putting a cork on the volcano of Merapi, which certainly will erupt at some stage.’ \(^{32}\)

Nasution’s model encapsulated the sentiments of many within the officer corps who instinctively felt that the armed forces had a legitimate right to political power but were unable to formulate a conceptual justification for that claim. The importance of Nasution’s ideas for the development of TNI’s political identity was recognised in Wiranto’s 1999 speech, in which he maintained that the armed forces had learnt from Nasution that TNI was

“Not only an ‘instrument of the government’ like in Western countries; also not an ‘instrument of one party’ like in communist countries; and of course not some

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\(^{32}\) ibid: 114
sort of ‘military regime’ that dominates the state. TNI is an ‘instrument of the people’s struggle’, as one of the national political forces, and with its participation in political life, TNI will never remain inactive.33

The model of the ‘Middle Way’ was gradually implemented throughout the second half of the 1950s, affecting three major areas. First, the establishment of the National Council in May 1957 institutionalised the military’s participation in policy-making, with the chiefs of staff of all services represented on the body. The Council had the task of finding a new format for the post-democratic polity, and provided Nasution with a platform to present his ideas. Second, the army was given more access to the economic resources of the state. In December 1957, Nasution decreed military control over a large number of Dutch businesses that had been occupied by workers protesting against the inactivity of the UN vis-a-vis the West Irian issue. Third, the implementation of the ‘Middle Way’ in the sector of state bureaucracy was supported by the declaration of martial law in March 1957.34 Nasution and his commanders obtained extra-constitutional powers, and many officers were put into leadership positions of local administrations, particularly in West Java and the Outer Islands.35 Most importantly, this presence did not end with the lifting of martial law. As Herbert Feith observed, ‘these incursions were difficult to reverse; the army’s actual role did not diminish significantly when its formal powers were reduced by a change in the martial law level in a particular region.’36

Closely related to the development of the ‘Middle Way’ doctrine was the consolidation of the army’s territorial command system, another major legacy relevant for the evolution of Indonesia’s current civil-military relations. The structure of TNI’s territorial commands was first put in place in Java after the Dutch attack on Yogyakarta in December 1948, but its expansion and consolidation as a permanent form of military organisation was carried out only in 1957 and 1958. Nasution contended that Indonesia’s geographical, demographic and financial condition did not allow for a highly concentrated military with modern equipment and rapid deployment capacities. Instead, the country would have to rely on a network of military micro-units with strong roots in the local population, collecting intelligence, preparing for warfare and mobilising the people should need arise. The units were placed alongside the hierarchy of the civilian administration, so that every military command had a

33 Wiranto 1999: 86.
34 Crouch 1988: 33.
36 Feith 1967: 333.
The territorial command system, as it evolved under the New Order, is comprised of Regional Commands (Komando Daerah Militer, Kodam), which corresponds to either one large province or a number of smaller provinces; Resort Commands (Komando Resort Militer), covering the boundaries of the old Dutch regencies, often one smaller province or a number of kabupaten (districts); District Commands (Komando Distrik Militer, Kodim), corresponding to districts; Subdistrict Commands (Komando Rayon Militer, Koramil), supervising the kecamatan level; and the NCOs for Village Supervision (Bintara Pembina Desa, Babinsa), responsible for kelurahan and desa (villages).

IV. ESTABLISHING PRAETORIAN RULE: TNI AND THE EARLY NEW ORDER

Writing in 1963, at the height of Sukarno’s Guided Democracy, Herbert Feith reflected upon the question why Indonesia’s armed forces, despite their obvious privileges and powers, had not sought exclusive dominance over the government. Internal military conflicts were Feith’s first possible answer, but he suggested that there were more fundamental reasons:

"Secondly, there is fairly widespread opposition among civilians generally to the idea of government by the army. This is partly a reflection of the army’s unpopularity, which has grown markedly since the army began its large-scale movement into politics and administration in 1957-58. In addition, it reflects a common view that military rule is the very antithesis to democracy and sovereignty – very much more so than, for instance, rule by a single party or national movement. Thus the advocates of an army take-over are told that it would be hard to find acceptable justifications for this, that they would gain only grudging support from civil servants and the people generally, and so be forced to govern by something more like naked force. Neither General Nasution personally nor the army leaders as a group are seen as having an inborn or acquired right to rule Indonesia."

Only two years later, the armed forces assumed authority over the government, institutionalised their rule by revamping the political system, and expanded Nasution’s ‘Middle Way’ to become the ‘Dual Function’ as a model of dominance over the state. The New Order would last for more than three decades, and despite its various internal transformations, it remained a military-backed regime throughout its history.

The ascendancy of the armed forces to direct political rule was preceded by growing tensions between Sukarno and the senior military leadership. Several factors were responsible for this. Most significantly, Sukarno was increasingly leaning towards the Communist Party (PKI, Partai Komunis Indonesia) for political support in order to keep the military in check. The majority of officers had been staunchly anti-communist since the so-called ‘communist coup’ in Madiun in 1948, which military leaders saw as a ‘betrayal’ of the nationalist struggle against the Dutch. Consolidating its grassroots support throughout the early 1960s, and enjoying political protection from the President, the PKI had emerged as a serious challenger to the armed forces as the second main component of the Guided Democracy ‘triangle’ under Sukarno. As the President grew older, speculation about communist ambitions for a post-Sukarno take-over of the government was rampant.

41 Kahin 1952: 303.
Moreover, from the beginning of the 1960s onwards, Sukarno appeared determined to assert his control of the armed forces by placing loyalists in key military positions. This produced tensions within the ranks, as some officers approached either Sukarno or the PKI to promote their career interests. Finally, the armed forces became increasingly concerned with Indonesia’s international isolation. Sukarno’s course of confrontation with the West, culminating in his campaign against Malaysia and the withdrawal from the United Nations, had severe political and economic consequences for the country. While supporting the ‘Konfrontasi’ campaign against Malaysia in public, senior officers worked behind the scenes to deescalate the situation.

Despite the widespread dissatisfaction with Guided Democracy, nurtured by rapidly declining economic conditions and escalating political conflicts at the grassroots, there was very little societal support for the idea of military rule. Thus the quest for erecting a military regime had to be driven by ‘naked force’, just as Feith had predicted. The opportunity for assuming political control by force emerged on 30 September 1965: Six of the highest-ranking armed forces officers were killed in what the army called a communist coup attempt. Major-General Soeharto, Commander of Kostrad (the Army Strategic Reserve), one of the top officers not arrested and killed in the abortive ‘coup’, brought the situation under control within a day. Hundreds of thousands of suspected PKI followers were murdered or arrested in the months after the September incident, with the army backing Muslim organisations that settled old accounts with their communist archrivals. Sukarno, suspected of involvement in - or at least knowledge of - the alleged coup attempt, never regained control. In March 1966, he was forced to hand over effective government authority to Soeharto, and was gradually stripped of his presidential insignia. Finally, in March 1968, Soeharto was appointed by the MPR to become the second President of Indonesia.

The purge against the Communist Party and political activists suspected of association with it violently removed much of what Feith had diagnosed three years earlier as ‘widespread opposition among civilians’ to the idea of military rule. In spite of the major role of coercion in installing the military regime, however, several other factors assisted the process of establishing praetorian control. To begin with, the opposition of non-communist political groups towards the ascendency of the armed forces was not significant enough to pose a serious threat to the ambitions of the military. In fact, large segments of society supported the

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43 J.D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography*, Second edition, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, Wellington, London and Boston 1990: 326. Nasution was replaced as Army Chief of Staff in July 1962, but was ‘kicked upstairs’ to serve as Minister of Defence. He also became Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, a post vacant since the 1952 events.

armed forces in their campaign against the PKI, and the remaining political parties assisted in creating the necessary legal framework for institutionalised military rule. The divisions between communists on the one hand and Islamic forces on the other had been so deep that many Muslim groups prioritised wiping out their PKI rivals over questioning the political intentions of the armed forces. In addition, the economic decline had reached alarming levels, and the existing civilian groups appeared poorly equipped to overcome the crisis. According to Hal Hill and Jamie Mackie, ‘the economy was in chaos, with inflation headed towards 1000 per cent, while (the) central government was unable to maintain even the most minimal standard of administrative services.’

After years of political cleavages, social tensions and declining living standards, many Indonesians seemed willing to accept a limited period of military rule. Finally, the armed forces partially succeeded in avoiding the impression of a military dictatorship. The gradual transfer of authority from Sukarno to Soeharto extended over a period of two and a half years, pointing to the effort of the armed forces to portray their ascension to power as a constitutionally legitimate change of government. The combination of force, civilian fragmentation, economic decline and manipulated public images of the regime drove the process of establishing praetorian rule, which was largely completed by 1968.

The armed forces showed uncompromising determination in consolidating their claim to national leadership. The military placed its officers in senior political positions in the central and local administrations, and kept civil society and potential political players of the post-Sukarno era under tight surveillance. In addition, the officer corps also sought ideological confirmation of its new dominance by adjusting the military’s doctrine at a seminar in April 1966. The involvement of the armed forces in political and economic development, their defence of the state ideology Pancasila, and the upholding of the 1945 constitution became the core elements of the new doctrinal concept. The conclusion of the seminar was an ideological justification for praetorian rule:

47 Sukarno had announced five ideological principles in June 1945, which he believed were suitable to reflect the ideals, customs and convictions of all Indonesians. The five principles, collectively called Pancasila, were: nationalism, internationalism (or humanitarianism), democracy (or consent), social prosperity and belief in one God. The principles were designed to overcome the ethnic, religious, social and political differences within Indonesian society. They were subject to diverse, politically charged interpretations, however, with different groups and regimes attempting to use Pancasila in their struggle for political hegemony. The New Order would be no exception, launching Pancasila as its main ideological instrument to maintain political stability, eradicate extremism and limit individual freedoms. In doing so, the Soeharto government claimed to have saved the state ideology from the political manipulation it suffered under the Sukarno reign. See A. H. Nasution, ‘Angkatan Bersendjata – Orde
“Recently, all hopes of the people have been directed towards the armed forces in general, and the army in particular, to lead it to prosperity. Accordingly, there is only one alternative for the armed forces, and that is to implement what has been entrusted to them by the people. Based on all of this, the armed forces have an interest in taking part in the formation and guidance of a government that enjoys respect, a government that is strong and a government that is progressive.”

Arguing that the emergency situation forced the military to increase its representation in the bureaucracy, the seminar suggested that it was the army’s duty to support the Ampera cabinet - the post-coup cabinet formally headed by Sukarno, but in practice led by Soeharto. In fact, the military’s evolving doctrine constituted a retrospective legitimation of what had already been implemented - 12 of 29 ministers of the Ampera cabinet were military officials, and a rapidly increasing number of officers assumed senior positions in local bureaucracies.

By the early 1970s, the armed forces had taken either control of, or established dominance over, the four major areas in which militaries traditionally seek to intervene: the political sector, the economy, military organisation and the socio-cultural arena.

In the political field, the armed forces were especially well entrenched in the executive branch of government. Supported by the doctrinal concept of *kekaryaan* (the secondment of officers in non-military posts), the military leadership filled the most senior positions of the regime. Soeharto controlled the administration as both head of state and head of government, and military officers held key cabinet posts, including the Departments of Defence and Security, Internal Affairs and the State Secretariat. Even in departments led by civilians, a military officer routinely held the post of secretary-general. In addition, generals also ‘usurped the top strata of the diplomatic and consular corps’. Military officers ran the national logistics board (the institution in charge of distributing basic food items such as rice) and controlled the government’s news agency. In the provinces, 80 percent of governors were officers, and an equally high percentage held positions as regents.

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49 Soeharto had formed the Ampera cabinet after the 4th General Session of the MPRS (the provisional MPR) in July 1966. The MPRS legalised the transfer of authority to Soeharto and the banning of the PKI, and took the title ‘President for Life’ away from Sukarno. See McFarling 1996: 84, 87.
On the legislative side, 75 officers were delegated to Parliament, and more were appointed to the MPR. General Nasution, the former leader of the armed forces who had been 'honourably' sidelined by Soeharto, presided over the MPR that dismissed Sukarno, inaugurated Soeharto and adopted major changes to the political system. Military dominance of the national and regional legislatures was also exercised through the crucial role its officers played in the government's electoral machine Golkar, which won the 1971 elections with the help of massive military intervention and intimidation. Most importantly, Soeharto had a threefold grip over the legislatures: as supreme chairman of Golkar, he had the authority to select the party's parliamentary candidates; as head of the armed forces, he was authorised to exclude parliamentary nominees of both Golkar and the other parties for security reasons; and as head of state, he had the right to select representatives of functional groups for the MPR. Two years after the 1971 elections, the remaining political parties were merged into two, the secular-nationalist PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, Indonesian Democratic Party) and the Islamic PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, United Development Party). Both parties were heavily supervised and their leaderships screened before being allowed to compete in the next general elections. The third branch of state administration, the judiciary, saw similar levels of military intrusion. The attorney general's office came quickly under military control, as did the courts, while the Police remained one of the four services of the armed forces. This allowed the military to maintain supremacy over all aspects of legal investigations and proceedings.

Political control was reinforced by increased participation in the economy. The intervention in economic affairs was an integral part of the Dual Function, which called on the armed forces to provide the necessary conditions for economic growth. Moreover, it delivered increased income opportunities for the military as an institution as well as its officer corps. Military officers had held senior management positions in several state enterprises since the late 1950s, but their number grew rapidly under the New Order. The national oil company Pertamina, for example, provided substantial contributions to the budget of the armed forces

51 Golkar was established in October 1964, when a large number of pro-military functional groups were merged into one organisation. The merger was conducted in response to a government regulation requiring all organisations in the National Front (a body of mass organisations established in 1959) to seek affiliation with existing political parties or to merge into one organisation. This regulation motivated the anti-communist members of the National Front to found a joint secretariat of functional groups, or Sekber Golkar. 53 of 97 founding members were army-sponsored trade unions and civil servants organisations. See Leo Suryadinata, Military Ascendancy and Political Culture: A Study of Indonesia's Golkar, Ohio University Center for International Studies, Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series Number 85, Athens, Ohio 1989: 13.

as well as to its military directors. Regional commanders also forged business alliances with local entrepreneurs, offering a service that Robert Lowry called ‘facilitation’. In addition to obtaining business licenses, this covered assistance ‘in resolving land disputes, calming labor unrest, overcoming bureaucratic obstacles, relocating squatters, and so on.’ The business elite, Lowry concluded, found it ‘prudent to keep the local military on side against the day when social unrest might threaten their lives and property.’ Politically, the military’s new grip over local administrations, legislatures and political parties handed it a virtual monopoly in brokering business deals and implementing projects. In order to institutionalise its newly acquired economic privileges, the military established a large number of companies, foundations and cooperatives that managed its increasing business interests. The officers in charge of these business operations had, according to Richard Robison, ‘now almost unlimited access to the resources and facilities of the state and power to influence allocation of import/export licenses, forestry concessions and state contracts.’ This was particularly evident after the economy began to recover in the early 1970s, and foreign investment entered the country. The armed forces viewed the economic boom as a result of its political intervention and, as one officer put it, believed it had a legitimate claim on ‘its share of the cake’.

The commercial involvement of the armed forces did not only impact heavily on the institutional standing of the military vis-à-vis other socio-political groups. It also changed the social profile of its officers, and created additional incentives for them to defend the praetorian regime. Military commanders, often coming from lower-middle class families, suddenly enjoyed the prospect of rapid social advancement. In fact, a successful career in the New Order officer corps virtually ensured entry into the most exclusive elite. Senior officers often owned several houses in elite compounds and luxury cars, travelled widely and sent their children to expensive universities abroad. Ibnu Sutowo, the army officer in charge of Pertamina, purchased Indonesia’s first and only Rolls Royce in the early 1970s, symbolising the extent of self-enrichment within the officer corps. In later periods of the New Order, sponsors would provide officers with credit cards for use at their convenience, or accompany them on shopping trips to attend to their wishes and consolidate the relationship. Soeharto himself handed out substantial gifts to his senior officers or made sure that his business associates did. The prospect of rapid rise up the social ladder drove more and more young...
men to seek entry into the military academies. Between 1970 and 1975, an average of nearly four hundred officers graduated from Akabri, the armed forces academy. In 1963, only 113 graduates had been listed. 58

The hegemony of the armed forces delivered a multitude of post-retirement opportunities for officers and their families. If retiring military leaders were not placed in military-run enterprises or state companies, they were almost certain to receive offers from private business corporations. Expected to use their past connections to gain access to the ruling military elite, they were provided with offices and considerable salaries. Wiranto has given an illuminating insight into this phenomenon. After his retirement, he called in some of his tycoon friends and asked who had office space available for him. All hands went up. When he asked further who among them had no bad debts with the state, only two entrepreneurs still felt qualified. Wiranto finally chose one among the last two offers. 59 The special treatment of senior officers contrasted sharply with the retirement packages for lower ranking personnel, creating additional pressure to seek civilian positions before reaching pension age or to use all possible means to achieve a rank that would encourage interest from the business sector.

The increased economic powers of the armed forces also strengthened their organisational autonomy. The unprecedented flow of off-budget funds into the military allowed it to exercise a high degree of managerial autonomy, with unit commanders now also functioning as heads of rent-seeking foundations and cooperatives. Soeharto encouraged this trend 60 , despite obvious fears that the armed forces might grow too independent from his executive control. Drawing from his own experience as regional commander in the late 1950s, he apparently believed that granting senior officers access to additional sources of funding would strengthen their loyalty towards him as the patron of the system that made such self-service possible. In order to anticipate any challenges to his regime from inside the ranks, however, Soeharto also introduced wide-ranging changes to the command system. At the core of his reform program was the integration of the services into a strong central command under ABRI Headquarters and the Department of Defence and Security. Soeharto downgraded all service commanders to chiefs of staff, thus depriving them of direct

58 The number of graduates dropped by 75 percent, however, in 1975-1976. While no official explanation was provided for this decline, it is likely that recruitment was reduced after the New Order had consolidated its position, and most kekaryaan positions were already filled. See Douglas Kammen and Siddharth Chandra, *A Tour of Duty: Changing Patterns of Military Politics in Indonesia in the 1990s*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Ithaca, New York 1999: 35.


command over troops, and stripped them of their cabinet status. He also reduced the powers of the regional commanders, creating a system of coordinating commands overseeing several military territories (Komando Wilayah Pertahanan, Kowilhan). While this led to some tension within the armed forces, there was no doubt that their leadership for the first time since Sudirman’s election enjoyed complete jurisdiction over internal military affairs.

The fourth arena of military intervention is in the socio-cultural sector. It is in this area that militaries typically face the most serious difficulties, and Indonesia’s military was no exception. The early New Order regime was relatively tolerant towards expressions of criticism from the media and the arts, largely because different factions in the military were still using the press for their own purposes and Soeharto appeared anxious to avoid the impression of a military dictatorship.61 This changed, however, from the early 1970s onwards. The government established a system of tight censorship regulations for the media and cultural activities. At the same time, it encouraged the development of an official culture consistent with the leadership principles of the regime. Barbara Hatley explained that the key element of that culture was the

"celebration of conservative, hierarchical values. The central state – Java-based and Javanese-dominated – supports Javanese culture of a particular type, that of court tradition. Images of noble grandeur and hierarchical social order serve to display and confirm the authority of the contemporary state and its officials.62

The indoctrination of the New Order masses with officially sanctioned forms of artistic expression was successful on the surface, but did not manage to penetrate all segments of the cultural sector. Writers, painters, cartoonists, musicians and journalists continued their critical work, and some went to jail or suffered intimidation and social marginalisation.63 The majority, however, developed a highly sophisticated system of self-censorship, producing language and art forms that would be understood by the audience as being critical, but deliver no legal pretexts for the New Order apparatus to intervene.

61 The armed forces had two newspapers of their own, Berita Yudha and Angkatan Bersenjata, both established in 1965. The military also played a dominant role in the Golkar newspaper, Suara Karya. David T. Hill, The Press in New Order Indonesia, University of Western Australia Press, Perth 1994: 36.
63 Those Indonesian authors who had gained international reputations for their literary work were the most difficult to control, even for the armed forces. Y. B. Mangunwijaya, for example, was one of the most vocal critics of the military’s Dual Function during the New Order. His collection of articles, expressing criticism through historical comparisons and philosophical contemplations, can be found in Y. B. Mangunwijaya, Tentara dan Kaum Bersenjata, Penerbit Erlangga, Jakarta 1999.
The historical legacy of the early New Order period for the development of civil-military relations in the post-Soeharto era consists of three major components. First of all, the evolution of the military's role from earlier forms of political participation into a praetorian version of the Dual Function. Despite the military's efforts to portray its take-over as constitutionally legitimate, the new doctrinal guidelines issued in August 1966 provided philosophical justifications for political hegemony over the state. Moreover, the entrenchment of the military in state institutions and civil society was so extensive that any successor regime would have difficulties in disengaging the armed forces from the areas it had intruded. Military involvement in local politics and businesses, its expansion into the state bureaucracy, legislature and the judiciary, its surveillance of civil society, press and arts – all these institutional manifestations of praetorian rule would shape long-term perceptions of political culture, both within the elite and the wider population. Finally, the successes of the authoritarian regime in stabilising the economy and controlling political conflicts persuaded many Indonesians that economic development is best secured by non-democratic forms of government. This widely held view poses very serious challenges to the process of democratic consolidation in the post-authoritarian transition, including the propagation of democratic civil-military relations.

V. CONSOLIDATING THE AUTOCRACY: SOEHARTO AND THE MILITARY IN THE 1970s

The successful establishment of a praetorian regime, however, exposed the New Order to divisive dynamics that affect all military-dominated governments. Alagappa pointed out that

“(…) once the military rulers begin to govern, fissures develop between those who govern and those who command the troops, especially the field commanders. (…) To consolidate their control and prevent counter coups, military leaders at the political helm may hold on to senior positions, appoint loyalists, create counter-balancing factions, develop patronage networks, develop extensive surveillance and intimidation mechanisms, or remake the political center by co-opting potential challengers. Despite these measures, the contradiction between military as government and military as an institution is a fundamental and inescapable contradiction that ultimately leads to disunity and breakdown of the military regime.”

64 In September 2003, the independent research institute LSI (Lembaga Survei Indonesia, Indonesian Survey Institute) conducted a poll that showed 56.4 percent of the Indonesian electorate as favoring the system of the New Order over the current democratic polity. At the same time, 65 percent of voters identified the economy as the most serious problem facing the government. 'Menguat, Dukungan terhadap Tentara, Orba, dan Partai Golkar', Kompas 29 September 2003.

65 Alagappa 2001b: 51-52.
The phenomenon described by Alagappa was present in Soeharto's regime even in its very early phase. In formulating policy directives and creating the fundamentals of the political system, Soeharto relied heavily on long-time friends from the army who worked on the SPRI, the private staff of the President. Officers at Armed Forces Headquarters observed this concentration of power in Soeharto's private circle with suspicion. Furthermore, regional commanders as well as service heads affected by the structural reforms to the military hierarchy expressed concern over their loss of influence. Their dissatisfaction, however, was reduced by the collective feeling within the ranks that Soeharto's regime generated unprecedented political and material advantages for the armed forces as an institution and the individual interests of their officers.

The divisions between Soeharto's inner circle and the armed forces intensified when the political system of the New Order was fully erected after the 1971 polls and the 1972 reelection of Soeharto. It had become apparent to many officers that Soeharto was about to install an institutional mechanism for the perpetuation of his personal rule, and that he viewed the military only as the stabilising framework for his autocracy. The growing awareness within the officer corps that the political interests of Soeharto were gradually separating from that of the armed forces left a deep mark on TNI's institutional memory, and would form the fifth and final element in the complex of historical legacies relevant for the post-New Order period. In his 1999 address, Wiranto admitted that

“In the New Order era under President Soeharto, we saw ABRI playing its most extensive socio-political role; according to some ABRI seniors who participated themselves in developing the concept of Dwifungsi, this role even exceeded the proportions intended at the time when Dwifungsi was born. In this context, we arrive at the conclusion that the concept of Dwifungsi cannot anticipate the possibility that the office of President is held by someone with a direct position in the system of the command hierarchy, and who manipulates his influence on the command hierarchy for his own socio-political interests.”

Throughout the 1970s, there were challenges from within the armed forces to the exclusivism of Soeharto's rule, but the President was able to contain them by using his direct control over the military command hierarchy. He was still an active member of the armed forces for most of the 1970s, creating the impression that many of the disputes were linked to intra-military conflicts rather than the growing gap between the presidency and the army elite. In 1974 and 1978, Soeharto struggled to fend off threats to his regime launched by critical student groups,

which claimed to have received support by some elements within the armed forces. Many of the student leaders were arrested and jailed, while the officers linked to the movement were removed from their commands and subsequently sidelined.

Soeharto’s reelection to a third presidential term in 1978, and his retirement from active duty in the army, removed all remaining doubts that he would be more than just the replaceable leading officer of a military junta. Soeharto’s consolidation in the presidency was accompanied by generational changes in the armed forces. As Kammen and Chandra noted, ‘by the early 1980s the Angkatan 1945 generation that had fought in the Indonesian revolution against the Dutch had retired, passing the leadership to a post-war generation of officers.” The retirement wave removed both trusted associates and critics of the President from the military elite and redefined the relationship between the regime and the top brass. With Soeharto firmly established in the centre of a personalised autocracy, and a new type of officers in charge of the armed forces, the praetorian regime was about to undergo substantial changes.

VI. PRAETORIAN REGIME OR SULTANISTIC RULE? SOEHARTO AND THE ARMED FORCES IN THE LATE NEW ORDER

The legacy of the later New Order period that would impact most significantly on the character of post-Soeharto civil-military relations consisted of two major elements. Most importantly, there was a gradual reduction of the role of the armed forces in politics from the mid-1970s to the late 1990s. The number of military officers in cabinet, governorships, the legislatures and senior bureaucratic positions declined, and so did the influence of the armed forces on matters of general policy. While in the early 1970s around 80 percent of the gubernatorial posts were held by active or retired military officers, that figure shrunk drastically to 40 percent by the late 1990s. Executive positions were increasingly filled by civilians whom Soeharto had integrated into the foundations of his regime: technocrats, Muslim leaders, technology experts, business executives, and Golkar politicians. Soeharto also reshuffled the composition of his inner circle, replacing confidants from the army with business cronies and members of his own family. Despite the reduction of their political

70 General Soemitro, the most prominent officer losing his job over the 1974 events, has credibly maintained that the students misunderstood his attitude towards their protests. ‘You guys were wrong’, he told the students later. ‘You don’t understand the ethics of a soldier. He will never want to bring down his superior, let alone replace him.’ He was, however, strongly opposed to the SPRI officers in Suharto’s inner circle. Heru Cahyono, *Soemitro dan Peristiwa 15 Januari ’74*, Pustaka Sinar Harapan, Jakarta 1998: 1.
powers, however, the armed forces remained the backbone of the regime, and Soeharto continued to command their loyalty by handpicking the top brass and distributing material rewards to the officer corps.

The second element was the gradual change in societal perceptions of the armed forces. The decline in formal regime participation allowed ABRI to blame much of the growing public criticism of the government on Soeharto's personal leadership style. Throughout the 1980s until the early 1990s, the military elite had been a central target of widespread dissatisfaction with the repressive policies of the regime. During the final years of the New Order, however, the discontent in many segments of society with economic favouritism, political stagnation and tight social control was increasingly addressed to Soeharto and his family. Many even started to view the armed forces as much a victim of Soeharto's manipulative tactics as they considered them a crucial component of his regime. The dualism of continued loyalty towards the regime and declining formal engagement with it was reflected in the doctrinal development of the armed forces in the 1990s. Military attitudes ranged from hardline responses vis-a-vis the challenges of socio-political change to critical reflections on the excesses of Soeharto's rule. The prominence of non-military protagonists in the late New Order, and the development of a critical discourse within the armed forces, dissociated the military to some extent from the failures of the regime. This disassociation, or the perception that the Indonesian public had formed of it, would have a profound impact on the character of the 1998 regime change.

The key developments that drove the dissociation of the armed forces from the President occurred in the late 1980s. After his retirement from active duty, Soeharto had entrusted a select circle of officers with the leadership of the military. This circle consisted of commanders and intelligence operators whom Soeharto had known personally from his days of active military service, and who had very limited prospects of succeeding him in the presidency. Most of these officers were restricted by their ethnicity or religion from seeking the top executive post, with Christians and non-Javanese holding a disproportionate percentage of senior command positions. Soeharto expected total loyalty from these officers, as they owed their position to his personal patronage. Consequently, they were most determined in suppressing what Soeharto viewed as one of the most serious threats to his rule from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, namely that of political Islam. The armed forces leadership, headed by the Catholic General Benny Moerdani, was the target of much of the

72 Daniel Dhakidae, Cendekiawan dan Kekuasaan dalam Negara Orde Baru, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta 2003: 256-257. Dhakidae lamented the weakness of the armed forces, and their deliberate misuse as 'guards of Soeharto's personal interests, and that of his cronies.'
criticism for the regime's authoritarian methods in controlling Muslim mainstream organisations and destroying violent Islamist cells. In return, Soeharto's trust in his military elite was extraordinary. Against this background, he was irritated by reports, emerging in the mid-1980s, that Moerdani had developed an extensive intelligence network and was actively lobbying against some of Soeharto's civilian confidants in the state bureaucracy.\(^74\) In addition, he began to remind Soeharto of the potential damage the business interests of his children could do to the credibility of his government.\(^75\) In February 1988, one month before the MPR convened to re-elect Soeharto for his fifth presidential term, Moerdani was relieved of his command.

The incidents leading to Moerdani's dismissal appeared to convince Soeharto that even the most loyalist segments within the armed forces had the potential to threaten his rule.\(^76\) Soeharto reacted with changes to both the composition of his power base and the selection criteria for the military elite. From the late 1980s onwards, he encouraged Muslim mainstream leaders and intellectuals to broaden their socio-religious activities and become part of his regime. This development will be discussed further in Chapter 2. In appointing the post-Moerdani top brass, on the other hand, Soeharto applied two major criteria. First, candidates for leadership positions had to be firmly opposed to the Moerdani group. Accordingly, officers with devout Muslim backgrounds, who had seen their promotions held up under the Moerdani reign, were now given special consideration.\(^77\) Second, future military leaders qualified for speedy promotion if they were members of his wider family, had strong relationships with it, or had recently served as Soeharto's adjutants and commanders of the Presidential Security Squad. The post of Army Chief of Staff, for example, was held in the 1990s consecutively by the brother-in-law of Soeharto's wife, a close confidant of his daughter Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, his former adjutant and, finally, the former chief of the Presidential Security Squad. At the same time, Soeharto's son-in-law and several other ex-

\(^{74}\) In addition, Moerdani had built up a sizeable business empire, largely focusing on coffee exports, construction and property. The net profit of his business group, managed by the holding company Batara Indra, averaged an annual 30 to 40 million US dollars in the years 1988-1990. See Indria Samego et.al., *Bila ABRI Berbisnis: Buku Pertama yang Menyingkap Data dan Kasus Penyimpangan dalam Praktik Bisnis Kelangan Militer*, Mizan, Bandung 1998: 121.

\(^{75}\) Interview with Gen. (ret.) Benny Moerdani, Jakarta 5 September 1998.


\(^{77}\) Interview with Let.Gen. (ret.) Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo, Jakarta 4 December 1997. Despite the increased numbers of devout Muslim officers in the top brass, Soeharto did not exclude non-Muslim and secular Muslim officers from the promotion cycle. In fact, there appears to have been a delicate balance between the appointments of officers with devout Muslim backgrounds on the one hand and commanders with non-Muslim and secular profiles on the other. This dualism led some observers to conclude that ABRI was divided into a 'green' (Muslim) faction and a 'red-and-white' (nationalist-secular) camp. As will be argued later in this study, this division was superficial and reflected political calculations rather than ideological or religious dispositions.
adjutants filled senior positions. Soeharto apparently came to believe that only officers with
direct links to his personal fate would develop the kind of allegiance that was necessary to
sustain the regime.

The New Order state of the 1990s had undergone substantial social and political change
since its formation in the early 1970s and its consolidation in the 1980s. The reduction of
military participation in governance, the inclusion of various civilian groups in its power
structure, and the increased concentration of political and economic powers in Soeharto’s
family circle gave the regime an image significantly different from the praetorian rule it had
exercised throughout the 1970s. Edward Aspinall argued that ‘by the mid-1990s, Suharto’s
regime was undergoing a process of sultanization, in which the dominance of the president,
and that of his family and inner circle, was becoming increasingly venal and all pervasive.’

The armed forces, while still enjoying the profits distributed by Soeharto’s patronage
network, were severely impaired in their ability to act as an independent political entity.
David R. Mares saw the military in the late New Order, similarly to the armed forces under
Chile’s Pinochet, ‘relegated to agent status along with the rest of society.’ In all four areas
of traditional military intervention, their influence had declined. In the political arena,
besides witnessing the formal reduction of military representation in the executive, the
legislature and the judiciary, the armed forces also had to concede the leadership of Golkar to
civilian politicians. In its relations with Soeharto, the military suffered a series of defeats,
and was only rarely able to translate its crucial importance for the maintenance of the regime
into concrete political gains. In 1993, the military forced its vice-presidential candidate,
General Try Soetrisno, on Soeharto, but the President retaliated by isolating Try and
replacing him after one term in office. In the economic field, the armed forces had to
surrender some of their privileges to businesses controlled by the Soeharto family and
civilian entrepreneurs protected by the State Secretariat. The ongoing economic boom, with
growth rates of around 7 percent each year in the early 1990s, ensured that the military still
had considerable income opportunities, but the increase in the number of actors resulted in a
reduction of its total share.

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78 Edward Aspinall, ‘Political Opposition and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule: The Case of
80 Toriq Hadad, ‘Mengapa ABRI-Golkar?’, in: Santoso (editor), ABRI Punya Golkar?, Institut Studi
81 Robinson Pangaribuan, The Indonesian State Secretariat, 1945-1993, Pustaka Sinar Harapan, Jakarta
1996: 57.
Budiman (editor), State and Civil Society in Indonesia, Monash Papers on Asia No. 22, Clayton 1990:
128.
The most drastic reduction of military influence, however, occurred in the sector of its organisational autonomy. Soeharto, now a civilian with a complex web of political interests and support groups, had almost complete control over appointments and matters of internal management. The rapid rise of officers with links to the Soeharto family or a history of personal service at the palace created discontent within the corps. Many officers with outstanding professional qualifications felt that they had to make way for those with better political connections.83 Finally, in the socio-cultural sector, intellectuals and artists became increasingly critical. Censorship efforts and official bans only helped to catalyse the popularity of the prohibited book, paper, theatre play, cartoon or song. Responding to public demands for fewer restrictions on the freedom of expression, the New Order declared a new era of openness (keterbukaan) in 1989. This led to critical discourses on a wide range of issues, including on the Dual Function of the armed forces. In fact, it appears likely that Soeharto himself encouraged the debate on Dwi Fungsi, reminding the armed forces that their future was tied to the continuation of his reign. Jun Honna emphasised that these discussions ‘reflected Soeharto’s counter-use of keterbukaan in his attempt to undermine the political influence of the military.’84 The discourse on the role of the military was a secondary debate, however, with the focus of criticism soon shifting to Soeharto and the longevity of his rule.

The reduction of the military’s intervention in the four areas mentioned above indicated a change in the character of the regime. The late New Order polity could no longer be described as a praetorian state. The armed forces did not have full control of the government as they had in the early period of the regime. In the traditional scheme of civil-military relations, Indonesia’s armed forces in the 1990s played the role of participant-ruler. They supported the political interests of an increasingly sultanistic civilian leader, and received substantial political and economic concessions in return. Writing in 1997, the last full year of Soeharto’s presidency, Anders Uhlin contended that while ‘the military is obviously an important power center and many powerful ministers have a military background, (…) the New Order is not a pure military regime.’ The government, Uhlin explained, ‘uses military force to rule but its first concern is not the interests of the military, but the protection of the political and economic interests of the Soeharto family and the big Chinese conglomerates associated with Soeharto.’85 The ambivalence of its role as a beneficiary and mishandled instrument of the regime created uncertainty within the military about its institutional interests in the late New Order. Obviously, the armed forces were dissatisfied with their loss of political powers since the 1980s. But there was also widespread anxiety in the ranks that

84 Honna 2003: 17
the fall of the New Order regime might end the military's role in politics altogether. The present arrangement, with all its shortcomings and frustrations, still appeared to many officers as more attractive than an uncertain future.

The historical complex of institutionalised power structures, ideological self-perceptions and societal interpretations of the armed forces' intervention in politics forms the background for the analysis of the political crisis that unfolded in 1997 and led to the post-authoritarian transition in the years after 1998. The debate over the role of the military in achieving national independence; the experiences with liberal democracy in the 1950s; the evolution of the Dual Function; the institutionalisation of military powers in the early New Order period; and the eroding identity between Soeharto and the armed forces in the 1990s all constitute elements of an influential historical legacy. The components of this legacy would emerge at various stages of the post-authoritarian transition, and have a considerable impact on the characteristics of its civil-military relations.
CHAPTER TWO

CIVILIAN CONFLICT AND MILITARY INTERVENTION: THE CLEAVAGES WITHIN INDONESIA’S MUSLIM COMMUNITY

The military quest for political participation is one important aspect of the civil-military equation, and its historical manifestations and legacies in Indonesia have been discussed extensively in chapter 1. Authors like Samuel Finer asserted, however, that the quality of civilian political leadership is equally crucial for the outcome of civil-military interactions. Solid civilian state institutions, consensus among key society groups over the foundation of the system of government, and low levels of political conflict combine into what Finer called a ‘developed political culture’. States with sophisticated political cultures are much less likely to experience military intervention in politics than those with weak institutions and fragmentation among major civilian groups.

For much of Indonesia’s post-independence history, fissures within the civilian political sphere have had an obstructive effect on the development of strong democratic institutions. Conflicts among key societal groups have weakened the civilian capacity to run stable governments, eroding the confidence of the public in political parties and parliamentarism. The intra-civilian fractures contributed to an environment in which the armed forces were presented with numerous opportunities for political intervention. This chapter will focus on divisions within the Muslim community as one of the primary sources of civilian conflict in Indonesia. The case study will illustrate broader patterns of rivalry between large societal groups and their impact on the quality of civilian governance and the levels of military intervention in political affairs. Disputes among key constituencies over the role of Islam in state and society as well as over its diverse doctrinal, cultural and political interpretations have marked Indonesian politics since 1945. The historical legacies of these debates and conflicts had, as will be shown in the course of this study, important implications for the development of civil-military relations after 1998. In discussing the fragmentation within the Muslim community, this chapter will discuss three main areas. First of all, there have been stark differences between groups favoring a strong role for Islam in politics and those that promote a nationalist vision of the state without distinguishing between followers of different religions. The controversy between these two camps over the formal role of Islam in the state
dominated the Indonesian polity from the mid-1940s to the late 1950s and played an important role in the decline of liberal democracy. Second, the rivalry between traditionalist and modernist Muslim groups over religious, social and political questions related to the interpretation of the Islamic faith has been equally significant. Both currents have developed a deeply antagonistic relationship, fed by bitter experiences of failed cooperation during liberal democracy in the 1950s and mutual accusations of betrayal during decades of authoritarian rule. Third, the existence of small, but influential groups at the militant fringes of political Islam posed security threats to civilian governments in the 1940s and 1950s and served as a legitimating threat for the New Order in the 1970s and 1980s. Developments in all three areas have undermined the civilian political sphere and strengthened the role of the military in politics; and despite shifts in their respective significance, they would play a critical role in shaping the political landscape of post-Soeharto Indonesia.

I. NATIONALISM VERSUS ISLAMIC POLITICS AND TRADITIONALISM VERSUS MODERNISM: THE CLEAVAGES IN INDONESIA’S MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Indonesia has the largest Muslim community in the world, with 88.6 percent of its population, or 190.3 million people, identifying themselves as followers of the Islamic faith.¹ There are significant divisions within the umat,² however, which are reflected in different practices and doctrinal beliefs, regional variations and conflicting political viewpoints. The most important of these divisions have been the split between santri and abangan on the one hand, and between traditionalist and modernist Muslims on the other.

The scholarly differentiation between santri and abangan was an influential typology in the 1960s and 1970s, distinguishing devout from less pious Muslims.³ Santri were defined as devout Muslims who adhere strictly to the rituals prescribed by scripture, such as praying five

¹ These figures are based on the registration of voters conducted by the Central Statistics Board in 2003, which estimated the total population at 214,827,614, and the census of 2000, which established the percentage of religious affiliations. 'Pemilu 2004: Menghitung Jumlah Kursi DPR', Suara Merdeka 26 August 2003.
² The term ‘umat’ (Ar. umma), literally ‘community’, ‘people’ or ‘nation’, is in the Islamic context used to describe the community of believers, i.e. Muslims.
³ The following paragraphs on the doctrinal and social differences between Muslim groups are largely based on Greg Fealy, 'Divided Majority: The Limits of Political Islam in Indonesia', in: Shahram Akbarzadeh and Abdullah Saeed (editors), Islam and Political Legitimacy, RoutledgeCurzon, London and New York 2003: 150-68.
times a day, fasting during the month of Ramadhan, avoiding alcohol and gambling as well as
giving alms to the poor. In contrast, abangan Muslims were described as less strict in their
practice of Islamic rituals, or as engaging in religious practices that combined elements of the
Islamic faith with those of other religions, mostly Hinduism and Buddhism. In this context,
the more ‘lax’ abangan do not view orthopraxy as a matter of importance for them, while the
syncretistic abangan often adhere devoutly to a set of rituals developed through an
amalgamation of local beliefs and Islamic regulations. The distinction between santri and
abangan, introduced by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz in the 1960s while describing
Javanese Islam, has been widely criticised as inapplicable to a larger Indonesian context and
changing socio-demographic trends. The categories have remained helpful, however, to
grasp the political preferences of voters with divergent religious profiles. In the 1950s and
1960s, for example, santri typically supported Islamic parties with clearly defined demands
for the introduction of Islamic law and state structures, while abangan voted for secularly
oriented parties (nationalist, communist and socialist) that opposed the idea of an Islamic
state. While the cultural features of the abangan-santri divide have undergone important
changes, its political dimension continues to influence voting behaviour to this day.

In the santri community, there are two major currents: modernism and traditionalism. The
two groups have significant differences over issues of doctrine, religious practices and their
relations with the state. In matters of doctrine and jurisprudence, the traditionalists almost
invariably follow the Syafi‘i school, one of the four main Sunni law schools (mazhab). Traditionalist ulama or kiai often blend local influences into their religious practices, leading
to forms of syncretism that the modernists view as deviations from the ‘true’ Islam. The
leaders of traditionalist communities are revered by their students as sources of clerical
expertise collected over the centuries, placing them at the apex of their respective local
hierarchies and handing them a degree of social control over their constituency much greater

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5 Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, University
6 Martin van Bruinessen, 'Traditions for the Future: The Reconstruction of Traditional Discourse
Within NU', in: Greg Fealy and Greg Barton (editors), *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and
7 The terms ‘ulama’ and kiai’ are not differentiated in this study, describing religious scholars and
leaders. Some authors have pointed out that kiai typically are heads of Islamic boarding schools or
pesantren, while ulama do not necessarily fulfil that function.
8 Zaimuddin Fananie and Atiqa Sabardila, *Sumber Konflik Masyarakat Muslim Muhammadiyah – NU:
than that exercised by modernist ulama. Doctrinally, modernists refer primarily to the Qur’an and the Sunnah (compendia of the exemplary behavior of the Prophet Mohammad), and are opposed to religious practices not based on strict Islamic prescriptions. Modernists promote *ijtihad*, the individual reasoning to understand the Qur’an, which grants Muslims the freedom of adopting or rejecting aspects of the *mazhab*. These doctrinal differences are also reflected in socio-economic and regional splits. The traditionalist strongholds are located in the rural areas of Central and East Java, with its communities living in and around Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and working in lower-class jobs as farmers, small traders and labourers. The modernists, on the other hand, are largely urban-based, better educated, typically work as traders, entrepreneurs and professionals, and are particularly strong in the Outer Islands.

The two groups differ not only in their religious practices and socio-economic profiles, but also in their concepts of the relationship between the Muslim community and the state. The two constituencies often use different reference sources in determining their position vis-à-vis state authorities and therefore developed very different attitudes towards incumbent regimes. The basis for the spiritual and political behaviour of traditionalist leaders is the *kitab kuning*, commentaries on medieval Sunni jurisprudence. The main sources of this compilation are texts of Middle Eastern scholars and jurists written between the tenth and fifteenth centuries, such as al-Baghdadi (d. 1037), al-Mawardi (974-1058), al-Ghazali (1058-1111), Ibn Jama’a (d. 1333) and Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406). The texts reflect the political decline of the Abbasid caliphate. The caliphs, traditionally as well as the religious heads of the Islamic community, lost their powers gradually to a succession of foreign invaders and local warlords. This forced the jurists of the caliphate to adjust their religio-political theories to the shift in power. The majority of the ulama, as Greg Fealy has argued, opted to avoid conflict with the new power holders by declaring social order as the priority of the Islamic community. Violent opposition against the government would disrupt the very political stability that the philosophers asserted was the precondition for the enforcement of God’s law. This jurisprudential focus allowed the followers of the powerless caliph to avoid risks to the *ummat* by collaborating with the new regime. The upholding of a strong government,

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regardless of its religious orientation, was seen as preferable to anarchy, which was synonymous with the betrayal of Muslim interests.

The political experience of the Sunni theorists supported the accommodative nature of traditionalist legal-political theory. Like the caliphs, the kiai felt responsible for the spiritual and material well-being of their followers. And, like the philosophers and jurists of the caliphate, the kiai feared that a possible breakdown of political order would diminish their privileged place in the social hierarchy. This concept of avoiding risks in the interests of the umat was also expressed in the traditionalist interpretation of the Qur’anic injunction of amar ma’ruf nahi munkar (enjoining good and preventing evil). Sunni theorists frequently used the injunction to justify their concept of choosing compromise with the power holders over the risk of challenging them. The judgement about what exactly constituted danger and what suitable compromise rested with the ulama, and formed a large part of the fikih discourse (the study of Islamic jurisprudence). In later discussions about amar ma’ruf nahi munkar, traditionalist leaders laid the main stress on the obligation of the kiai to cooperate with the government, give advice to those in power and thereby protect their own communities.

The modernists, on the other hand, intended not only to reform Islam as a faith by challenging the validity of the medieval sources used by traditionalists, but also to make Islam relevant and competitive in the modern world. One of the leading questions for Indonesian modernists has been: ‘Why are the Muslims backward while the infidels are affluent?’ The Egyptian thinker Amir Shakib Arsalan, one of the most prominent intellectuals of the global modernist movement, published a book of that title in 1930. The book was widely read in the Middle East and in Indonesia, and Arsalan claimed that it was an Indonesian scholar who had put the question to him. The improvement of social and economic conditions for the Muslim community, the quest for technological innovations that would close the growing gap with the West, and the mobilisation of resources to recruit traditionalist Muslims to their cause became central issues in the theological and political agenda of the modernists. As far as their relationship with the state was concerned,

15 This guideline was also reflected in the premise dar al-mafasid mugaddam ‘ala jalb al mashalih, that prioritises the avoidance of danger over the quest for advantages that carry higher risks. See Said Jamburi, Gus Dur: Pemimpin NU Kharismatik Kontroversial, Yayasan Lembaga Pemelihara Moral Masyarakat, Jakarta 1998: 61.
17 In the eyes of the modernists, the traditionalist leaders were not only competitors for resources and leadership over the umat, they represented the very backwardness of the Muslim community that the
modernist intellectuals had considerable differences among themselves, but agreed that it had to be defined through references to original sources of the Islamic faith. Robert Hefner, for example, pointed out that modernist thinkers of the pre-independence period differed on the question of the Islamic state, but they did so in reference to their different readings of the Qur'an. The traditionalists, in contrast, could formulate their attitude towards models of state organisation on the basis of what was best for the political interests of the umat at that particular point of time.

The religious, socio-economic and political interests of the modernist and traditionalist communities have been represented since the 1910s and 1920s by two major and a number of smaller organisations. The main traditionalist organisation is Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, Revival of the Islamic Scholars). It was founded in 1926 and currently claims a membership of over 35 million, with the majority of its followers concentrated in East and Central Java. The ulama or kiai have traditionally dominated the religious and political course of the organisation, with its executive board assigned to carry out the directives of the clerics. There are a number of smaller traditionalist organisations such as al-Jamiyatul al-Wasyliah and Persatuan Tarbiyah Indonesia or Perti (West Sumatra), Mathlaul Anwar (West Java) and Nahdlatul Wathan (Lombok), but their influence is limited to their local contexts. The largest modernist organisation is Muhammadiyah, claiming a membership of 25 million. Founded in 1912, it drew its members from the urban upper and middle classes, providing the organisation with considerable funds to develop a wide network of schools, libraries and hospitals. Professionals, university lecturers and bureaucrats have played a large role in Muhammadiyah's leadership. Other modernist organisations include Persatuan Islam and al-Irsyad, but they are much smaller both in membership numbers and political significance. NU and Muhammadiyah have for much of Indonesia's political history succeeded in defending their status as the main representational bodies of their communities in national politics.

modernists hoped to overcome. The traditionalists had, so their judgment, allowed non-Islamic elements to intrude the sanctity of their faith, and had therefore to shoulder the blame for its demise.


II. COMPETING FOR HEGEMONY: MUSLIMS AND THE STATE

The religious and social divisions within the Muslim community resulted in stark political
differences. Fealy asserted that 'when it came to politics, each stream had major differences
over ideology, policy and leadership style, and each used different aspects of Islamic thought
and tradition to legitimate their particular approach to politics.' Most of the controversies
focused on the structure, identity and resources of the state. In this respect, there were two
major areas of debate: one that concerned the formal role of Islam in the state, while the other
related to the function of the state as the main distributor of funds, positions and privileges to
particular constituencies.

The controversy over the role of Islam in the state has created substantial fractures in
Indonesia’s civilian political sphere. In June 1945, when a committee for the preparation of
Indonesia’s independence discussed the issue, there were fierce debates between those who
wanted to see syariat, or Islamic law, recognised in the constitution and those who argued for
a religiously neutral state. Non-Muslims and abangan secular nationalists warned that the
inclusion of syariat in the constitution would encourage predominantly non-Muslim areas to
secede from the nation state, and some santri politicians agreed. The representatives of
Muhammadiyah and NU, however, insisted on an explicit role for Islam in legal and political
affairs. On 22 June 1945, the delegates reached a compromise: the preamble of the
constitution, or Jakarta Charter, would include a seven-word clause which translated as: ‘with
the obligation for adherents of Islam to practise Islamic law’ (dengan kewajiban menjalankan
syariat Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknya). The exact meaning of this clause remained open to
dispute, however, especially as far as its legal consequences were concerned. Muslim
delegates pointed out that the state was given no authority to enforce the regulation, and
demanded that, at the very least, the President had to be a Muslim in order to ensure that
syariat was observed. Sukarno, the main nationalist leader, convinced Christian delegates to
accept this proposal, and it was adopted as an additional paragraph in the draft constitution.

The compromise did not last long, however. Delegates from the predominantly Christian
areas of Ambon and the Minahasa reported that large segments of their societies threatened to

22 Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, Risalah Sidang Badan Penyelidik Usaha-Usaha Persiapan
Kemerdekaan Indonesia (BPUPKI): Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia (PPKI), 28 Mei 1945-
23 J. B. Boland, The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague 1982; Umar
separate from the Indonesian Republic if the Jakarta Charter came into effect. In fact, the split of the Republic into a large number of smaller states was exactly what the returning Dutch forces were hoping for. Against this background, secular nationalists under the leadership of Hatta convinced the proponents of the ‘syariat clause’ on 18 August to drop their demands, and the constitution was subsequently passed without the ‘seven words’ and the stipulation that the President had to be a Muslim. Islamic leaders were deeply disappointed by what they saw as an unbalanced political compromise. They consoled their supporters, however, by claiming the first principle of the Pancasila ideology, the ‘belief in Almighty God’ (KeTuhanan yang Maha Esa), as the result of their insistence on monotheism. Muslim politicians also considered the compromise to be temporary, and intended to reopen the debate once the struggle against the Dutch was over. Expecting to win sufficient majorities in the post-independence elections, they were confident that they could implement Islamic law through legislation and the anticipated revision of the constitution.

Developments after 1949, though, failed to satisfy the expectations of Islamic leaders. The elections of 1955 did not produce the majority for Islamic parties that their leaders had predicted. Combined, parties with explicitly Islamic profiles won only 43 percent of the votes, denying them the necessary numbers to push syariat-based laws through Parliament. In addition, the Constitutional Assembly, the body tasked with producing a new constitution from 1956, deliberated for three years on the reintroduction of the Jakarta Charter without reaching agreement on the issue. The secular-nationalist parties, backed up by Sukarno and the armed forces, were opposed to its reinstatement, and in a series of votes in May and June 1959, the supporters of the Charter failed to reach the necessary two-thirds majority. On the other hand, the non-Islamic parties proposed to return to the presidential constitution of 1945, but did not manage to gain a majority either. As a result, the Assembly was deadlocked. The inability of Indonesia’s political parties to compromise on the future constitution added to the increasing impatience of the public with the parliamentary system. In contrast to 1945, when the goal of independence and the threat of the returning Dutch had forced key societal forces to cooperate and compromise, the constitutional debates of the late 1950s deepened the political divisions and accelerated the decline of the democratic polity. On 5 July 1959,

Sukarno dissolved the Assembly and declared the return to the 1945 constitution, marking the end of the parliamentary system.

The debate over the role of Islam in the state polarised civilian politics along secular-nationalist and Islamic lines, but the Muslim forces were deeply divided as well. Their conflicts focused largely on the second issue in Islam-state relations: the function of state bodies as the largest distributor of institutional and material privileges. In this regard, the Department of Religious Affairs was, and is, of crucial importance to both traditionalist and modernist constituencies. It has responsibility for key aspects of Islamic life, including religious education, authority over marital, inheritance and divorce laws, and hajj affairs. For NU particularly, the department has been the predominant vehicle of patronage and material advancement for its supporters. It offers civil service positions to both kiai and pesantren-educated santri, and its control of funds, contracts and licenses has given NU much needed access to the economic infrastructure of the state. While modernists tend to possess the necessary educational backgrounds to gain employment in other ministries as well, NU politicians typically had to focus on Religious Affairs as their sole source of bureaucratic power. The struggle to control the department has created serious tensions between modernist and traditionalist organisations and parties for much of Indonesia’s post-independence history, including the transition after 1998. It was a critical issue for the formation and disintegration of cabinets in the 1950s, and provided the authoritarian regimes of Sukarno and Soeharto with a welcome tool to lure Muslim groups into backing their rule.

III. CONFLICT AND DECLINE: ISLAMIC POLITICS IN THE 1950s AND 1960s

The fight for the reinstatement of the Jakarta Charter was one of the few political issues that traditionalist and modernist Muslim politicians agreed on. The differences over other doctrinal, social and political questions were substantial, and ultimately caused the failure of attempts to create and maintain a single Islamic party. In 1945, most Islamic organisations had united to form the party Masyumi (Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia, Indonesian Muslim Advisory Council). Tensions within Masyumi grew continuously after 1949,

27 The hajj is the pilgrimage to the holy site of Mecca. It is required for all Muslims who can afford it.
28 While kiai raise some of the funds necessary to run their boarding schools from the payment of tuition fees and businesses, many pesantren are dependent on outside funding. Pradjarta Dirdjosanjoto, Memilihara Umat: Kiai Pesantren – Kiai Langgar di Jawa, LkiS, Yogyakarta 1999: 151-153.
however, when younger modernist politicians took control of the party and demanded that it acquire a more ‘rational’ and ‘modern’ outlook. In the following years, the political authority of the NU-dominated supervisory board was gradually reduced in favour of the central board led by the modernist Mohamad Natsir, leading to a widespread feeling of marginalisation within NU. The number of Muhammadiyah representatives in the party leadership increased steadily, from under 30 percent in 1949 to around 50 percent in 1952. Many of the old animosities between traditionalists and modernists re-emerged during the conflict over the party leadership, with modernists portraying their traditionalist counterparts as obstacles to political reform and social modernisation, and the traditionalists fearing that their rivals wanted to erode their authority over the NU santri. The control of the Department of Religious Affairs was an equally contentious issue in the party. Consequently, it was a conflict over the department in 1952 that escalated tensions within Masyumi. When modernist elements claimed the ministry, NU declared its separation from Masyumi and the establishment of its own party.

The secession of NU from Masyumi convinced both communities that political representation of their interests through an Islamic umbrella organisation was impossible. As a result, each constituency felt that they needed their own party in order to compete in politics, catalysing a tendency for particularism in the Muslim community that would, much later, cause the proliferation of Islamic parties in the post-Soeharto era. The split also sharpened the specific profiles of the political vehicles used by the various groups. NU established itself as a Java-centric, pragmatic party that sought to protect the interests of the traditionalist community by approaching politics in a flexible, moderate and compromise-oriented fashion. Its populist sentiments brought it close to the Sukarnoist PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian Nationalist Party), which in turn was attracted by NU’s sympathies for syncretistic religious practices. The modernist Masyumi, on the other hand, pursued political and economic modernisation in a ‘rational’ and technocratic manner, and

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30 Even decades later, the feeling within NU circles remained that modernist politicians had cheated them. An NU-sponsored pamphlet of 2002 recalled that ‘(...) Masyumi successfully cheated NU. At the beginning, activists who had initiated Masyumi lured NU leaders to support Masyumi because the latter controlled large masses, with the promise of strategic positions like chairman of the Advisory Board or ‘Consultative Council’ with full authority to determine the course of Masyumi. It is indeed true that K.H. Hasyim Asy’ari became chairman of Masyumi’s Advisory Board. But unfortunately, his role and functions were ‘sterilised’. His talks were never given attention. His fatwa were always ignored.’ Bahrul ’Ulum, “Bodohnya NU” Apa “NU Dibodohi”? Jejak Langkah NU Era Reformasi: Menguji Khittah, Meneropong Paradigma Politik, PW IPNU Jawa Tengah, Lembaga Pers dan Penerbitan, Yogyakarta 2002: 34.

rejected NU’s compromise-seeking policies as lacking conviction and conceptual thinking. This rationalist interpretation of politics allied Masyumi with socialist and non-Muslim parties which, like Masyumi itself, had their strongholds in the Outer Islands. The political and regional preferences of the Islamic parties and their secular counterparts were highlighted by the outcome of the 1955 general elections. Masyumi gained 20.9 percent of the vote, and emerged as the dominant political force in the Outer Islands. NU came third with 18.4 percent, with its supporters largely concentrated in Central and East Java. On the secular-nationalist side, PNI became the strongest of all parties with 22.3 percent, and the PKI took the fourth place with 15.4 percent. The split between Java-based parties, like NU and PKI, and the parties dominating the Outer Islands, had a significant impact on political developments in the post-election period.32

Both NU and Masyumi were drawn into the spiralling political crisis of the mid to late 1950s. As the strongest party in the Outer Islands, Masyumi played a major role in the regional uprisings on Sumatra and Sulawesi in 1956-58. There, several regional administrations were toppled by alliances between Masyumi politicians critical of the centralist policies of the Jakarta government and local military commanders dissatisfied with the dominance of army headquarters over their affairs. The rebellions were defeated militarily, discrediting Masyumi in the eyes of the political elite and making it largely ineffective in defending the increasingly embattled parliamentary system. Combining with widespread societal apathy towards liberal democracy and its parties, the regionalist insurgencies provided Sukarno and the armed forces with welcome arguments in their lobbying for an authoritarian solution to the crisis.33 NU, for its part, appeared unwilling to resist the mounting calls for replacing the democratic system. The 1955 result for the PKI had come as a shock to many NU leaders, and the communists had improved their position further in local elections on Java in 1957. If the PKI was able to sustain this trend under the existing democratic polity, it might have emerged as the largest political party at the next national election. The prospect of having an atheist party dominating parliament and government, and the fear that communist grassroots leaders would expand their influence at the expense of the kiai, undermined the support of NU politicians for parliamentary democracy. Thus when Sukarno erected his Guided Democracy, Masyumi and NU were incapable or reluctant to offer meaningful resistance.34

The imposition of Guided Democracy marked the beginning of almost four decades of authoritarian rule and political marginalisation of Islam. The early phase of Sukarno’s regime saw the evolution of a general pattern that applied the divisions between Islamic groups as an instrument of political legitimacy and regime maintenance. Based on the presumption that any form of non-democratic rule in Indonesia needed the endorsement of at least one of the two major currents of political Islam, Sukarno invited NU to join his regime and excluded Masyumi. In the lead up to the presidential decree, Sukarno had observed that NU was reluctant to support Guided Democracy, but appeared ready to compromise. Masyumi, on the other hand, was uncompromisingly opposed to the authoritarian shift. The difference in NU’s and Masyumi’s attitudes towards Guided Democracy contributed significantly to the consolidation of non-democratic rule. Fealy suggested that ‘had NU joined Masyumi in rejecting the Konsepsi and Karya cabinet, Sukarno would have been forced to abandon or moderate his plans.’ After long internal debates, NU accepted Sukarno’s invitation, and in exchange retained the Department of Religious Affairs and significant representation in the restructured parliament. The main argument of the NU board for joining Guided Democracy was to ensure that Muslim interests were sufficiently represented, and that participation in the regime was necessary to control the expansion of the PKI. Masyumi, by contrast, was banned in 1960, and two years later many of its leaders were arrested and imprisoned.

The differences within Islamic groups over their attitude towards Guided Democracy not only helped Sukarno and the armed forces to establish and sustain their authoritarian rule, but also had long-term effects on the relationship between civilian forces and non-democratic polities. Nahdlatul Ulama’s acceptance of Sukarno’s regime in exchange for political concessions signalled that representation in government was more important to its

36 Fealy 1998: 223. Sukarno had presented his idea (konsepsi) of ‘burying the political parties’ and erecting a ‘guided democracy’ in October 1956. In response, Natsir contended that ‘if the parties are buried, democracy will be buried automatically.’ In April 1957, Sukarno installed the Kabinet Karya, a ‘business cabinet’, replacing the last democratic government elected by the 1955 parliament. Herbert Feith, The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York 1962: 518.
37 In the Sukarno-appointed parliament, NU had 51 seats (1955: 45 seats). As Masyumi had no representatives at all, however, the total number of Islamic members was only 67 out of 283, giving the nationalists a comfortable majority.
institutional interests than the nature of the political system it participated in. The support for democratic principles of state organisation appeared to be negotiable if authoritarian actors offered the same political resources that otherwise were only accessible after intense competition in parliamentary systems. NU’s indifference towards the destruction of Masyumi also gave rise to a sense of bitterness in some sections of the modernist community, aggravating the tensions within the umat and allowing future authoritarian regimes to manipulate them for their political purposes. The prioritisation of regime engagement over democratic values and the growing intra-Islamic antagonism developed into important elements of Indonesia’s political culture, and they have remained influential features in post-Soeharto politics.

IV. FRUSTRATED EXPECTATIONS: MUSLIM GROUPS AND THE EARLY NEW ORDER

Soeharto’s rise to power in 1965 further marginalised political Islam. This greatly disappointed Muslim groups, which had hoped for increased regime participation after assisting the army in its purge of the PKI. In fact, in the years preceding the military takeover, some Islamic leaders had entered into an informal alliance with anti-communist segments within the armed forces. Traditionalist kiai in particular had been concerned that the rapid expansion of the PKI into rural areas could threaten their dominance over Nahdlatul Ulama’s core constituency. They established militias to defend their interests, which in turn sought contacts with and advice from military officers. The political turmoil surrounding the events of 30 September 1965, during which the army claimed to have aborted a communist coup attempt, led to almost institutional cooperation between the armed forces and Muslim groups in eradicating the PKI. Islamic youth organisations, mostly but not

40 The allegations of political opportunism, directed against NU by a variety of political forces, were reflected in the derogatory reference to NU’s spiritual leader, Wahab Chasbullah, as ‘Kiai Nasakom’. Nasakom had been promoted by Sukarno as an all-encompassing ideological concept, combining Nationalism (Nasionalisme), Religion (Agama) and Communism (Komunisme). See Saifullah Ma’shum, Karisma Ulama: Kehidupan Ringkas 26 Tokoh NU, Mizan, Bandung 1998: 151.

41 In 1963, the communists had started a campaign, named the ‘unilateral action’ (aksi sepihak), for the immediate implementation of land reform legislation introduced in 1960. As owners of pesantren and agricultural land attached to it, kiai became targets of the campaign. Aminuddin Kasdi, Kaum Merah Menjarah: Aksi Sepihak PKI/BTI di Jawa Timur 1960-1965, Jendela, Yogyakarta 2001: 230-231.

exclusively NU-affiliated, played a major role in destroying the infrastructure of the PKI and killing probably several hundred thousand of its members. In many cases, the army rounded up suspected communists, loaded them on trucks and delivered them to a location where members of Muslim militias stood by to kill them. The involvement of civilian groups in the killings not only fulfilled logistical purposes, however. More significantly, it created political interests in the establishment and continuation of a regime that would prevent investigations into the legality of these actions. The New Order administration offered political protection to those involved in the unlawful killings, and could count on sufficient civilian and military support in return.

While neither the traditionalist nor the modernist Muslim groups intended to facilitate the rise of a military-run dictatorship, they assisted the army in dismantling the political structures of Guided Democracy and establishing the New Order polity. By doing so, they demonstrated that under conditions that threatened their core interests, key civilian organisations were prepared to accept military intervention in politics as a legitimate instrument for settling societal disputes. Like most political actors at that time, Islamic organisations and parties believed that the intervention of the armed forces in politics was temporary, and that the regime emerging from the post-coup turmoil would serve their interests better than previous political systems. The modernists expected to end their marginalisation from political life and return to the arena of the leading societal forces. Nahdlatul Ulama politicians, on the other hand, hoped that the post-Sukarno state would reward them for their close cooperation with the army in destroying the PKI. Accordingly, NU members of parliament played a crucial role in Sukarno’s political demise and Suharto’s ascent to the presidency. In the same vein, modernist student leaders were at the forefront of the movement that demanded Sukarno’s resignation, allowing Soeharto and the armed forces to consolidate their grip on power. It was only by 1967 that Islamic leaders began to realise that their support for the army had not only resulted in the collapse of Sukarno’s pro-

44 Andree Feillard, ‘Traditionalist Islam and the Army in Indonesia’s New Order: The Awkward Relationship’, in: Greg Barton and Greg Fealy (editors), Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia, Monash Asia Institute, Clayton 1996. In contrast to the younger NU politicians, however, the ‘old guard’ under NU General Chairman Idham Chalid supported Sukarno until it became evident that the latter’s decline was irreversible.
communist regime, but also in the creation of another authoritarian polity with equally strong reservations towards political Islam.\textsuperscript{45}

The optimistic cooperation among Muslim groups that had accompanied the decline of Guided Democracy and the rise of the Soeharto regime ended soon after the new rulers had consolidated their position. With the PKI destroyed, the single most important bond of solidarity between Islamic organisations had vanished, and their diverging interests began to dominate the political attitudes within the umat once again. Faced with an unsympathetic regime, the two currents of Indonesian Islam competed for the few privileges and resources available under the new polity. The fractures within Islam were likely to result in different attitudes towards the regime, and offered Soeharto opportunities to demonstrate the powers of retribution and patronage at his disposal. Like Sukarno's Guided Democracy, Soeharto's regime was aware that it was crucial to gain the support of at least one of the major currents of Indonesian Islam to legitimise its authoritarian rule. In theory, the integralist nature of the New Order sought the cooperation, and eventual cooptation, of both constituencies, but more often than not, the support of only one stream was forthcoming. For the government, the most important goal in this regard was to prevent both constituencies from uniting against the government and withdrawing the Islamic credentials they supplied to the regime.

In defining their relationship to the new regime, traditionalist and modernist groups had, rather predictably, different approaches. In fact, their attitudes towards the early New Order were a direct reversal of their roles in establishing Guided Democracy. This time, NU chose a more confrontational strategy. The reason for this was not so much opposition towards the non-democratic nature of the regime, but its gradual exclusion from it. NU lost the Department of Religious Affairs in 1971, was severely intimidated by the military in the elections of the same year and had to give up its status as an autonomous political party in 1973 when it was merged into the all-Islamic PPP under modernist leadership. By the mid 1970s, Soeharto counted NU among the opponents of his regime, and removed most of its officials from public office.\textsuperscript{46} The modernist community had a more diverse approach, but none of its key groups chose to confront the New Order state. Arguably, it was the bitter experience of marginalisation under Guided Democracy that led most modernist organisations to drive an accommodationist course. Muhammadiyah decided at its 1971


\textsuperscript{46} Young NU activists even suspected that the government wanted NU to 'disappear', and called this period a time of 'NU phobia'. Choirul Anam, \textit{Gerak Langkah Pemuda Ansor: Sebuah Percikan Sejarah Kelahiran}, AULA, Surabaya 1990: 128-129.
congress to eschew active politics, followed by an influx of bureaucrats into the national and regional leadership boards. A substantial proportion of them would later become members of Golkar. By the 1990s, 78 percent of Muhammadiyah's leadership personnel were state bureaucrats. Many former modernist politicians, on the other hand, joined Parmusi (Partai Muslimin Indonesia, Indonesian Muslim Party), the Islamic party sanctioned by the government after it had objected to the rehabilitation of Masyumi in 1967. At the same time, prominent members of Masyumi founded Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII, Indonesian Council for Islamic Predication), which assembled modernists with a more formalist, scripturalist understanding of Islam. It concentrated on missionary and social work (dakwah) in order to avoid open confrontation with the increasingly repressive regime.

The reversed intra-Islamic power relations under the early New Order pointed to the continued divisions between the modernist and traditionalist constituencies. Many of the doctrinal and socio-cultural differences remained relevant, and the key organisations Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah still viewed each other as competitors in the struggle for religio-political hegemony and access to the socio-economic infrastructure of the state. Just as Nahdlatul Ulama had reacted with indifference to the destruction of Masyumi in 1960, and had accepted regime participation in return, so did modernist elements in the 1970s and early 1980s tolerate, or even applaud, the marginalisation of NU from the political arena. In fact, modernist politicians actively sidelined NU representatives from the leadership of PPP, assisting the regime in maintaining high levels of conflict between modernists and traditionalists throughout the New Order period. The internal competition within PPP not only allowed the regime to hand out rewards to loyalists and retaliate against opponents but also reduced the capacity of the party to challenge Golkar at the general elections.

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47 The regime had banned civil servants from joining political parties, so former Muslim politicians keen on keeping their jobs in the bureaucracy saw Muhammadiyah as their primary option for remaining active in Islamic affairs.

48 For the research results, see Haedar Nashir, *Perilaku Politik Elit Muhammadiyah*, Tarawang, Yogyakarta 2000: 8.


Islamic fragmentation, therefore, served to stabilise the authoritarian regime, which both created and cultivated the divisions to prolong its rule.

V. ADAPTATION AND CONFRONTATION: SOEHARTO AND ISLAMIC FORCES IN THE LATER NEW ORDER

The capacity of the regime to distribute favours and inflict punishment encouraged modernist and traditionalist intellectuals to reformulate the political and ideological guidelines for their relations with the state. This led to significant changes within the ideological frameworks of both Islamic constituencies from the early 1970s onwards. In the pre-New Order period, traditionalist thinkers had defended NU’s endorsement of regimes that differed from the ideal of an Islamic state by referring to the accommodationist principles of Sunni theology. The modernists, on the other hand, had accepted the democratic system of the 1950s as a means to achieve their ultimate goal, the establishment of an ‘Islamic democracy’, and had refused to cooperate when Guided Democracy put an end to that option. In contrast, controversial new concepts that emerged in parts of the Muslim community in the early 1970s questioned the benefit of elite politics as such and, therefore, used the banner of the ‘reform movement’ (gerakan pembaruan) and, in later years, ‘cultural Islam’ (Islam kultural). These new conceptual patterns were motivated by three major conclusions related to the history of Islamic politics in Indonesia: first, the major Muslim parties had failed to achieve any of their goals. They had not gained a majority in elections, had not succeeded in implementing syariat, and had created anything but unity within the umat. Second, the partial confrontation with the New Order had only worsened the situation of Muslims. Finally, the concentration on political competition had distracted Muslim leaders from further developing the intellectual, cultural and doctrinal principles of Islamic life.

The intellectual reform movement in the Islamic community called on Muslims to practise their faith in a manner that was not only concerned with formal fulfilment of religious regulations, but emphasised the doctrinal substance of Islam: justice, social equality and human dignity. While ‘cultural Islam’ appeared to mark the departure from Islamic politics, it in fact paved the way for increased participation of Muslim organisations in the structures of the New Order by shifting attention from the ideal of an Islamic state to the religious and
social goals achievable under existing political regimes. In the modernist discourse, the young intellectual Nurcholish Madjid called for the depoliticisation of Islamic theology, proposing that Muslims concentrate on the application of basic Islamic values in the context of modern, industrialising states. In the framework of the New Order, this stress on Islamic ideals such as social equality amidst a booming economy created a strong incentive for modernists to cooperate with the regime instead of pursuing the ideal of an Islamic state or society from the political margins. Intellectuals like Adi Sasono legitimated interaction with the state as an instrument to propagate economic redistribution of resources from well-connected Chinese tycoons to Muslim entrepreneurs:

“How can you change the situation without power? You can become someone at the periphery whose job it is to read poems. But power is not the same as government. Om Liem (the Chinese tycoon Liem Soei Liong, M.M.) is not the government, but who would deny that he has power?”

This concept saw engagement with the regime not as an act of transitional cooperation in times of emergency, but as a legitimate effort to improve the social conditions of Muslims and to uphold justice. Similar processes of theological modernisation occurred in the traditionalist community. Under the leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid, who became chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama in 1984, young NU intellectuals began to review the sources of traditionalist thinking. They argued that the kitab kuning had to be reinterpreted in order to


54 A major focus of the new generation of Islamic intellectuals was the refutation of claims that industrialisation led to the decline of religiousness. See Nurcholish Madjid, ‘Masyarakat Religius dan Dinamika Industrialisasi’, in: Nurcholish Madjid, Islam: Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan, Bandung 1987: 149.


56 Abdurrahman Wahid, popularly known as ‘Gus Dur’, was born in 1940, grandson of the NU founders Hasjim Asj’ari and Bisri Syansuri, and son of Wahid Hasjim. In 1953 he was with his father when the latter died in a car accident. After spending several years in various pesantren on Java, he left for Cairo in 1964, and later for Baghdad. In 1971, he went to Europe for further studies, but returned to Indonesia soon afterwards, teaching in his hometown of Jombang. He moved to Jakarta in 1978, founded his own pesantren in Ciganjur, and became active in NU’s executive board as well as in a wide range of cultural organisations. In 1984, he was nominated by a number of senior kiai to take over the chairmanship of NU. Prior to his election, he had attracted Soeharto’s attention by proposing the ‘pribumisasi’ of Islam, meaning the adaptation of Islamic teachings to national Indonesian culture. He also called attempts to confront Islam with Pancasila ‘stupid’, paving the way for NU’s endorsement of Pancasila as its ideological guideline. See M. Saleh Isre (editor), Tabayun Gus Dur: Pribumisasi Islam, Hak Minoritas, Reformasi Kultural, LkiS, Yogyakarta 1998.
fit into the contexts of modern state organisation. In their view, cooperation with unsympathetic power holders was not, as the Sunni theorists had proclaimed, a necessity in times of exceptional circumstances, but an integral part of the political process.

Despite reservations from more scripturalist Islamic scholars, the new doctrinal frameworks eventually allowed traditionalist and modernist organisations to compete openly for the resources and institutional privileges that the state had at its disposal. After having suffered from continued economic isolation throughout the 1970s, NU reconciled with Soeharto in 1984 by endorsing the government's controversial plan of prescribing Pancasila as the sole ideological principle for all mass organisations. In an interview with John Bresman, an NU leader, presumably Abdurrahman Wahid, left no doubt about the motivation behind NU's decision to seek cooperation with the regime:

"I reached an agreement with the government. They agreed that all NU people who had been civil servants, and left the civil service to take political posts with PPP would be reinstated. They also agreed they would give preference to NU people in making new appointments to the civil service, assuming they met the necessary requirements. The government also agreed that NU would receive licenses for economic activities, so we can support ourselves by our own efforts."

Under Abdurrahman's leadership, NU declared its departure from party politics, withdrawing its organisational support from PPP and opening the traditionalist constituency for Golkar's electoral efforts. The modernists, on the other hand, were pleased with a series of political moves by Soeharto, from the late 1980s onwards, that indicated his willingness to revise some of the restrictions on political Islam. Soeharto initiated a number of laws strengthening Islamic courts and educational institutions, went on a much-publicised hajj and approved the foundation of a modernist-dominated organisation of Muslim intellectuals, ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia, Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals). Under

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59 This policy shift was rewarded with the very material concessions that Abdurrahman had hoped for: the civil service was opened for NU cadres, and leading bureaucrats took senior positions in NU's regional chapters; government officials resumed handing out donations to pesantren; and the army extended training to NU's security forces, organised under its youth wing Ansor. See Andree Feillard, "Traditionalist Islam and the State in Indonesia. The Road to Legitimacy and Renewal", in: Robert W. Hefner and Patricia Horvatich (editors), *Islam in an Era of Nation-States: Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia*, University of Hawai‘i Press, Honolulu 1997: 139.
the leadership of Soeharto’s trusted Minister of Research and Technology, BJ Habibie, ICMI became the main political vehicle for government bureaucrats and modernist leaders for promoting explicitly Islamic policies in the field of economic distribution and socio-religious representation.61

The increased integration of modernist Muslim figures into the regime led to fresh tensions between the traditionalist and modernist currents of Indonesian Islam. Abdurrahman Wahid was highly critical of ICMI and warned that it could facilitate the rise of ‘sectarianism’.62 In order to counter the political manoeuvres of modernist politicians and activists, Abdurrahman began to forge alliances with opponents of ICMI, including nationalist intellectuals, politicians in the PDI and military officers close to Benny Moerdani. The regime retaliated by challenging Abdurrahman’s leadership of NU. In 1994, Abdurrahman was able to fend off a regime-sponsored attempt to unseat him as NU chairman.63 The government continued to apply pressure on NU’s branches, however, withholding economic resources and marginalising NU officials from political life. By 1995, Nahdlatul Ulama was confronted with a similar situation to that of the early 1980s, when the economic problems of many pesantren communities forced the NU leadership to reconsider its stand towards the regime. Left with very few political options, Abdurrahman reconciled with Soeharto in 1996, much to the pleasure of local NU leaders who saw an immediate change in the attitude of government offices and the security forces towards their organisation.64 Just like in the post-reconciliation period of the mid 1980s, previously withheld funds for the pesantren were made available, and regime support for anti-Abdurrahman elements within NU was suspended. The 1997 elections consolidated the accord, with Abdurrahman introducing Soeharto’s daughter to key pesantren leaders and helping to secure an unprecedented electoral triumph for Golkar.

NU’s reconciliation with the regime coincided with a sharp decline in the relationship between Soeharto and senior modernist leaders. Muhammadiyah chairman Amien Rais, a senior member of the ICMI leadership, started criticising the President in late 1996 on a wide variety of issues, ranging from the businesses run by Soeharto’s family to his failure to provide a schedule for his departure from politics. Once a staunch supporter of regime accommodation in order to defend the interests of political Islam from within the administration, Amien now believed that the New Order had gained more from this cooperation than the Islamic forces he represented. The government responded to Amien’s criticism with the well-established mechanisms of regime exclusion, socio-political isolation and creation of internal divisions. Amien was forced to resign from ICMI, and calls for him to stand down from the Muhammadiyah chairmanship were heard from within the organisation. The very policies of repression and intimidation that were lifted from NU branches and their affiliated pesantren in late 1996 began to impact on Muhammadiyah and its network of educational institutions. As the 1997 elections approached, the key figures of traditionalist and modernist Islam found themselves, once again, in diametrically opposed positions vis-à-vis the regime.

The fact that the political antagonism between key Muslim groups persisted despite the gradually narrowing doctrinal and cultural gap was largely related to the absence of unifying themes of all-Islamic concern in the late New Order. Ironically, the support of the Soeharto regime for the process of cultural Islamisation, and the concessions it had made to some of the legal-political demands of the umat since the late 1980s, had taken away the few opportunities in which major Muslim organisations could demonstrate the potential strength of Islamic solidarity. In 1973 and 1978, modernists and traditionalists had united to oppose new marriage laws and an MPR decree on the role of syncretism, forcing the regime to revise

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65 Amien Rais was born in 1944 in Solo, Central Java. Active in several modernist student organisations, he pursued an academic career that led him to doctoral studies in the United States. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a Masters in 1974 and received his doctorate from the University of Chicago in 1981. Despite his long periods of study in the West, he was highly critical of the US and Europe for what he viewed as their pro-Israel policies. He became a specialist on Middle East politics at the University of Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta, engaging in research projects such as ‘Zionism: Its Meaning and Function.’ He joined ICMI in the early 1990s and became an increasingly important figure in Muhammadiyah. In 1994, he was appointed as its chairman. Zaim Uhrowi, Muhammad Amien Rais: Memimpin dengan Hati Nurani – An Authorized Biography, The Amien Rais Center, Teraju, Jakarta 2004.

66 Interview with Amien Rais, Yogyakarta 27 November 1997.

67 Despite these acts of intimidation, many Muhammadiyah branches encouraged Amien to continue his confrontation with the regime. He received numerous invitations to speak at branch activities and on Muhammadiyah campuses. See Andi Wahyudi, Muhammadiyah Dalam Gonjang-Ganjing Politik: Telaah Kepemimpinan Muhammadiyah Era 1990-an, Media Pressindo, Yogyakarta 1999: 123-124.
some of its positions. These moments of Islamic unity had become rare, with the regime allowing for a larger role of Islam in society and granting rewards to those organisations that supported its rule. In fact, the pro-Islamic policies of the regime in the early 1990s proved to be a divisive factor in intra-umat relations. While Abdurrahman was opposed to state support for the Islamisation of society, and viewed religious practice as a personal matter, the modernists threw their full support behind Soeharto's new approach. The policies of retribution and patronage exercised by the regime on the one hand, and the continued rivalry between its leaders on the other, sustained the disharmony between the modernist and traditionalist communities and impaired their ability to formulate an alternative to the non-democratic polity of the New Order.

The New Order left important legacies that highlighted and consolidated the linkage between political conflict and military intervention in politics: first, the support for the army by key Muslim organisations in the turmoil of 1965 and 1966 defined the conditions under which major civilian groups viewed military intervention in politics as an acceptable form of political interaction. The massive threat of the PKI towards the religio-political privileges of both the traditionalist and modernist communities legitimised, in the eyes of Muslim leaders, temporary praetorian rule. When Islamic groups realised that the armed forces had no intention of handing back power to civilian actors, the authoritarian regime was already deeply entrenched in the political system. Second, their emphasis on gaining representation and resources under the New Order suggested that civilian forces largely interpreted politics as the fight for regime participation rather than the quest for a democratic system in which different concepts and ideas compete for acceptance at the ballot box. Allan A. Samson concluded that 'Nahdlatul Ulama is not so much a goal-centered political party as it is a religious welfare organisation governed by a confederation of religious and political notables.' The focus on constituency welfare made the form and quality of the political system in which it was achieved an issue of secondary concern, allowing Islamic groups to accept military-backed authoritarian rule as long as it paid attention to their interests. Third, the continued divisions between modernist and traditionalist groups provided the regime with the opportunity of applying the means of retribution and patronage at its disposal, securing the cooperation of and legitimation by at least one of the major Islamic groups at any given time.

VI. ISLAMIC MILITANCY AND THE STATE: BETWEEN EXTREMIST THREAT AND POLITICAL MANIPULATION

The differences between Islamic and secular groups on the one hand and the divisions within the umat on the other had a significant impact on the political landscape of Indonesia. The divisions led to tensions and self-destructive behaviour within the civilian sphere of politics, affected the institutional functionality of liberal democracy, and provided opportunities for non-democratic actors to seize power and sustain it for extended periods of time. These conflicts were, however, of a largely political nature, and provided indirect 'invitations' for the armed forces to intervene. In contrast, the existence of a small but militant segment of political Islam has constituted a direct security threat to all regimes from the emergency governments during the guerrilla war to the current post-authoritarian order. This threat has resulted in extensive security and military operations, and has in return widened the political space of the armed forces and other security agencies. The rise of Islamic militancy in the post-New Order environment since 2000, and the fact that most of these groups have their roots in radical movements under previous regimes, requires a closer look at the historical legacies of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia, and their impact on democratic consolidation in the post-Soeharto era.

Extremist Islamic groups in post-colonial Indonesia first emerged during the guerrilla war against the Dutch, with Muslim clerics and leaders commanding militias consisting of their students and followers. In the context of only rudimentary administrative control of the Republic over its territories, these militias exercised considerable authority in areas with ongoing combat operations. In West Java, one such militia was led by Sekarmadjji Maridjan Kartosuwirjo, who had previously been involved in Masyumi politics but later focused on building up his own political and military network, the Darul Islam ('Abode of Islam'). In early 1948, he declared the establishment of the Islamic Army of Indonesia (Tentara Islam Indonesia, TII) and subsequently refused to acknowledge the central command authority of the national army under Sudirman. By early 1949, there was open war between Darul Islam and the Republic. When the Siliwangi division marched into West Java after the Dutch attack on Yogyakarta in December 1948, their leaders were stunned by heavy resistance from TII fighters:

"Their way was bitterly contested not only by the Dutch but by the troops of Darul Islam as well, with as many casualties being lost to the latter as to the former. (This was totally unexpected, many Siliwangi units being caught
completely off guard, for at the time they set out they had believed Darul Islam still backed the Republic). Wherever the units of the Siliwangi went, they were enthusiastically received by the local inhabitants as deliverers not only from the Dutch, but from Darul Islam as well.69

Despite the decimation of his forces by government troops, Kartosuwirjo announced in August 1949 the creation of the Islamic State of Indonesia (Negara Islam Indonesia, NII), which claimed authority not only over West Java, but the entire Indonesian territory. Except for regionally limited rebellions in South Sulawesi and Aceh, which were temporarily part of the Darul Islam movement, Kartosuwirjo’s rebel state never gathered much support outside of its West Java strongholds. The armed forces had to allocate substantial resources to suppress the insurgency, however, and only in 1962 did the army manage to capture Kartosuwirjo. He was put on trial and executed later that year.

While the Darul Islam rebellion had been a serious threat to the authority of the government and the capacity of the armed forces, several actors in Indonesian politics were able to use the insurgency for ideological and political purposes. For the nationalist groups, references to the militancy of the movement served to fend off demands for an Islamic state.70 Opponents of parliamentary democracy pointed to the failure of a series of governments to end the rebellion, calling for more ‘decisive’ leadership and regime change. Muslim grassroots leaders, while not sympathetic to the rebels, considered Darul Islam a potential counterweight to the expanding mass organisations of the PKI. And the armed forces, finally, enjoyed increased political support, operational autonomy and budget allocations to destroy Darul Islam, exposing the indispensability of the military to any incumbent regime. Given this instrumentalisation of Islamic militancy under previous regimes, it was not surprising that some factions in the intelligence services of the New Order too tried to utilise it to consolidate their grip on power. In 1977, the government announced that it had uncovered a conspiracy by former Darul Islam figures to regroup under the name of Komando Jihad. Many leaders of PPP felt that the announcement constituted a deliberate effort by the intelligence apparatus to undermine the chances of the Muslim-based party at the approaching general elections.71

69 Kahin 1952: 409.
71 Shortly after announcing that the security forces had rounded up the Komando Jihad, Admiral Sudomo, the head of the all-powerful security agency Kopkamtib, declared that there were four major limitations on campaigners for the general elections: first, no attacks on political opponents; second, no offenses to the dignity of the government and its officials; third, no attempts to destabilise national unity, and fourth, no criticism of government policies. The catalogue of limitations virtually paralysed
with ‘special’ intelligence operations, was widely believed to have engineered the emergence of Komando Jihad, and even some of his colleagues in the intelligence community confirmed this:

“So, for instance, you talk about Komando Jihad. (...) (Ali Moertopo) had the opinion that we must create issues. He said, ‘One time we will have to use this’ and so on and on. Let’s say it’s always in his mind.”

In the wake of the Komando Jihad affair, the government clamped down on several other militant groups. Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, a leading member of one such group, was arrested in November 1978 and sentenced to prison for subversion. Ba’asyir would later come to prominence in the post-Soeharto era as the spiritual head of Jemaah Islamyiah, a terrorist group that carried out a series of bombings throughout the archipelago, including the Bali attacks of October 2002.

The political manipulation of radical Islam helped the New Order regime to broaden its legitimacy base and to justify the continued use of repression against opponents. After a decade of political consolidation, and the almost complete destruction of the communist network, the regime had to remind the public that its main mission was to defend the Pancasila state against extremist threats from both ends of the ideological spectrum. This manipulative use of Islamic militancy, however, did achieve significantly more than was initially envisaged. Sidney Jones, in an International Crisis Group report, has pointed to the ‘unintended consequences’ of Moertopo’s intelligence operations:

“It renewed or forged bonds among Muslim radicals in South Sulawesi, Sumatra, and Java. It promoted the idea of an Islamic state that the original Darul Islam leaders had perhaps not intended, and in doing so, tapped into an intellectual ferment that was particularly pronounced in university-based mosques. That ferment was only beginning when Komando Jihad was created, but through the late 1970s and early 1980s, it was fuelled by the Iranian revolution, the availability of writings on political Islam from the Middle East and Pakistan, and anger over Soeharto government policies.”

the PPP campaign, which had planned to ride to victory on a wave of widespread disenchantment with the Soeharto regime. Despite these obstructive measures introduced by the government, however, PPP won nearly thirty percent of the vote. See R. William Liddle, Pemilu-Pemilu Orde Baru, Jakarta 1992: 67.

72 Jenkins 1984: 57.
The regime began to feel the consequences of this ferment in September 1984, when Muslim demonstrators clashed with army troops in the Jakarta harbour district of Tanjung Priok. The unrest was sparked by soldiers who had entered a mosque without removing their shoes, tearing down Islamic posters they viewed as critical of the government. When troops opened fire on the protesting crowds, at least 34 people were killed, but unofficial reports put the number of deaths in the hundreds. The incident was followed by a series of bomb explosions on Java, including the January 1985 bombing of the Buddhist temple of Borobudur, one of Indonesia's cultural landmarks. Four years later, army troops under Col. Hendropriyono, who would later rise to become the head of intelligence under the Megawati government, attacked a group of Muslim militants in Way Jepara, Lampung. The group had attracted followers from Java, offering an 'authentic' Islamic lifestyle isolated from government intervention and secular influences. When the military sought to disperse the compound, around 100 people died.

The late New Order saw a drastic decline in violent Islamic opposition towards its rule. By the late 1980s, most of the radical leaders with roots in the Darul Islam movement had either been imprisoned or fled the country. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, for example, went to Malaysia and developed a new militant network from there. The younger generation of radicals, on the other hand, chose to study in Pakistan or join the guerrilla war in Afghanistan as well as the Muslim insurgency in the South Philippines. Moreover, Soeharto's efforts to increase Muslim participation in his regime, and his support for cultural Islamisation policies, reduced the need for intelligence operations aimed at manipulating radical movements for political purposes. Finally, some of the ultra-modernist Islamic groups that had withdrawn into dakwah activities in the late 1960s and early 1970s began to reconcile with the New Order. While not directly linked with the most militant of the groups, Dewan Dakwah leaders had considerable influence over those elements of radical Islam that opposed the regime but were unwilling to use violence to achieve their goals. Since the early 1990s, some of these clerics and activists developed ties with central figures of the regime, in particular with a group around Prabowo Subianto, Soeharto’s son-in-law and seen as a rising star in the armed forces. This improvement of the relationship between the government and the most radical elements of the modernist mainstream contributed to the decline in Islamic militancy in the first half of the 1990s.

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76 Hefner 2000: 201.
The activities of militant Islamic groups throughout Indonesia's post-independence history have left important legacies for the current democratic transition. These legacies are largely related to theories of threat levels as explanations for military intervention in politics. Authors like Michael Desch identified high levels of internal threat as incentives for military intervention, with security operations against insurgencies and terrorist cells providing the armed forces with expanded resources and authority. As the introduction has shown, however, the threat level theories are vulnerable to cases in which regimes or elements within them have an interest in creating artificial threats in order to serve their political purposes, such as the justification of repressive measures against dissidents or higher budget allocations for security forces. Evidently, the history of Islamic militancy in Indonesia is a case in point. On the one hand, the military campaign against the Darul Islam rebellion in West Java confronted a 'real' threat to the stability of the state and strengthened the armed forces vis-à-vis civilian politicians as a result. On the other hand, the case of the Komando Jihad campaign in 1977 exposed the importance of manipulated images of militant Islam for purposes of power maintenance and regime legitimation.

This chapter has introduced societal divisions over the role of Islam in the state as one of the most important areas of political conflict in Indonesia. The severity of the splits has assisted non-democratic actors, including the armed forces, to gain political control and sustain decades of authoritarian rule. The internal fractures within the Muslim community between traditionalists and modernists have been a particular source for instability in the civilian realm. Despite the gradual reduction of doctrinal and socio-cultural differences, the cleavages have remained politically volatile. In addition to the political conflict between mainstream constituencies, the existence of a tiny, but high-profile extremist segment of Islam created fissures within the civilian polity. The political impact of these tensions both weakened the civilian capacity to establish strong governance and increased threats to domestic security. Consequently, Indonesia became a classic example of a state in which serious conflicts between key civilian forces and rising internal threat levels resulted in increased military intervention in politics. The legacy of this civilian fragmentation, which stretched from the colonial period to the late New Order polity, was about to leave its mark on the 1998 regime change and extend into the subsequent post-authoritarian transition.
SECOND PART

CRISIS AND REGIME CHANGE, 1997-1998
CHAPTER THREE

FACTIONALISM, REFORM AND THE END OF SULTANISM: 
THE MILITARY'S ROLE IN THE FALL OF THE NEW ORDER

The introduction to this study has presented a number of theoretical approaches to explain the possible complications in establishing democratic control over the armed forces in transitional states. Most of these models are concerned with historical legacies and particular developments in the post-authoritarian polity. The introduction also emphasised, however, that the character of regime change is a crucial determinant for the outcome of civil-military reform processes. In particular, the role of the armed forces in the transfer of power from the previous regime to its successor government plays a significant role in shaping the conditions of civil-military interactions in the democratic transition. In Indonesia, the engagement of the armed forces in the events leading to Soeharto’s resignation has been critical in two aspects. Both of these aspects are closely related to the dynamics of military factionalism, but cover different analytical areas. In more general terms, the success of moderate elements in the military in negotiating an intra-systemic transfer of authority from Soeharto to his deputy helped to prevent the complete breakdown of the regime typically associated with the fall of sultanistic systems. Linz and Stepan asserted that sultanistic polities ‘present an opportunity for democratic transition because, should the ruler (and his or her family) be overthrown or assassinated, the sultanistic regime collapses’.

One possible explanation for the fact that this total disintegration of the regime infrastructure did not occur in Indonesia is Aspinall’s proposition that Soeharto’s system was not purely sultanistic but included strong authoritarian features. Aspinall suggested that the combination between sultanistic and authoritarian characteristics resulted in a ‘democratic transition (that) occurred in a tumultuous way, involving substantial mobilization and a sharp break with the authoritarian system, yet (...) produced successor governments marked by strong underlying continuity with the Suharto era.’ This chapter will argue, however, that in addition to such structural factors, the political behavior of moderate military leaders was equally crucial in producing a regime change.

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1 Linz and Stepan 1996: 70. Linz and Stepan explained that the low level of institutionalisation in sultanistic regimes makes them particularly vulnerable to violent overthrows, and power is typically transferred to provisional governments composed of non-regime forces. In contrast, the stronger roles of political institutions under authoritarian rule, both within and outside the regime, provide the preconditions for a negotiated, institutional transfer of power to a successor regime. Linz and Stepan 1996: 52-53.

that avoided the complete collapse of the existing system. Consequently, the first post-Soeharto government consisted of large segments of the New Order elite, impacting on the pace and depth of reform efforts, particularly in the area of civil-military relations.

The second important influence of military factionalism on the character of regime change is related to the societal perceptions of the armed forces during the political crisis of 1997 and 1998. The failure of the 'hardliners', who had preferred a more confrontational approach to oppositional forces and suggested that martial law be declared, not only defused political tensions and facilitated the intra-systemic regime change discussed above. It also pointed to the fact that, for the first time, factionalism in the armed forces had linked up with the discourse on Soeharto's departure from politics. In the eyes of many Indonesians, the emergence of a military group favoring an orderly end to sultanistic rule, and its eventual victory over the 'hardliners', reflected the gradual process of dissociation between the military and Soeharto that had begun in the 1980s. The outcome of the factional dispute confirmed the perception within large segments of the political elite and society that moderate officers in the military had assisted in removing Soeharto from power, and that they had done so by sidelining the most problematic elements within the armed forces. Accordingly, the marginalisation of officers seen as most responsible for the military excesses during Soeharto's rule appeared to satisfy some of the societal demands for change in the post-authoritarian military, and public pressure for more wide-ranging reform decreased as a result. The following chapter will develop the two main arguments outlined above by discussing the factionalism that marked the political behavior of the military and its various sub-groups during the crisis of 1997 and 1998. Interpreting military politics within the context of Soeharto's rapid political decline, the chapter will point to the consequences of the intra-military conflicts for the nature of regime change and the likelihood of successful civil-military reforms in the post-authoritarian transition.

I. COMPETITION AND LOYALTY: MILITARY FACTIONALISM IN THE NEW ORDER

Factionalism was a common phenomenon in the armed forces under the New Order regime. The divisions within the ranks had very diverse, and often overlapping, demarcation lines. To begin with, there were important ethnic differences, with Javanese and officers from the Outer Islands competing for key posts. Rivalries also occurred between soldiers attached to the large military
commands, especially the Siliwangi, Diponegoro and Brawijaya units on Java. Generational differences created tensions between the ‘generation of 1945’, the transitional officers and the ‘younger’ generations trained in the Magelang academy. Officers from the intelligence services were engaged in conflicts with the rest of the armed forces as well as among themselves. The ‘financial’ officers involved in running business-related and political operations had major differences with more ‘professional’ military leaders. Religio-political divisions related to the controversy over abangan ‘syncretism’ in Soeharto’s inner circle in the 1970s, the prominence of Christian officers in the 1980s and the perceived split between ‘Islamic’ and ‘nationalist’ commanders in the 1990s. Finally, personal patronage networks were also important, such as the close ties of some officers to the palace that marked many of the intra-military rivalries of the mid-1990s.

For much of the New Order period, the factionalism within the armed forces did not result in the kind of serious cleavages that various authors have described as causes for the destabilisation, and ultimately degeneration, of authoritarian regimes. The divisions within the Brazilian armed forces between moderates and hardliners, for example, contributed significantly to the erosion of the military government in the early and mid-1980s. Similarly, severe regional splits within the Nigerian and South Korean militaries accompanied the rise and fall of several authoritarian regimes in these countries. In Indonesia, on the other hand, most of the ethnic, regional and generational divisions could be managed by higher levels of centralisation and the increased rate of reshuffles in the officer corps since the 1970s. In fact, the factionalism in the Indonesian armed forces from the mid-1980s onwards was largely an instrument used by Soeharto to consolidate his rule. The creation and cultivation of intra-military competition ensured that no camp within the armed forces grew strong enough to challenge Soeharto’s grip on the presidency. The competitive atmosphere also encouraged rival groups to report indications of disloyalty among their counterparts directly to Soeharto, feeding the intra-regime intelligence network developed by the President in order to detect potential threats to his regime. The positions of ABRI Commander and Army Chief of Staff were at the centre of Soeharto’s efforts to engineer conflicts over authority and resources, with the incumbents in both posts seeking presidential

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3 These regional rivalries did not always coincide with ethnic identities, however. In the Siliwangi Command of West Java, for example, many non-Sundanese officers were prominent.
6 Kammen and Chandra 1999: 83.
backing to decide the competition in their favor. In major reshuffles, Soeharto paid careful
attention to the 'equitable' distribution of key positions among competing factions, balancing
their interests and consolidating their loyalty to his government.

One of the most important elements of New Order military factionalism was the forming of
strategic alliances between competing officers and civilian socio-political forces. Military leaders
sought to advance their interests by building civilian support groups, hoping that their attachment
to and influence on key political constituencies would convince Soeharto of their indispensability
in mobilising support for the regime. These attachments were not necessarily of an ideological
nature, but reflected perceptions within competing groups of Soeharto's political priorities. The
formation of alliances between senior officers and ultra-modernist Islamic groups in the late
1980s and early 1990s, for instance, was a direct reaction to Soeharto's campaign against the
Moerdan group. Other officers believed, however, that Soeharto had no intention of 'Islamising'
the armed forces and was determined to keep a stable balance within the military. Accordingly,
these officers aligned themselves with civilian opponents of modernist groups, largely in the
traditionalist Muslim community. Geoffrey Robinson has asserted that the formation of civilian-
military alliances caused by intra-military factionalism has 'enhanced the power of civil society',
and sometimes even allowed civilians to 'challenge the military or the regime itself'. This
enhancement of civil society may have occurred occasionally as a by-product, but in most cases,
the alliances focused on promoting the interests of both partners within the regime by gaining
access to Soeharto's patronage system. In the very few instances that civilian-military alliances
carried ideas of political change to advance their positions, these were largely aimed at
weakening competitors within the New Order state rather than at presenting conceptual
alternatives to Soeharto's rule.

The successful isolation of reformist ideas from high-level competition within the armed forces
allowed Soeharto to turn military factionalism from a potential source of instability into an
instrument of regime maintenance. Criticism of Soeharto's sultanistic leadership emerged in the
lower and middle ranks in the mid-1990s, but was not part of the competition within the elite. The

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7 Officers were under strong pressure, however, to provide evidence to Soeharto that their alliances with
civilians served the interests of the regime and were not designed to undermine it. Particularly in the 1970s
and 1980s, Soeharto was highly suspicious of military officers who built support bases outside the military
to pursue their own interests more than those of the government. The increased integration of civilian
groups into the New Order in the 1990s eased some of these concerns, but Soeharto remained alert to
indications that officers might turn their cooperation with civilians against him.

8 Geoffrey Robinson, 'Indonesia: On a New Course?', in: Mutiah Alagappa (editor), Coercion and
Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia, Stanford University Press, Stanford
2001: 239.
various factions in the top brass, despite their concerns about the military's loss of political influence and widespread dissatisfaction with the government, viewed Soeharto as the key to advancing their careers, and feared the complete collapse of the Dual Function should he be removed from office. Thus it needed a change in the substance and quality of intra-military divisions for them to pose a serious threat to the regime. Soeharto's control over the armed forces was in danger if one or more of the competing factions utilised reformist ideas, and ultimately notions of regime change, as instruments of inter-elite conflict, and if alternatives to Soeharto's leadership began to offer higher rewards than continued loyalty. The increasing social and political tensions of the late New Order regime provided the platform for such a scenario, but it needed the dramatic shock of the crisis unfolding in the second half of 1997 to change the nature of military factionalism dramatically and elevate previously isolated discourses on political reform to the centre of intra-military divisions.

II. CONFLICT AND REFORM: THE DEBATE WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES ON THE 1997 GENERAL ELECTIONS

The political landscape of Indonesia ahead of the 1997 elections showed classic indicators of an autocratic regime that was approaching its end. To begin with, Soeharto's age (he had turned 75 in 1996) played a crucial role in fuelling expectations that his political departure was near. While Soeharto was still the epicentre of political authority, he suffered from a number of setbacks from the beginning of 1996. His wife and key political confidante Siti Hartinah, popularly referred to as Tien Soeharto, died in April 1996. Shortly afterwards, Soeharto spent some time in Germany for medical treatment, sparking speculation about his health and possible succession scenarios. The sudden vulnerability of Soeharto's rule encouraged critical forces both within and outside the government to intensify their political activity. Most significantly, the chairwoman of the secular-nationalist PDI, Megawati Soekarnoputri, openly challenged her replacement by a regime-appointed party official. The public protests against her removal provided a platform for criticism of Soeharto's leadership. In July 1996, after several weeks of anti-regime speeches in front of Megawati's PDI headquarters in Jakarta, the military mobilised thugs and supporters of the new, government-backed chairman to storm and occupy the party offices. The attack led to the worst

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rioting in the city since 1974, leaving at least 5 people dead and sending hundreds of Megawati followers to prison.\footnote{10}

The unrest not only indicated the increasing opposition towards the repressive methods of the regime, but created cracks within the political system of the New Order. Megawati's call on PDI members to ignore the instructions of the new party leadership was largely obeyed, undermining the very three-party system that had supplied Soeharto's regime with a modicum of formal legitimacy. In addition, a series of ethnic, religious and social riots and clashes occurred throughout 1996 and 1997, with government offices, banks and Chinese businesses being the primary targets.\footnote{11} The power erosion typical for late sultanistic regimes, coinciding with ruptures in the previously static polity and increasing levels of social unrest, challenged the key components of the New Order, including the armed forces, to define their level of commitment towards the embattled ruler. With the general elections approaching, they had to make decisions that would neither threaten their position in the regime nor exclude them from participation in a possible post-Soeharto government.

**Hardliners and Moderates: Military Factionalism Ahead of the 1997 Elections**

The internal military discourse on the general elections catalysed the emergence of two large factions in the senior ranks of the armed forces with divergent political views and highly antagonistic personal relationships.\footnote{12} Despite significant levels of heterogeneity within them, the
composition of the two camps remained largely intact throughout the crisis that led to Soeharto’s resignation. The split between the factions was triggered by a controversy regarding the extent to which the armed forces were prepared to support Golkar in the upcoming poll. The first camp consisted of hardliners who demanded unconditional military support for Golkar’s electoral machine and viewed any criticism of Soeharto’s leadership as an act of subversion. The hardliners commonly blamed the increasing societal dissatisfaction with the New Order on internal and external provocateurs who deserved swift and uncompromising ‘treatment’ by the security forces. Guided by a militaristic paradigm of solving political conflicts, their conceptual thinking rejected institutional changes to the New Order system for the foreseeable future and saw a reduction of military engagement in politics as neither necessary nor appropriate.

Prominent members of the hardline faction were Army Chief of Staff General Hartono, a close confidant of Soeharto’s daughter and leading Golkar politician Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana; Commander-in-Chief General Feisal Tanjung; and the head of Kopassus (Special Forces) Maj.Gen. Prabowo Subianto, Soeharto’s son-in-law. The three generals had influential patronage networks below them, with a large number of regional commanders, staff officers and intelligence operators depending on their favours and protection. There were important fissures within the hardline faction, particularly over appointments and resources, but the increasing pressure on the regime ensured a sufficient level of solidity and coherence. An important bond between the various components of the group was their cooperation with ultra-modernist Muslim organisations, which aimed at building up constituents willing to defend the regime against mounting societal dissent. They were also strongly opposed to former ABRI chief Benny Moerdani and his patronage of non-Muslim officers, a policy that many of them felt had hampered their careers in the past.

association with one of the two broad factions, or remained neutral and cultivated alternative relationships or patronage connections.

Prabowo had a reputation of being a highly professional but ill-tempered soldier. Coming from a well-connected political and diplomatic family, he had grown up abroad and spoke several languages fluently. His tendency for emotional outbursts, however, was the subject of wide discussion within the ranks and the political elite. In 1974, he graduated from his military academy class with a one-year delay because of a conflict with a superior. After marrying into the Soeharto family, he became widely known as the President’s ‘special envoy’ for sensitive political and military tasks, dealing with officers and affairs way above his rank. For Prabowo’s reputation in the political elite, see Theodore Friend, *Indonesian Destinies*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London 2003: 324.

The most important of these divisions was that between Feisal and Hartono. Despite their very similar views on how to deal with opposition to the regime, they were engaged in a deep personal rivalry over the position of Commander-in-Chief. Hartono was widely known to be interested in the job, and with his retirement age approaching, he needed a quick decision on the matter. Feisal, on the other hand, was determined to stay on at least until March 1998, when he could expect a cabinet appointment.
The second group was equally diverse, but was held together by a joint sense of political
moderatism and flexibility. Members of this faction viewed discontent with the government as a
result of complex social processes that demanded political solutions instead of repressive
measures against critics. Despite its intolerance towards the militant fringes of the opposition, the
moderate group believed that there were legitimate complaints over the static nature of the New
Order and its inability to accommodate public calls for institutional change. The moderate
officers also had a mixed perception of the role of the armed forces in the regime. While they
agreed that regime participation was important for political stability and the institutional interests
of the military, they feared that tooclose an identification with the government could damage the
reputation of the armed forces. Accordingly, the group argued against open support for Golkar in
the 1997 elections, insisting that it was not the mission of the armed forces to support a particular
political party. The moderate faction comprised three major subgroups: the reluctant reformers,
the gradual reformers, and the rapid reformers. The reluctant reformers formed the largest
element in the moderate group. Its members included officers with strong personal ties to
Soeharto and his family, but in contrast to the hardliners, they were prepared to adjust their
position vis-à-vis the regime to changing social and political contexts. Wiranto, then Commander
of Kostrad, was the most prominent leader of this subgroup. Having served as Soeharto’s adjutant
for four years, he was seen as destined to replace Feisal Tanjung as head of the armed forces
when the latter’s term expired in 1998. Wiranto felt a deep personal affection for Soeharto, but
understood that the longevity of his rule was a source of concern among ordinary Indonesians.
This flexibility in accommodating societal developments turned Wiranto and officers in his
patronage network into barometers of the political crisis. They were certain to back Soeharto as
long as societal resistance to the continuation of his rule was low; but a drastic drop in public
support for the President was likely to reduce their willingness to defend the regime at all cost.

In contrast to the reactive attitude of the reluctant reformers, the other two subgroups in the
moderate faction actively developed sharp critiques of the New Order government and
contemplated scenarios for an Indonesia without Soeharto. The gradual reformers viewed
Soeharto as a major problem for the armed forces and society as a whole, but were well aware
that they were not in a position to challenge his rule. They wanted to continue the gradual
disengagement of the armed forces from the regime, isolating the military from the growing
discontent with Soeharto’s government. Expecting that regime change was most likely to occur

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15 Wiranto had been presidential adjutant between 1989 and 1993. After his term in the palace, his career
skyrocketed. The soft-spoken, low-profile officer became Chief of Staff of the Jakarta Command in 1993,
its Commander in 1995, and Commander of Kostrad in 1996. Despite his moderate image, however, he had
shown no indication that he had any political vision beyond defending Soeharto’s grip on power.
through the President’s death or voluntary resignation, the proponents of gradual reform projected their ideas of opening up the tightly controlled political system into the post-Soeharto polity. While stopping short of suggesting an unrestricted democratic system, they were prepared to introduce more political rights and greater institutional transparency. The group consisted largely of younger officers and was represented by Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who in late 1996 was regional Commander in South Sumatra. Regarded as ‘military intellectuals’, most members of the group had served for long periods at the military’s staff and command schools in Bandung, providing them with the time, resources and distance to reflect on the future of ABRI’s engagement with the regime. In addition, some among them had extensive foreign experience, including study in the US. The same professional profile defined the third subgroup in the moderate faction, the rapid reformers. This very small group, under the leadership of Agus Wirahadikusumah, believed that the military should take a more active role in catalysing the process of regime change. Bitter over what he saw as his marginalisation by officers close to the palace, Wirahadikusumah thought that waiting for Soeharto’s departure could come at a high cost for the armed forces. Instead, he proposed that the military present a comprehensive reform package that included Soeharto’s orderly resignation. In 1996 and 1997, the differences between gradual and rapid reformers were tiny. Both groups were too far from the power center to influence high-level decision-making, convincing them to foster their cooperation in discussion circles and seminars instead. For the time being, they concentrated on supplying advice to the reluctant reformers and consolidating their position in the debates with the hardliners.

Support or Neutrality? The Intra-Military Debate on Golkar

The dispute over the role of the armed forces in the 1997 general elections brought the conflict between hardliners and moderates into the open. Let.Gen. Soeyono, then Chief of Staff of General Affairs, recalled how the two factions clashed at an ABRI leadership meeting in October 1995, bickering over Hartono’s proposal to support Golkar in the ballot:

“Hartono got upset with Ma’ruf (Moh. Ma’ruf, Chief of Staff of Socio-Political Affairs, M.M.). Ma’ruf had just recommended that ABRI remain neutral in the general elections. That really enraged Hartono. He shouted at Ma’ruf, and claimed that he had his own political agenda, and that kind of stuff. It got really tense. Pak Tanto (Navy Chief of Staff Admiral Tanto Kuswanto, M.M.) had to intervene and

17 Interview with Agus Wirahadikusumah, Jakarta 6 January 1998.
Hartono did indeed step up his efforts to strengthen ABRI’s institutional ties with Golkar. In March 1996, he declared his ‘personal allegiance’ to Siti Hardiyanti in her capacity as Deputy Chairwoman of the Golkar Central Board. He began to tour several pesantren at Siti Hardiyanti’s side, wearing Golkar’s yellow jacket and giving campaign-like speeches. In late 1996, he played a significant role in organising the reconciliation between Abdurrahman Wahid and Soeharto, and subsequently lobbied the NU leader to open his community to the Golkar campaign. By early 1997, the Army Chief of Staff was seen as a key political player, balancing his contacts to the Muslim community, Golkar politicians and the presidential family.

The controversy between the two factions provided important insights into the politics of factionalism within the armed forces. Most importantly, officers from both camps exercised considerable pressure on their subordinates to endorse their individual viewpoints and affiliations. They offered speedy promotion in case of obedience, and threatened to obstruct the careers of disloyal commanders. Djadja Suparman, then Chief of Staff at the South Sumatran Sriwijaya Command, reported that

“Hartono was incredibly blunt about all this. He called people up and said ‘Hey, I can promote you to such and such post. But you have to help me. Golkar needs our support. I am sure you know what your duty is.’ (…) Most of us, however, just ignored him. I felt that he wouldn’t last long.”

The second element in the factional competition was association with civilian partners in order to build societal support and launch attacks against rivals. Hartono, for example, supported the Center for Policy Development Studies (CPDS), a think tank staffed largely with researchers from a modernist Islamic background. Ahead of the 1997 elections, the organisation published a paper that accused Wiranto of planning Soeharto’s downfall. Wiranto, for his part, commented

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that the paper ‘contained nothing but lies and garbage’. The badmouthing of competitors had, as the incident showed, turned into an important feature of intra-military factionalism in the armed forces in the late 1990s.

The intensity of the factionalism required both camps to consolidate and sharpen their conceptual views. Most importantly, Hartono’s militancy in supporting Golkar encouraged the gradual and rapid reformers to overcome some of their internal differences and formulate more coherent critiques of hardline positions. Wirahadikusumah acknowledged that ‘retrospectively, I think we should be grateful to Hartono because he pushed us to address our own divisions and increase our efforts to package reform ideas in a more presentable way.’ Accordingly, Wirahadikusumah organised an army seminar in June 1996, at the height of the PDI crisis and Hartono’s campaign for Golkar. The seminar criticised the political ‘superstructure’, i.e. the government, for excessive intervention in socio-political life, nepotistic and corrupt practices, and inconsistency in policies. Significantly, papers presented at the seminar suggested that the armed forces mediate between the ‘superstructure’ and society, effectively defining ABRI as a non-participant in the New Order regime. Based on their analysis, the gradual and rapid reformers developed a new doctrinal concept for ABRI, which was discussed within the ranks in the first half of 1997. The concept contained four points: first, ABRI had to accustom itself to the idea that it was not always to be at the forefront of political developments; second, the concept of ‘occupying’ would be transformed into a concept of ‘influencing’; third, ABRI’s method of exerting influence would be changed from a direct to an indirect way; and fourth, ABRI was ready for political role sharing with civilian forces. The four suggestions added up to what its authors called the ‘New Paradigm of ABRI’s Dual Function’. The reluctant reformers under Wiranto did not endorse the concept, however. Despite its deep antagonism towards the hardliners, Wiranto’s group saw no reason to reformulate the military’s doctrine.

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The military’s preparations for and its conduct of the general elections indicated that the armed forces leadership was still dominated by hardline officers. In February 1997, shortly before the polls, Feisal Tanjung emphatically rejected the results of a study conducted by the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI, Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia) in which it had proposed the gradual disengagement of the military from political affairs.26 The core themes of the hardline discourse also became apparent at an ABRI leadership meeting in April 1997. There, the military top brass condemned the emergence of new social organisations with leftist orientations, the uncontrolled circulation of pamphlets, the publication of books not in line with Pancasila, and the proliferation of NGOs with a tendency to ‘political adventurism’.27 The gradual and rapid reformers had obviously very little influence on the official debates in the immediate military elite, and the reluctant reformers under Wiranto remained anxious not to raise suspicions on Soeharto’s side over possible moves by their group against the regime. The only success the reluctant reformers had was the abortion of Hartono’s campaign for direct electoral support of Golkar. Announcing the compromise between the various factions, Feisal Tanjung suggested that the relationship between individual officers and the government party was of a personal rather than an institutional nature. The armed forces backed Golkar indirectly, however, by removing one of the greatest obstacles to another landslide victory for the regime: the ‘Mega-Bintang’ movement.28 The initiative had been launched by PPP officials who hoped to gain the support of Megawati loyalists determined neither to vote for the government-sanctioned PDI nor for Golkar. The movement gained considerable momentum in the national media and some urban centres, but the security apparatus dispersed Mega-Bintang crowds wherever they emerged.29 Towards the end of the campaign, the initiative had largely collapsed, and the way was open for Golkar to claim its 6th successive triumph in New Order electoral history.

28 The term ‘Mega-Bintang’ suggested an alliance of Megawati’s PDI and PPP. The Islamic PPP had adopted the ‘Bintang’ (Star) as its party symbol in the 1980s.
29 Mudrick Malkhan Sangidoe, the chairman of the PPP branch in Solo and widely seen as the leader of the movement, witnessed how his supporters were arrested en masse: ‘Police and military officers came to our campaigns, and asked us to go home. They said Mega-Bintang was not a registered political party, and therefore we were not allowed to campaign. When we refused, they arrested our supporters, mostly students, young people. (…) They demanded that our supporters hand over their Mega-Bintang t-shirts, only then they would be released. I protested. I asked them: “Didn’t you say ABRI would remain neutral in the elections?” They only looked at me and said: “Orders from above.”’ Interview with Mudrick Malkhan Sangidoe, Solo May 1997. See also Mohammad Thoyibi, Menentang Arogansi Kekuasaan: Kasus Mega Bintang, Solo 1999: 43; and ‘Lakonnya Apa, Bung? Mega-Bintang…’, D&R 17 May 1997.
Triumph or Decline? The Post-Election Landscape

The result of the 1997 general elections exposed the growing gap between the political sentiments in large sections of the population and the 'theatre politics' performed by the New Order establishment. Despite high levels of social unrest, widespread criticism of corruption and the inability of the elite to absorb demands for reform, Golkar won 74 percent of the votes and the largest majority in Parliament since the creation of the New Order. Golkar chairman Harmoko presented the outcome of the polls as an unprecedented vote of confidence in the regime, but in reality it delivered the ultimate proof of its inherent failure to accommodate change. The clearest indication of this failure was not the ridiculously inflated result for Golkar, but the almost complete disappearance of the PDI. Only three percent of the electorate supported the party, a decline of almost 12 percent. The majority of nationalist voters had expressed their resentment towards government intervention in party affairs by withdrawing their support for one of the main pillars of Soeharto’s restricted party system. Even the President appeared to be uncomfortable with the election results and the way several government officials claimed credit for them. Only one week after the elections, Soeharto dismissed Harmoko from his post as Minister of Information, and filled the vacancy with General Hartono.

Hartono’s departure from the army was followed by the most extensive reshuffle in the armed forces since early 1995. The reshuffle improved the position of the moderates, with the leading hardliner Hartono replaced by Wiranto as Army Chief of Staff. The factional affiliations of Subagyo HS, who was installed as Wiranto’s Deputy, and Sugiono, who became Commander of Kostrad, were difficult to establish, but they too had opposed Hartono’s electoral support for Golkar. The hardliners defended their grip on key positions, however, with Feisal still in command of ABRI Headquarters and Prabowo retaining his control of Kopassus. In addition to the factional implications, personal links with Soeharto had once again proved the most crucial criteria for promotion. Officers who had served in the palace either as adjutant (Wiranto), in the Presidential Security Squad (Subagyo), or both (Sugiono) were elevated in the promotion, and Prabowo as well as the head of National Police, former presidential adjutant General Dibyo Widodo, remained central figures in the security apparatus. Across the factional divisions, the

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armed forces were in the hands of officers with long-standing personal ties to the Soeharto family.\textsuperscript{32}

The contrast between the mechanical conduct of the elections and the general mood in the country pointed to signs of decay within the regime. The cracks in the elite that O’Donnell and Schmitter have identified as the major cause for degenerating authoritarian systems were clearly visible.\textsuperscript{33} The destruction of the PDI in the elections exposed ruptures not only in the elite, but in the whole political framework. The loss of credibility in the political system of the New Order cast a shadow over Soeharto’s re-election through the MPR scheduled for March 1998. In addition, the factionalism in the armed forces had facilitated the emergence of reformist military elements that incorporated ideas of regime change into their conceptual thinking. These ideas, while unable to penetrate the decision-making process of the military elite, had the potential of influencing the attitude of the largest subgroup in the moderate faction, the reluctant reformers under Wiranto. The group had so far extended firm support to Soeharto, but a further destabilisation of the New Order polity was likely to change that.

III. MILITARY FACTIONALISM IN A DECLINING REGIME: ABRI, POLITICAL LEGITIMACY AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

The New Order state of mid-1997 was crippled by inter-elite conflict, social unrest and political stagnation. Despite old divisions and newly emerging ruptures in its political system, however, the Soeharto regime appeared stable enough to neutralise serious threats to its rule. The single most important factor in this was the continued economic growth. The New Order’s rise to power in 1966 had been underpinned by promises of political stability and economic development, and for most of the time, the government had delivered. Anne Booth contended that ‘whatever its exact dimensions, a prolonged and broad-based improvement in living standards under the New Order did take place.’\textsuperscript{34} In the eyes of many Indonesians, the robust economic growth had

\textsuperscript{32} In a separate reshuffle a month after Hartono’s replacement, Syarwan Hamid left his post as Chief of Staff of Socio-Political Affairs. He was sent to the parliament and finally became Deputy Speaker of the House in October. Syarwan’s replacement in ABRI was Let.Gen. Yunus Yosfiah, an officer who made no secret of his admiration for Habibie who, like him, originated from Sulawesi. He thought that Habibie’s contribution to the nation’s development was ‘extraordinary’. Interview with Let.Gen. Yunus Yosfiah, Jakarta 22 November 1997. See also ‘Syarwan Diganti Mayjen Yunus Yosfiah’, Bernas 15 July 1997; ‘Syarwan Datang Senayan Bergoyang’, Forum Keadilan 28 July 1997.

\textsuperscript{33} O’Donnel and Schmitter 1986: 19.

justified restrictions on political activity and individual freedoms, and even supported certain levels of tolerance towards corruption in the elite. The economic strength of the regime, however, made it politically vulnerable. With the legitimacy of the government tied to its economic performance, any significant disruption in the economy was certain to alter the political attitudes of large segments of society.

The role of economic development in legitimising non-democratic forms of governance was a central theme in the political thinking of the armed forces elite, but it was even more relevant to Soeharto’s sultanistic rule. The gradual disengagement of the armed forces from politics since the 1980s had left Soeharto in the center of a personalised web of patronage networks. Consequently, the public was much more likely to identify Soeharto as the main cause of economic difficulties than any other component of the regime. The business empire of the presidential family had been exposed to public criticism for some time, but was certain to become the focus of public outrage if economic conditions deteriorated. The emergence of a regime-critical discourse in segments of the armed forces provided the public with additional reasons for differentiating between the President and the institutions he used to stabilise his government. Thus, when the economic crisis began to affect Indonesia in July 1997, following the float of the Thai baht and the fall of the Malaysian ringgit, Soeharto was the most vulnerable target in the search for the causes of this downturn. The crisis, which initially appeared to have hit the monetary sector only, soon spiraled into political dimensions. Economic observers noted that Soeharto’s anachronistic system was incompatible with the requirements of global markets, and pointed to the uncertainty of Soeharto’s succession as a major reason for the massive capital outflow. The sharp drop in the stock market and the Indonesian currency paralysed the real sector, with foreign debts increasing, investment projects cancelled or postponed, and consumption declining. Unemployment rose, the numbers of corporate bankruptcies exploded, and inflation reached levels last seen in the mid-1970s. By the end of the year, the free fall of the economy was accelerated by a drought that cut back agricultural production.

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Crisis and Competition: The Wiranto-Prabowo Rivalry

While critics largely focused on the institutional inflexibility of Soeharto’s rule, the economic decline also affected the legitimacy of military participation in politics. The armed forces had traditionally presented their role in securing economic growth as a key reason for their political engagement, but the sudden downturn in the economy challenged this claim. The tight control of society, previously viewed as an important factor in containing political conflicts, was now widely blamed for the lack of creativity and competitiveness of Indonesian businesses. With central components of its doctrine eroded by the crisis, the various factions in the military were confronted with difficult strategic choices as far as their relations with Soeharto were concerned. For the time being, unconditional defence of the President appeared as the only realistic option for both the hardline faction and the group of reluctant reformers. From their perspective, the risk that Soeharto’s fall would end the Dual Function was seen as more harmful than the political cost of maintaining the regime. The gradual and radical reformers, on the other hand, were not in a position to influence the decision-making in the top brass. Susilo was promoted in August 1997 to the post of Assistant to the Chief of Staff of Socio-Political Affairs, but was still unable to implant ideas of substantial reform into the political attitudes of the most senior military elite. Agus Wirahadikusumah, then Deputy Assistant of General Planning, felt frustrated by the conservatism of his superiors, both within the hardline faction and the reluctant reformers:

“The world was collapsing around them (the ABRI leadership, M.M.), with Soeharto clearly responsible for what was happening, but all they talked about was giving him his fifth star. I couldn’t believe it.”

Before conferring a fifth star on Soeharto and declaring him a ‘Grand General’ in early October, the ABRI leadership had announced in August that it would re-nominate Soeharto for the presidency. Outgoing Chief of Staff of Socio-Political Affairs, Let.Gen. Syarwan Hamid, explained that ABRI had decided to put its trust in the President as the majority of Indonesians wanted to see a continuation of his rule. At the same time, ABRI backed Soeharto’s request for the restitution of a 1988 MPR decree giving the President special powers to deal with security

threats in emergency situations. Furthermore, ABRI rejected suggestions to limit presidential terms to two periods, the idea coming closest to public criticism of Soeharto at that early stage of the crisis.

The caution exercised by both factions suggested that the system built by Soeharto was still strong enough to detect and prevent disloyalty towards him. The norms and rules of that system continued to dictate the dynamics of intra-military conflict. In the second half of 1997, competition within the armed forces focused on the position of Commander-in-Chief. Feisal Tanjung was expected to be replaced soon, and there were only two prospective candidates for the job: Wiranto, the Army Chief of Staff, and Prabowo Subianto, who was still only a two-star general, but had much more influence within ABRI than his rank suggested. Evidently, the hardline and moderate factions were now in open competition for the leadership of the armed forces. Throughout August and September, rumours supported Prabowo's hopes of a promotion to Chief of Staff of General Affairs and a third star, therefore qualifying him for the top post. But the promotion never came. Prabowo later reported that the chemistry between him and Wiranto was bad, blaming cultural differences between the traditional Javanese villager and the Western-educated intellectual. Despite the relevance of Prabowo's observation, it appears that their rivalry had much more to do with factional affiliations and personal ambitions: as Soeharto rarely changed Commander-in-Chiefs before the end of their five-year term, only one of them could make it to the top, with the loser likely to be sidelined under the leadership of the winner.

The competition between Wiranto and Prabowo over the armed forces leadership was accompanied by the same features of military factionalism that had marked many of the intra-

42 'Pangab: "ABRI Tak Ikut-ikutkan"', *Jawa Pos* 30 August 1997. Soeharto himself made his rejection of any restriction on presidential terms very clear. Like Feisal, he referred to the constitution that knew no such limits. See 'Soeharto Rejects Call to Limit Presidential Term', *Singapore Straits Times* 30 August 1997.
43 In September, close Prabowo friend Syafrie Syamsuddin had been promoted to Jakarta Commander, and other Prabowo allies led several regional commands. Syafrie Syamsuddin was a classmate of Prabowo, graduating from the military academy in 1974. From 1974 to 1984, Syafrie served in the Presidential Security Squad, and returned to command its Group A in 1993. Another Prabowo ally in an important position was Zacky Anwar Makarim as head of BIA, who was appointed in August 1997.
46 Commanders-in-Chief were typically replaced shortly before or after the 5-yearly sessions of the MPR. That was the case with M.Yusuf (1978-1983), Benny Moerdani (1983-1988) and Try Soetrisno (1988-1993), with the only exception of Edi Sudradjat, who spent a short time on the post in 1993 before being transferred to the Department of Defence and Security.
military conflicts of the 1990s: the promotion of loyalists to key positions, the establishment of links with civilian supporters, and the badmouthing of competitors. The crisis, however, catalysed the political relevance of the rivalry. It was obvious that Soeharto would look favourably upon military officers whose political activities and interactions assisted in overcoming the crisis. Prabowo apparently believed that Soeharto wanted to shift the blame for the crisis to Chinese tycoons and confront his critics with hardline methods of repression. Accordingly, Prabowo strengthened his links with Islamic groups on the far right of the political spectrum, and encouraged them to promote their traditional views that Chinese rent-seekers had undermined the Indonesian economy. At the same time, he ordered a special unit in Kopassus to prepare for the kidnapping of several political activists who had spoken out against the re-election of Soeharto. Wiranto, on the other hand, consolidated his relationship with the main opponent of Prabowo’s civilian allies, Abdurrahman Wahid. Wiranto viewed the alliance with the moderate Muslim leader as an effective instrument to appease the critics of the regime and demonstrate its openness towards ideas of change. According to Abdurrahman, Wiranto was not convinced that Soeharto endorsed Prabowo’s tactics of political radicalisation and physical violence against opponents to restabilise the regime:

"Wiranto sent his confidants to me to convey messages. Wiranto said that Prabowo was taking a very dangerous path. Of course I agreed. Pak Harto is in trouble, and we have to make sure that the country stays safe. (...)."48

Despite their close ties with Soeharto, however, neither Wiranto nor Prabowo could predict with absolute certainty the strategies and methods the President had in mind for solving the economic and political difficulties. Thus the political manoeuvres of both officers were conducted in secretive ways for most of the first period of the crisis between July and December 1997.49

The divisions between Prabowo and Wiranto were not, despite the claims of many observers, an indication of a religious split within the military. Robert Hefner, for example, suggested that Prabowo was a member of the ‘ascendant “Islamic” wing of the armed forces.50 Opposed to this ‘green’ faction was the ‘red-and-white’ group, which Hefner identified as ‘nationalist’. It appears, however, that the political alliances both Prabowo and Wiranto built were to a much larger extent

47 According to Fadli Zon, one of the key contact persons between Prabowo and Islamic groups, Prabowo increased the frequency of his meetings with ultra-modernist organisations as the crisis intensified, citing his ‘concern for the future of the nation’. Interview with Fadli Zon, Jakarta 14 April 1999.
48 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Jakarta 17 December 1997.
49 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Jakarta 17 December 1997. Wiranto asked Abdurrahman to keep their communication and cooperation confidential until the MPR session scheduled for March.
50 Hefner 2000: 151.
shaped by their respective hardline and moderate military paradigms than by individual religio-ideological preferences. The major difference between these two paradigms was the degree to which the military was prepared to nurture and mobilise militant societal elements in defence of the regime, and was not related to the role of Islam in society or politics. Prabowo was hardly an Islamic radical, with his family rooted in the former PSI (Partai Sosialis Indonesia, Indonesian Socialist Party), ideals of Western education and acceptance of non-Muslims. Prabowo had learnt, however, that Islam could be a powerful instrument of political engineering, using it in the early 1990s to confront the remnants of the Moerdani group. Wiranto, on the other hand, was a practising Muslim, and not opposed to a greater role of Muslim groups in political life. What the two officers fought over at this stage of the crisis was the most suitable strategy to contain the mounting opposition to Soeharto's presidency, and they were bitterly opposed in their competition for the armed forces leadership. So far, neither the hardliner Prabowo nor the moderate Wiranto had contemplated political alternatives beyond Soeharto's rule to advance their interests. It needed a further escalation in the crisis to not only raise the stakes of the intra-military conflict, but to link the conflicting factions with Soeharto critics both inside and outside the armed forces.

IV. THE CRISIS ESCALATES: BETWEEN DIVISIVE RADICALISATION AND THE SEARCH FOR SOCIETAL SUPPORT

The second phase of the crisis, beginning in December 1997, saw a serious deterioration in economic and political conditions. Soeharto suffered a mild stroke in early December, sparking fresh oppositional speculation on the issue of his succession. The news led to negotiations between various oppositional forces over forming an alliance in case sudden opportunities should arise. Amien Rais had already declared his willingness to run for president in September, breaking the New Order taboo against proposing Soeharto's replacement. By January, Megawati joined the chorus, offering to lead the country if nobody more appropriate was found. While his re-election was

51 Prabowo's Islamic allies frequently noted his rather erratic observance of Muslim rituals, and wondered why he had chosen them as political associates. They agreed, however, that such considerations were secondary as long as Prabowo protected their interests. See 'Mengapa Prabowo Mendekat?', Sabili 2 September 1998.
53 'Mensesneg Moerdiono: Presiden Perlu Istirahat Penuh', Kompas 6 December 1997. A few days later, there were even rumors that Soeharto had died. See 'Presiden Tersenyum Saat Diisukan Wafat', Kompas 10 December 1997.
openly challenged, Soeharto aggravated the economic decline by presenting a highly unrealistic state budget in early January. Soeharto aggravated the economic decline by presenting a highly unrealistic state budget in early January. The subsequent free fall of the rupiah led to widespread panic, with supermarkets emptied by customers worried about the escalating prices of basic food items. Only days later, the IMF intervened, forcing Soeharto to sign a second letter of intent after he had failed to meet the benchmarks set in the first document agreed upon in October. At the same time, Soeharto shocked the political elite by announcing his candidate for the vice-presidency: B.J. Habibie, his Minister of Research and Technology, who was well known for spending big on ambitious but dubious development projects. Domestic political actors were stunned at this choice, as were international investors, who sent the rupiah to an all-time low.

**Blaming the Chinese? Habibie, Prabowo and Military Factionalism**

The nomination of Habibie sharpened the factional divisions within the officer corps. While he was disliked by the armed forces mainstream for his interference in ABRI’s procurement procedures and his political affiliation with Islamic groups, Habibie had several military associates. Feisal Tanjung, Syarwan Hamid and the then Chief of Staff of Socio-Political Affairs, Let.Gen. Yunus Yosfiah were known to be close to Habibie, but his most influential ally was Prabowo. Their relationship was mutually beneficial. On the one hand, Prabowo facilitated access for Habibie to ABRI’s formal command structure. He also provided Habibie with an additional link to the presidential family, as some of Soeharto’s children viewed the intimacy between the President and his favourite minister with suspicion. On the other hand, Prabowo hoped that the vice-presidential candidate would pave his way to the top post of the armed forces, either through input given to Soeharto or by succeeding the latter. According to Prabowo, Habibie used to dream aloud of his future presidency, under which Prabowo would be ‘armed forces chief, you’ll be four-star.’ It was this promise that formed the core of their alliance, and provided a crucial incentive for Prabowo to secure Soeharto’s re-election and, inseparably linked to it, the installation of his associate in the vice-presidency.

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55 Soeharto announced that economic growth would slow down to four percent in the year 1998/99, while most observers expected zero growth or even a contraction. The rupiah was calculated at 4000 to the dollar, although the currency was close to double-digit figures. See ‘Disiapkan 7 Program Reformasi Ekonomi’, *Suara Merdeka* 7 January 1998.


59 Habibie supporters appeared to confirm Prabowo’s hopes. AM Saefuddin, a close Habibie confidant in the PPP faction and later Minister of Agriculture in his cabinet, predicted that Soeharto would use special
Opposition to Habibie’s nomination was strong, and Prabowo played an active role in regime efforts aimed at defusing it. The international and domestic business community, especially Chinese conglomerates, objected to Habibie’s lack of economic credentials and his open support for indigenous, Muslim entrepreneurs. The campaign against Habibie was initiated by Sofyan Wanandi, a leading Chinese businessman and a central figure at the think-tank CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies), in which the retired Benny Moerdani still maintained an office. One week after Habibie’s likely nomination made headlines, Sofyan’s name was suddenly implicated in a bomb explosion in a low-class apartment in Central Jakarta. In the course of the investigations under Prabowo’s friend Syafrie Syamsuddin, ‘evidence’ was found that linked the incident to Sofyan. Sofyan was investigated, but the widely expected questioning of Benny Moerdani was called off. Violent demonstrators appeared at the CSIS building for two consecutive days, on 26 and 27 January, demanding Sofyan be brought to court and CSIS shut down. According to one leading CSIS executive, the demonstrations only stopped after he called Zacky Anwar Makarim, Prabowo’s associate in command of the military intelligence agency, BIA: ‘We knew that Prabowo and Zacky were behind the mobilisation of the crowds that threw stones at our office, and I told Zacky that this madness had to end, otherwise we would make his involvement in the whole affair public.’ If the hardliners had cornered CSIS, the moderates pledged to protect it. Wiranto ordered the Police to secure the CSIS offices, and the protests quickly died down.

The campaign against CSIS signalled the beginning of Prabowo’s accelerated efforts of mobilising the Muslim majority against what he portrayed as a Chinese conspiracy to bring down the New Order. On 23 January, Prabowo and his ABRI associates met with prominent modernist intellectuals and kiai at a large fast-breaking gathering at the Kopassus Headquarters. While his powers handed to him by the MPR to engineer the transition to Habibie in 2000, with Prabowo filling the then vacant vice-presidency. ‘Hanya Sekali Yang dengan Catatan’, *Jawa Pos* 3 March 1998.

CSIS was founded in the early 1970s by intellectuals of largely Catholic-Chinese descent and intelligence officers close to Soeharto, among them Ali Moertopo and Sudjono Humardhani. It was widely viewed as being behind the anti-Islamic policies of the government of the 1970s and much of the 1980s. The relationship between CSIS and the regime declined drastically, however, after Benny Moerdani was marginalised by Soeharto in the late 1980s.


Interview with J. Kristiadi, Deputy Executive Director of CSIS, Jakarta 3 September 1998.
staff distributed books containing data on the Chinese dominance of the Indonesian economy, Prabowo called on the participants to unite against those who threatened the stability of the nation. After the sharp devaluation of the rupiah in the first week of January, Soeharto had privately spoken of international machinations of the financial markets to undermine his authority and, after the next rapid drop following Habibie’s nomination, the President was increasingly inclined to make his suspicions public. Officers from the hardline faction interpreted Soeharto’s remarks as an endorsement of Prabowo’s confrontational approach, and they acted accordingly. Feisal Tanjung phoned 13 leading tycoons in mid-January, asking them for donations in order to overcome the economic crisis, and he led the anti-Sofyan chorus in ABRI Headquarters. Prabowo’s double strategy of aggravating political conflicts and conducting covert operations to confront the opponents of the regime was gradually adopted by other hardline members of the military elite, particularly those with an immediate interest in Habibie’s ascension to the vice-presidency.

Countering the Hardliners: The Moderates and the Discourse of Change

The radicalisation of Prabowo’s strategic and political approach led to the consolidation of his moderate competitors. It provided the key impetus for connecting the various subgroups in the moderate faction and elevated ideas of political change to the centre of conflict within the armed forces. Similar to the way Hartono’s partisanship in 1996 had triggered counter-reactions from the moderate faction, Prabowo’s divisive strategies for defending the regime convinced his opponents to increase their internal cooperation and adjust their conceptual thinking. This time, however, the stakes were much higher. The crisis had transformed the earlier discussions on the role of the armed forces in the regime from discourses on long-term alternatives to matters of immediate political urgency. Wiranto, who had not been particularly interested in the ideas of the gradual and rapid reformers in the past, now began to feel that they delivered him the necessary foundation for the competition with the hardliners around Prabowo:

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65 Kholil Ridwan, chairman of BKSPPI (Badan Kerjasama Pondok Pesantren Indonesia, Cooperation Forum for Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia), gave the main speech of the evening. In line with Prabowo, he stressed that if ABRI and the Muslim community united, this would create a power able to face any element trying to destabilize the country. See ‘Umat Islam dan ABRI harus Bersatu’, Republika 26 January 1998; Margot Cohen, “‘Us” and “Them’”, Far Eastern Economic Review 12 February 1998.

66 Feisal argued that the tycoons had received government facilities for the last 30 years, and that it was now time for them to return the favor. See ‘Panglima ABRI Telepon 13 Konglomerat’, Kompas 15 January 1998.

"Of course the crisis changed a lot. It forced us to reconsider the principles of our political beliefs. I include myself in this. (...) We had to go out to people and signal that we understood their problems, and that we were ready for change. That did not mean toppling Pak Harto, but constituted an invitation to society to work with us to overcome the crisis — not pinning the blame on certain groups and then taking profit from it. That was certain to lead to disaster."68

Wiranto’s approach to integrate societal forces into government efforts to stabilise the situation contrasted sharply with Prabowo’s strategy of escalation. In meetings with Muslim leaders on 18 and 25 January, Wiranto stressed the necessity to defuse tensions, asking the kiai to assist the government in fighting against what he called ‘destructive rumours’.69 In addition, some of Wiranto’s associates established contacts with critics of the regime. Maj.Gen. Agum Gumelar, then Commander of the Wirabuana Command in Sulawesi, spoke regularly with Amien Rais:

“We exchanged information with Pak Amien. He told us things, we told him things. For instance, when some within the government thought Pak Amien should be arrested for treason, we told him to slow down. Susilo also knew Amien well, so we had pretty good relations with him.”70

The polarisation between hardline officers determined to suppress oppositional groups by force, and moderate military leaders prepared to open a dialogue with dissidents, pointed to the changing nature of intra-military competition. Traditional forms of military factionalism had focused on efforts to demonstrate maximum levels of loyalty towards Soeharto. The divisions emerging amidst the political and economic decline of the regime, however, had much stronger conceptual features, and none of them particularly favoured the President. Prabowo’s manoeuvres in defence of the regime were aimed at securing the electoral mechanism scheduled to install Habibie in the vice-presidency, and he offered few indications about his plans beyond that date. Wiranto, on the other hand, believed at that stage that Soeharto’s regime was reformable, and he was determined to win wide-ranging societal support for this effort. Given Soeharto’s fierce resistance towards reform, however, the group of reluctant reformers around Wiranto increasingly opened up to the idea of regime change discussed by the gradual and rapid reformers since

68 Interview with General (ret) Wiranto, Jakarta 13 October 2000
69 ‘KSAD Minta Ulama dan Santri Tenangkan Masyarakat’, *Media Indonesia* 19 January 1998; ‘KSAD Minta Ulama dan Umoro, Harus Saling Menasihati’, *Media Indonesia* 26 January 1998. In responding to Feisal Tanjung’s accusation that Chinese corporations had done nothing to stop the economic decline, Wiranto ally Chief of Staff of General Affairs Let.Gen. Tarub suggested that the media may not have covered statements by leading tycoons about how to solve the economic crisis. Tarub stated that there should be no differential treatment of the tycoons as the crisis called on all Indonesians to do their duty. See ‘ABRI Sumbang Uang dan Emas kepada Pemerintah’, *Kompas* 27 January 1998.
1996. The ultimate conclusion from this gradual adaptation process within the Wiranto group was instinctively felt by its members, but not yet openly addressed: Soeharto had to resign, and the main task of the armed forces was to secure an honourable and stable departure of their patron.

V. FINAL ELECTION, FINAL RESHUFFLE: MILITARY FACTIONALISM REVISITED

Military factionalism had been a major element of regime stabilisation throughout Soeharto’s rule. Balancing rival groups and distributing important positions among them, Soeharto granted rewards and punished disloyalty. The fact that Soeharto did not sideline either of the major groups competing for hegemony in early 1998, and used the last reshuffle of his presidency to allocate key posts proportionally to the two camps, indicated that the embattled leader was still convinced of the continued loyalty of his top brass. Soeharto appeared to trust the public assurances given by both factions that they were determined to keep him in power, and seemed unaware of Prabowo’s understanding with Habibie on the one side and the growing influence of the idea of regime change in Wiranto’s camp on the other. Thus he appointed Wiranto as Commander-in-Chief and Prabowo as Commander of Kostrad in February 1998. Wiranto ally Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono became Chief of Staff of Socio-Political Affairs, and Maj.Gen. Muchdi Purwopranjono replaced his friend Prabowo as head of Kopassus. Subagyo HS, for his part, was promoted to Army Chief of Staff. The reshuffle left both groups with roughly equal control networks within the armed forces: Wiranto headed ABRI Headquarters, with key allies holding crucial regional commands and most positions in the military’s socio-political branch. Prabowo, on the other hand, had direct control of, or influence over, the brigades of the capital, Kopassus, the ABRI Intelligence and his own unit, Kostrad.

The reshuffle pointed to Soeharto’s inability to adapt to the radically changed political context created by the crisis. In the same way that he applied traditional strategies to confront the problems of economic and political decline, he appeared to believe that the well-tested approach

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72 Susilo, Prabowo and Muchdi were to take up their new positions after the session of the MPR, while Wiranto and Subagyo were installed in their new positions shortly after the announcement was made.
of engineered factionalism in the military would carry him through the turmoil. Soeharto had obviously failed to notice that the character of this factionalism had changed substantially, and that it, for the first time, included scenarios of a post-Soeharto military. The paradigmatic shift became evident in Wiranto’s first major policy speech after his appointment on 23 February. Openly contradicting the position of his hardline predecessor that the country’s problems had been instigated by ‘provocateurs’, Wiranto conceded that Indonesia faced a political, economic and security crisis. The complexity of this crisis, Wiranto explained, affected all aspects of life. The middle class was losing its competitive talents and its vitality, while the lower classes saw their purchasing power declining. Unemployment was up, social inequality widened and crime was increasing, with the vast majority of Indonesians experiencing a drastic drop in living standards. In such a situation, Wiranto said, it was understandable that the people felt helpless in facing realities. While he signalled that ABRI was prepared to stop potential ‘troublemakers’ from exploiting the crisis for political gains, Wiranto’s empathy for those socially affected by the crisis marked a significant breach with Feisal’s hardline approach to security politics. His analysis of the problems echoed many of the critical ideas discussed in the 1996 army seminar, and indicated how far the thinking of the gradual and rapid reformers had penetrated the views of Wiranto and his group. It was this increasing openness towards rising societal frustrations and demands that slowly eroded Wiranto’s institutional loyalty to Soeharto, and not, as O’Rourke suggested, the predilection of the ABRI chief for Javanese ‘tales of kings being overthrown by their trusted advisors, lieutenants or even their own brothers.’

Frustrated Hopes: The Moderates and Soeharto’s Inability to Reform

The mounting tensions caused by the factional differences came into the open on the day of Wiranto’s speech. During the hand-over ceremony of the post of Army Chief of Staff from Wiranto to Subagyo, Agum Gumelar asked his fellow regional commanders as well as the

74 On 7 February, Feisal had spoken in front of 25,000 security personnel in Senayan. Using traditional New Order rhetoric, he threatened to deal harshly with those who wanted to disturb national stability and the proceedings of the MPR session. He claimed that the phenomena of the current crisis, like unrest, mass movements, radicalisation and terror, were all products of instigation by those who aimed at obstructing the MPR session. See ‘ABRI Siapkan 25 Ribu Personel’, Jawa Pos 8 February 1998; ‘ABRI Chief Warns of Mass Unrest’, Singapore Straits Times 8 February 1998.
commanders of Kostrad and Kopassus to join him in declaring an oath of loyalty to Wiranto. Agum was one of the core members of Wiranto’s group, and his dislike for Prabowo was well known. The oath was a clear warning to the hardline faction, with Agum keen to ‘make sure that everybody understood who the new Commander was, and that was Wiranto.’ The obvious splits within the military led many in the political elite and the broader population to conclude that some elements in the armed forces were prepared to reconsider their support for Soeharto. This perception had a strong impact on the character of subsequent events leading up to Soeharto’s fall. The removal of the President had been the primary target of oppositional forces for some time, but now these groups turned to lobbying military leaders to achieve their goal. Marking the beginning of the third phase of the crisis, students began to organise and demonstrate in late February against Soeharto’s re-election, but at the same time they distributed flowers to soldiers and police officers who showed a much less repressive approach to their protest than some had feared. Wiranto’s concept to contain and de-escalate the protests rather than to violently disperse them helped to convince key government critics that the political attitude of some senior military officers was indeed undergoing substantial change. That hardline elements in the military still favoured the traditional security approach only reinforced the interest of regime dissidents in establishing contact with moderate commanders thought to be more open towards the idea of regime change.

The public interpretation of the intra-military conflicts as a competition between moderates and hardliners favored Wiranto’s group as far as societal support for its approach was concerned. The kidnappings of student activists, labour leaders and other dissidents, starting in February and widely linked to Prabowo, accelerated this polarisation and provided Wiranto with further arguments for his policy of de-escalation. It was unclear, however, whether Soeharto would appreciate Wiranto’s non-confrontational approach as much as large segments of society did. Given the risk that the President might view Wiranto’s tolerance of societal protest as an indication of declining loyalty towards him, the Commander-in-Chief had to strike a delicate balance between accommodating public discontent and maintaining the political hegemony of the regime. The intra-military debate on Habibie’s nomination for the vice-presidency delivered a welcome opportunity for Wiranto to express his continued loyalty to Soeharto. The press had

78 Agum asserted that Prabowo was ‘one of the reasons why ABRI had lost its ideals. He was promoted because of his family links, he ran all these underground operations and was heavily involved in businesses, and had them protected by military units,’ Interview with Let.Gen. Agum Gumelar, Jakarta 8 June 1998.
80 The 3,000 students rallying at the campus sang ‘Do not hurt us. We are your friends. We are on the same side.’ See ‘Students Urge Riot Troops to Join Demonstration’, Sydney Morning Herald 27 February 1998.
speculated that Wiranto would overturn Feisal’s earlier decision to back Habibie, with many retired officers publicly encouraging him to do so. Wiranto, however, made it clear that ABRI stood by its commitment to support Habibie.\footnote{ABRI Denies it was Forced to Nominate Habibie', \textit{Singapore Straits Times} 26 February 1998.} The armed forces leader saw little value in seeking an open confrontation with Soeharto, and Wiranto did not believe that Habibie’s election would significantly alter the power balance in the military:

“I was close to Habibie since my days as adjutant to Pak Harto. Also, my wife is from Gorontalo, as was Habibie’s father, and Habibie’s mother was from Yogya, like myself. (…) So if some people told me that Habibie’s election would be bad for me, I just let them talk. I knew better.”\footnote{Interview with General (ret) Wiranto, Jakarta 13 October 2000}

Habibie’s appointment as vice-president was confirmed by the MPR in mid-March, and Soeharto was handed his seventh term in office. Many observers believed that Soeharto had no intention of resigning any time soon, and therefore did not view Habibie’s election as a final decision on the matter of succession. In fact, there were strong indications that Soeharto had chosen a controversial deputy in order to deflect demands for his departure from politics. The smooth procession of Soeharto’s re-election in the MPR, however, contrasted sharply with the increasingly cynical sentiments in both the political elite and the general population.

The moderates within the armed forces had hoped that Soeharto would use his re-election to begin reforms aimed at overcoming the stalemate and stabilising the political situation. Even the rapid reformers around Wirahadikusumah, who were sceptical about Soeharto’s ability to bring about major change, examined the President’s every statement and political manoeuvre for possible signals of his willingness to reform:

“We thought he still might have a last chance, if he just offered something to calm down the protesters. Anything, really. More political parties, more freedoms, maybe early elections. Or a clear plan for his retirement. But there was just a big zero.”\footnote{Interview with Maj.Gen. Agus Wirahadikusumah, Jakarta 12 November 1998.}

Soeharto, in delivering both his accountability and acceptance speech at the MPR, had not only failed to offer concrete reforms, but had presented an analysis of the situation that indicated his increasing isolation from political realities. Against the background of economic crisis, political stagnation, social riots and demonstrating students, Soeharto read out economic statistics that compared the 1993/94 period with that of 1997/98, stressing the successes of his government in
raising per capita income, life expectancy and the value of exports. Mentioning air crashes, train and ship accidents as well as the ongoing drought, he described the events of 1997 as a chain of unfortunate incidents, ultimately culminating in the economic crisis, which he largely blamed on the IMF. Soeharto promised to serve out his full term, and made no reference to political reforms or a controlled transfer of power to his successor. The President’s political immobility came as a great disappointment to the moderate faction in the military. Agum Gumelar, asked by the ABRI faction to present the response of the armed forces to Soeharto’s accountability report, declined because ‘people would hate me for that sort of hypocrisy.’ ABRI’s response to the President, read out by the Chief of Police, reflected a compromise between confirming Soeharto’s view of the economic crisis as a matter of technical management and the position of the moderate camp that political change was inevitable. According to ABRI’s official statement, two things were important: first, overcoming the economic crisis; and second, reform of the political system, the economy and the judiciary. While the first agenda was of an ‘actual’ and ‘situational’ character, the second was more ‘fundamental, structural, and cultural’. In other words: while solving the economic crisis was the priority, political reform was only a long-term project.

Endorsing Regime Change? The Moderate Faction and Mounting Popular Protest

The image of Soeharto’s progressing political calcification was aggravated by the announcement of the new cabinet shortly after the MPR session. Filled with loyalists, the cabinet featured the President’s decades-long friend and tycoon Bob Hasan in the crucial Department of Industry and Trade. In addition, Siti Hardiyanti became Minister for Social Affairs, in a promotion that many saw as the initial step to a dynastic solution to the succession problem. The military hardliner Hartono was appointed Interior Minister, and Wiranto Arismunandar, the brother of Tien Soeharto’s brother-in-law and notoriously harsh rector of the Bandung Institute of Technology, became Minister of Education. The composition of the cabinet signalled Soeharto’s unwillingness to reform the political system, and it had an immediate, radicalising effect on the student movement and other oppositional forces. Amien Rais, who had earlier softened some of his

criticism of the regime following Habibie’s selection as vice-president, resumed his role as the intellectual leader of the reform movement, travelling to campuses and providing political guidance to the previously disorganised student groups. The new radicalism not only facilitated the spread of the student protests from the cities of Java to other areas of the archipelago, it also questioned the effectiveness of Wiranto’s concept of de-escalation. Wiranto’s approach had been based on efforts to convince the protesters of the inherent ability of the New Order to reform itself, and had offered dialogue as a way of integrating the critics back into the regime. Soeharto, by insisting that no political reform was necessary, eroded the precondition for the successful implementation of Wiranto’s strategy. With Soeharto incapable of delivering prospects for change, and the students determined not to give up before the President resigned, the outbreak of violent confrontation was only a matter of time. The escalation of the conflict would, eventually, expose as unworkable and outdated the attempts of moderate officers in the armed forces to offer change within the existing political framework. Thus Soeharto’s resignation increasingly appeared to them as the only solution to the crisis.

The final phase of separating the moderates within the armed forces from the Soeharto regime began with the escalation of violence on the campuses in mid-March 1998. On 17 March, 103 students were seriously injured during a confrontation with security personnel in Solo. As a result, universities in Jakarta, Lampung, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surabaya and Makassar saw the numbers of protesters increasing by the day. Wiranto had earlier signalled that the armed forces would tolerate demonstrations on the campuses, but were determined to prevent them from taking to the streets. This warning was increasingly ignored, aggravating the tensions between student leaders and the local security apparatus. In early April, apparently ignoring Wiranto’s orders, security forces attacked the Gadjah Mada University campus in Yogyakarta, leaving scores wounded and seriously damaging ABRI’s reputation. The violent clashes increased fears within the moderate faction in the military that the strategic goal of the protests might shift once again, and this time include the role of the armed forces as a major focus of criticism. Soeharto’s removal had become the main theme of the protests, but the more the armed forces were viewed as being inextricably tied to the regime, the more likely they were to be targeted by the oppositional demands for change. Wiranto was well aware of this risk, and responded by

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88 Amien and Habibie had cooperated closely in the 1990s in ICMI. Their relationship, and Amien’s changing attitudes towards the regime, will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

89 The students of the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB, Institut Teknologi Bandung), one of the most prestigious universities in the country and therefore one of the most watched by both the media and the military, left their campus for the first time on 9 April. See ‘Mahasiswa ITB Turun ke Jalan’, Kompas 11 April 1998.

90 In late April, flags with the script ‘People’s Power’ were flown by students at the Gadjah Mada campus. This reference to the 1986 movement against President Marcos in the Philippines had always provoked
offering an open discussion forum between ABRI and the student movement on political reform issues. Student leaders, however, were in no mood to compromise and boycotted the ABRI-sponsored dialogue scheduled for 18 April. It was at this juncture of the crisis that Wiranto realised the failure of his conciliatory approach and, by implication, the impossibility of defending Soeharto:

"Frankly, I thought we had reached a dead end. The students were very stubborn, and there was no movement on the political side either. I told my staff that all we could do was trying to prevent people from getting killed. Because once a student gets shot, they will have a martyr, and then we will lose control." 91

Wiranto’s impression was confirmed by his intensifying contacts with NU leaders and Amien Rais, mostly through Susilo. NU was publicly calling on ABRI by mid-April to ‘support the reform process’, and Amien left no doubt about his intention to continue the criticism of the regime until substantial change had been achieved.92

The gradual separation of the military’s moderate wing from Soeharto’s political interests was in no sense a linear process, however. Soeharto’s system of patronage and personal loyalties had been weakened, but still proved forceful enough to prevent officers from openly demanding his resignation. Confronted with the choice of assisting in Soeharto’s removal or applying the coercive force of the military to contain the opposition, Wiranto avoided a clear-cut decision. He tried to combine both approaches in order to win time, and temporarily damaged the reputation of his moderate faction as a result. But just as the paradigmatic demarcation lines between the main factions in the armed forces began to blur, Wiranto’s hardline rivals reinforced them once again. Throughout the month of April, victims of the kidnapping campaign ordered by Prabowo re-emerged and identified the latter publicly as the brain behind the operation.93 In addition, Hartono and Feisal Tanjung, now Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs, underscored their hardline images by openly sabotaging Wiranto’s initiative for dialogues between students and the government. Asked in late March why Soeharto was ready to meet farmers while refusing to receive student representatives, Feisal Tanjung replied that if the students would behave

allergic reactions from the New Order establishment, but now it was widely reported in the press. See ‘Umbul-umbul “People Power” Muncul di Kampus Yogyar’, Suara Pembaruan 25 April 1998.
92 Amien got Susilo into trouble by claiming that the latter had ‘asked’ him to continue his criticism, insinuating that ABRI was satisfied seeing Amien doing the job that military officers would never have the courage to do. Susilo clarified Amien’s statement the next day, saying he had only expressed ABRI’s appreciation for academic criticism as long as it remained academic. Interview with Amien Rais, Surabaya 10 May 1999; ‘Kassospol Minta Amien Tetap Kritis’, Jawa Pos 28 March 1998; and ‘Kassospol: Kritis Boleh, Kebablasan Jangan’, Jawa Pos 29 March 1998.

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themselves like farmers, they would get a chance to see the President. In early April, Hartono opined on the same topic that a meeting between Soeharto and students would create the false impression that the students had aspirations worth listening to. For the Wiranto group, these verbal attacks on the student movement, despite further radicalising the protesters, had a fortunate side effect:

"Feisal and Hartono thought they could destroy the dialogues with their offensive statements. Well, they did. But they also reminded the students who the real obstacles to reform were. (...) Wiranto was frustrated that the public linked him with the violence on the campuses, but after Feisal’s and Hartono’s outbursts, Wiranto looked like an angel again."  

While students certainly did not view him as an ‘angel’, Wiranto remained the central entry point for oppositional efforts to encourage the armed forces to side with the movement. Soeharto also contributed to this perception. On 16 April, Soeharto threatened to send Kopassus troops to deal with the unrest, implying that security forces so far had been soft in their approach to the protesters. The prospect of Kopassus soldiers under the command of a hardliner replacing organic troops on the ground put some of the sharp criticisms of Wiranto into a wider context, and helped to repair some of the damage the moderates had suffered as a result of the increasing violence. In this regard, William Case’s assessment that Wiranto had ‘retreated to a more hard-line posture’ neither captured the grave tensions between the moderates and the hardliners nor the ABRI chief’s growing awareness that repression alone would not be able to address the source of the protest.

With the country locked in a stalemate between calls for Soeharto’s departure and the intransigence of the President, the moderates within the armed forces hoped for an eventual break-through when Soeharto ordered Indonesia’s political elite to the palace on 1 May for a

97 Soeharto delivered the warning in a statement read out at the 46th anniversary celebrations of Kopassus. The President expressed the ‘hope’ that ‘the people, local officials and police can maintain national security and order without the involvement of Kopassus troops.’ See ‘ABRI Can Now Take “Repressive” Action’, Singapore Straits Times 18 April 1998.
major policy speech. Many had given up hope that Soeharto would finally offer reforms, but others expected him to launch a final effort to save his presidency. According to Zarkasih Nur, the chairman of the PPP faction in the DPR who was present at the meeting, the atmosphere in the palace was one of tense expectation:

“Personally, I did not have much hope. But I thought ‘Who knows? Pak Harto had saved his head so many times in the past, why not this time?’ (…) But he offered nothing. Actually, it was worse than nothing.”

Much to the disappointment of the audience, Soeharto suggested that Indonesians start thinking about political reforms for the time after 2003. This announcement provided the final confirmation of Soeharto’s failure to grasp the urgency of the crisis that had engulfed him. It also served as a further motivation for the officers around Wiranto to increase their engagement with the opposition in order to evaluate the possibility of granting Soeharto a graceful departure from office. This approach was in line with what William Liddle called Wiranto’s ‘pattern of reaction instead of action’, with growing societal pressure forcing the military moderates into the gradual endorsement of regime change. Even within the hardline group, preparations for a post-Soeharto regime were under way. Prabowo and other hardliners expected that a possible Habibie presidency might facilitate their rise to the helm of the armed forces, and they began to use their contacts with Islamic groups to prepare the necessary societal support for this scenario. The nature of the military factionalism created by Soeharto had changed in a way that encouraged both competing groups to develop political plans for a future without Soeharto. When the crisis approached its next, and final, phase of escalation, none of the groups in the armed forces was prepared to follow Soeharto into the political abyss.

V. VICTORY OF THE MODERATES: ENDING SULTANISTIC RULE, NEGOTIATING REGIME CHANGE

After the 1 May announcement had underlined Soeharto’s unwillingness to offer hope of reform, the crisis entered into its fourth and, as far as the New Order was concerned, its last phase. On 4

99 Invited to the ‘consultative’ meeting with Soeharto were the DPR/MPR leadership, the leaders of the DPR factions, officials of the political parties, ministers related to political and security issues, the chiefs of staff of the three services and the head of the Police.
May, the government announced that fuel subsidies would be drastically reduced. The subsequent sharp rise in electricity and petrol prices led to violent demonstrations in Medan, escalating into three days of rioting in the North Sumatran capital. The clashes in Medan triggered a chain reaction, radicalising the student demonstrations in the rest of the archipelago. The unrest involved more and more non-academic protesters, ranging from small traders to street criminals who hid behind a political agenda to loot unprotected shops. With Medan in flames, elements of the regime made the first public moves to desert Soeharto. On 4 May, Harmoko declared that the parliament welcomed the students’ aspirations and would therefore reconsider the five political laws. ICMI called for a special session of the MPR on 6 May. The non-governmental elite, in turn, sped up its dissociation from the regime. NU stated on 11 May that it was preparing its own reform agenda, and Amien announced on the same day that he would form a Majelis Kepemimpinan Rakyat, a People’s Leadership Council, by the end of May. With alternative political institutions in the making, the factions in ABRI had to respond quickly. On 7 May, Wiranto announced the establishment of an ABRI team under Susilo to work out concrete proposals for reform.

The moderate faction in the military hoped to win societal approval for its efforts to allow Soeharto a graceful departure from office. The input from non-military forces was not only designed to increase the acceptability of ABRI’s proposals, but also to shield the moderate faction from possible retaliation from Soeharto. Thus Susilo consulted various intellectuals and asked them to prepare concepts for political reform. Among them was Nurcholish Madjid, who enjoyed Soeharto’s respect and was therefore well placed to develop a schedule for the latter’s retirement. Nurcholish, for his part, saw the armed forces as the key to solving the stalemate:

“Just look at Thailand, the Philippines and South Korea. There the cooperation of the military was crucial in initiating democratic change. So we had to win ABRI’s support for reform. If they remained obstructive, no change would have been possible.”

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102 ‘Harmoko: DPR Siap Ubah UU Politik’, *Jawa Pos* 5 May 1998. These laws, mostly passed in the 1980s, concerned the general elections, political parties, the composition of the DPR and MPR, and mass organisations.


105 While rejecting a special session of the MPR to replace Soeharto, Wiranto opened the door for ‘gradual and constitutional change’. See ‘Army Moves to Defuse Unrest’, *Sydney Morning Herald* 8 May 1998.

106 Interview with Nurcholish Madjid, Jakarta 27 May 1998.
The President, meanwhile, took the risky step of leaving the country on 9 May for an international conference in Egypt, demonstrating, according to Robert Elson, that he 'was still unable to grasp the significance of the mounting movement against him.' His absence gave both formerly loyal associates and fierce opponents the chance to draft a political map for a future without Soeharto. With Soeharto cut off from his network of informants and almost exclusively relying on Wiranto's telephone reports, ABRI Headquarters could promote Susilo's initiative without the fear of presidential intervention. The dynamics created by Susilo's project and Nurcholish's input would play a crucial role in shaping the events leading to the President's resignation.

Before Nurcholish could present his proposal to ABRI Headquarters, however, developments took yet another escalating turn. The conflict between the Wiranto and Prabowo camps within the armed forces erupted in a dramatic fashion, and the chaos arising from this split made Soeharto's position increasingly vulnerable. When Soeharto cut short his trip and returned almost a week later in the early morning of 15 May, the New Order was in ruins.

**Final Escalation: The Trisakti Shootings and the May Riots**

The escalation of violence in Jakarta began with the fatal shooting of four students during a demonstration at Trisakti University on 12 May 1998. Public speculation immediately connected the incident to army units loyal to Prabowo who was already widely known to have masterminded the kidnappings of activists. For many, Prabowo's public denial of his involvement in the shooting only confirmed the widespread suspicions. The Trisakti tragedy led to the eruption of factional tensions within the armed forces, with Wiranto suspecting that Prabowo aimed at escalating the situation in order to convince Soeharto that the Commander-in-Chief was incapable of securing the capital:

"I do not know who was behind the shootings and the violence that followed, but one thing was obvious: I was Commander of the Armed Forces, Soeharto was away. If

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108 On 17 May, Prabowo visited the parents of one of the victims, explaining that he felt the duty to pay his respects because the victim's father was a military veteran. He insisted that he be allowed to swear on the Qur'an that he was innocent, and after the distressed parents had refused three times, the victim's mother gave in and Prabowo swore that he 'knew nothing about the incident nor had given any orders.' See Rene L. Pattiradjawane, *Trisakti Mendobrak Tirani Orde Baru: Fakta dan Kesaksian Berdarah 12 Mei 1998*, Gramedia dan Yayasan Trisakti, Jakarta 1999: 163.
anything happened during his absence, it was clear that my opponents would try to blame me."\textsuperscript{110}

The riots that broke out on the day after the Trisakti killings, accompanied by city-wide looting, burning and occasional rapes, went on for nearly two days, on 13 and 14 May, leaving up to 1200 people dead and Chinese business centres devastated. Other cities, mostly on Java, were affected as well. Solo experienced one of the worst riots in its long violent history.\textsuperscript{111} While the actors and motivations involved in the unrest have never been identified, public opinion saw Prabowo and his hardline faction as its main beneficiaries.\textsuperscript{112} The chaos in Jakarta cornered Prabowo’s moderate rivals in the military and brought him one step closer to a Habibie presidency, under which he could expect to be ‘four star’ and eventually chief of the armed forces.

The suspicion that Prabowo had an active interest in the spread of violence was largely based on the inactivity of the security forces vis-a-vis the rioters.\textsuperscript{113} Troops from the Jakarta garrison, Kostrad and Kopassus, all under the command of Prabowo or officers associated with him, remained conspicuously indifferent towards the unrest sweeping through the city. Prabowo later gave defensive explanations for the insufficient number of troops and their reluctance to face the rioters, which contrasted sharply with the previous insistence of the hardline faction on stern measures against regime opposition. On the one hand, Prabowo recalled his surprise at noting the absence of troops on Jakarta’s main roads, and claimed to have reminded Syafrie, who was in charge of security in the capital, of the potential damage this might incur:

"I said: Syafrie, on Thamrin there are no troops. He was convinced there were enough. He asked me to come along, and we saw!"\textsuperscript{114}

On the other hand, Prabowo maintained that the soldiers were hesitant to ‘fire at housewives and children looting the shops’ because they shared the same low-class background: ‘I think that was psychological.’\textsuperscript{115} Despite commanding Kostrad, and having close personal ties with Syafrie and Kopassus chief Muchdi, he insisted that he had no influence over, or knowledge of, troop deployments during the riots, pointing at Syafrie and Wiranto instead. Regardless of the truth

\textsuperscript{110} Interview with General (ret) Wiranto, Jakarta 13 October 2000
\textsuperscript{111} The most prominent target of the Solo riots was the house of Harmoko in the elite area of Solo Baru. See ‘Terakhir, Harmoko Menginap Desember Lalu’, Bernas 17 May 1998.
\textsuperscript{113} The BBC correspondent in Jakarta, Matt Frei, described the situation on 14 May as one of ‘complete and rampant anarchy’. See “‘Total Anarchy’ in Jakarta”, BBC News, 14 May 1998.
\textsuperscript{114} Jose Manuel Tesoro, ‘The Scapegoat?’, Asiaweek 3 March 2000. Jalan Thamrin is the main protocol road that leads to the palace.
behind the movement of troops and their behaviour in the field, Prabowo appeared to have clearly understood that the riots had the potential of accelerating Habibie’s rise to the presidency, and therefore lead to his ascension to the top post in the armed forces. At the height of the rioting, Prabowo went to see Habibie and discussed possible succession scenarios and, most importantly, what they meant for him. Habibie seemed ready to claim the presidency, but was less forthcoming about his plans for Prabowo:

“I should have noticed the shift. (...) He said: ‘If your name comes up, I will approve.’ There's a big difference there.”

The mounting public criticism of Prabowo and the hardliners was probably the main reason for Habibie to reconsider his alliance with the Kostrad chief. Habibie’s changing position on Prabowo’s future role was, however, only the first in a series of setbacks for his faction, shifting the power balance decisively in favour of the moderates and their plans for Soeharto’s orderly departure.

The dramatic change in the fortunes of the two military factions was caused by a combination of factors. First of all, Wiranto had the advantage of delivering regular telephone briefings to Soeharto in Egypt, conveying his version of events before the President could gather information from other sources. Moreover, the Commander-in-Chief was able to blame the inactivity of the troops on Syafrie and appear as a decisive leader when he intervened on 14 May to order the immediate deployment of new troops, threatening to take direct control if his directives were not heeded. Wiranto also won the support of several regional commanders, among them Djadja Suparman in Surabaya, Djamari Chaniago in Bandung and Ryamizard Ryacudu, the chief of the Kostrad division in Malang. Marines were flown in from Surabaya on 14 May, helping to end the riots within a day and supporting the perception that the situation had only stabilised after Wiranto had assumed authority over the operation. Finally, Prabowo’s support base in the civilian sphere disintegrated rapidly. Amien Rais, whom Prabowo counted among his allies in the modernist Muslim constituency, distanced himself publicly from the Kostrad commander. Habibie, for his part, had withdrawn his promises of further promotion, and Muslim student groups that had previously entered into talks with Prabowo now threw their support behind

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118 Amien rejected a suggestion by ABRI’s ailing ‘elder statesman’, Nasution, who had proposed that Amien and Prabowo take the lead in reforming the country. In front of some of his Christian friends, who were particularly suspicious of Prabowo, Amien stated that he had never made any political arrangement with the former, earning him enthusiastic applause from the audience. See ‘Para Tokoh Bentuk Majelis Amanat Rakyat’, *Kompas* 15 May 1998.
Amien. Abdurrahman Wahid, who had a tense relationship with Prabowo in the past and whom the latter now visited to evaluate the chances of cooperation, also sent him home empty-handed.119

Resignation or Martial Law? The Moderates Prevail

The hardline faction in the military sought to counter the erosion of its political power base by trying to convince Soeharto that Wiranto was about to betray him. The reform proposals developed by Nurcholish for Susilo delivered one such opportunity. Nurcholish suggested elections in January 2000 and a special session of the MPR three months afterwards, implying that Soeharto should not stand for re-election. Moreover, Nurcholish demanded that Soeharto return his illegally obtained wealth and apologise to the nation for his mistakes:

"Susilo really liked the concept. But he recommended that I drop the demands related to Pak Harto’s wealth and the apology. (...) Prabowo, on the other hand, called the paper ‘crazy’. And I am sure he let Pak Harto know what Wiranto’s people were doing behind his back."120

In addition to the Nurcholish initiative, Prabowo also reported a statement to Soeharto that had been issued by ABRI Headquarters on 16 May, indicating that the armed forces supported calls for the resignation of the President.121 Wiranto was forced to retract the release and apologise to Soeharto. The Prabowo group also raised questions about Wiranto’s trip to Malang on the morning of 14 May, taking with him almost the entire military leadership, including Prabowo, at a time of rioting and political turmoil.122 While this information on the alleged political...
manoeuvres of the moderate group proved insufficient for Soeharto to take measures against the Commander-in-Chief, it encouraged the President to consider ways of preventing the concentration of powers in Wiranto’s hands.

Soeharto’s attempt to limit Wiranto’s powers, however, only provided further evidence of the extent to which the riots and their political implications had strengthened the position of the moderate faction in the armed forces. The President told his advisers on 15 May that he planned to establish a new security command that was to play a role similar to that of Kopkamtib in the 1970s and 1980s. The idea of reinstating one of the most notorious New Order instruments of repression signalled Soeharto’s determination to apply a more confrontational approach towards the unrest. Soeharto stressed that he intended to hand the top post of this new body to a military officer other than Wiranto, as the latter was ‘too busy’. The creation of a dual hierarchy within the armed forces would have weakened Wiranto’s faction and the military as an institution, allowing the President to gain more direct control of the security operations against the protesters. Wiranto, however, opposed the plan, and Subagyo, whom Soeharto proposed as head of the agency, declined the offer. Subagyo was apparently aware that leading a security body specifically tasked with quelling popular protest to defend a doomed regime carried high risks for his career, and he was not prepared to confront Wiranto over the issue. The incident confirmed that Soeharto’s authority over the armed forces and its officer corps was declining dramatically. On 18 May, Soeharto appointed Wiranto to lead the agency he had earlier planned to hand to a rival officer.

The diminishing of Soeharto’s authority was accelerated further when student activists occupied the parliament complex in the early morning of 18 May. The symbol of the New Order’s manipulation of formal democracy was now in the hands of disrespectful youths who camped on its roof and bathed in its decorative fountains. How exactly the initially moderate influx of protesters was able to pass ABRI’s security apparatus remains unclear. Prabowo later claimed that

Wirahadikusumah, Jakarta 12 November 1998; see also Jose Manuel Tesoro, ‘The Scapegoat?, Asiaweek 3 March 2000. Wiranto himself insisted that it was Prabowo who had asked him to go to Malang to preside over a ceremony that marked the transfer of regional command authority from the First Kostrad Division to the Second, and claimed he had received no warnings from Prabowo to cancel the trip. The Commander-in-Chief also saw no problem to leave the capital for three hours as the command was in the hands of the Jakarta Commander and the Police Chief. Wiranto did indeed order Marine troops from East Java into the capital on 14 May, but insisted that this was done through phone communication. Interview with General (ret) Wiranto, 13 October 2000.

Wiranto had promised student leaders to provide transportation for students who planned a march on the parliament, and Syafrie confirmed that he was asked by two Wiranto aides to prepare military vehicles for the demonstrators. While most of the students refused to accept the free ride, Syafrie allowed them to enter the DPR complex as long as they came on wheels. On the morning of the occupation, Amien Rais addressed a public hearing at parliament, repeating his demand that Soeharto hand over his mandate. This was followed in the afternoon by a press conference in which the DPR leadership, ‘encouraged’ by hundreds of fanatical students, called on Soeharto to resign. The fact that Syarwan Hamid, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament and most senior military legislator, endorsed the statement was interpreted by many within the political elite as the official termination of ABRI’s support for Soeharto, triggering a series of defections of long-time loyalists from the New Order state. It is likely that the former hardliner Syarwan only sought to disengage himself individually from a polity with little prospect of survival, but the societal repercussions of his move were tremendous. Although Wiranto denounced the DPR statement as an ‘individual opinion’, Soeharto’s regime was now in a process of rapid disintegration.

Soeharto’s failure to push the armed forces into a more confrontational stand against the protest movement, coinciding with the decay of the regime from within, forced the President to launch a final promise of reform. He received Nurcholish Madjid to discuss the timetable for political change the latter had presented to Susilo, and arranged for a meeting with several Muslim leaders to announce his plan for early elections and the establishment of a Reform Council. The gathering at the palace on 19 May did not bring the break-through that Soeharto had hoped for, however. Nurcholish thought that his own proposals had already been overtaken by new developments, and now demanded elections within six months. Soeharto, for his part, only agreed to the formulation ‘as soon as possible’, provoking the Muslim figures to rule out their participation in the Reform Council or the new cabinet the President planned to form. During the next two days, Soeharto’s office contacted numerous societal leaders with the offer to join the Council, but only received rejections. In addition, fourteen of his ministers sent a letter to Soeharto, declaring their

resignations and refusing to serve in the next cabinet. With oppositional forces unprepared to cooperate, and regime loyalists deserting their patron, Soeharto’s position had become untenable.

The gradual demise of Soeharto further undermined the position of the hardline faction in the armed forces. Wiranto had consolidated his control and the President was increasingly deprived of his tools of political intervention. Prabowo tried to convince Siti Hardiyanti on 18 May that her father had to dismiss Wiranto or declare martial law, but Soeharto did not have the intention or the political power to do either. The successful opposition to his plans of recreating Kopkamtib had demonstrated to Soeharto where the new power centre in the armed forces was located, and that he was in too weak a position to challenge it. The prospect of martial law did not offer a realistic chance of stabilising his regime either, with the likely escalation of violence closing the option of a negotiated withdrawal from the political stage. Wiranto, on the other hand, was loyal enough to Soeharto to shield him from threats to his personal safety and ensure that his interests were considered when arrangements for the transfer of power were made. On 20 May, Wiranto concluded that Soeharto had to resign immediately:

“I knew since April that Pak Harto had to announce his resignation at some stage in order to calm down the protesters. But I had hoped for a transitional period. (...) After the meeting with the Muslim clerics, however, and the public reactions to it, I knew it was a matter of days rather than months. But at the same time, Pak Harto's dignity had to be maintained.”

130 The concern for Soeharto’s ‘dignity’, based on years of personal attachment and the ingrained military sentiment against populist uprisings, led Wiranto to ban a mass demonstration planned for 20 May, which was supposed to be headed by Amien Rais and bring millions of protesters to the streets. Amien ultimately called the rally off after receiving clear hints from within the military that it could result in massive bloodshed. At the same time, however, Wiranto worked towards Soeharto’s retreat. On the same day, he convened a meeting of several academic experts in his office, making it clear that within three hours he expected from them a convincing concept for Soeharto’s resignation.131 Several options were discussed, from endorsing Soeharto’s reform committee to military intervention, but only one looked politically and constitutionally reasonable: Soeharto had to resign in Habibie’s favour.132 With this concept, Wiranto left to see Soeharto.

131 Interview with Salim Said, Jakarta 23 November 1998. Salim was one of the academics consulted by Wiranto.
132 The military option would have seen Habibie resigning with Soeharto, bringing in a triumvirate of ministers, with Wiranto as Minister of Defence and Security in effect dominating the new government until new elections could be held. Wiranto rejected this option, and he later often referred to the moment where
The Final Act: Soeharto’s Fall and the End of the Hardliners

The conversation that took place between Soeharto and the head of his armed forces on that night of 20 May 1998 has been the subject of much speculation, focusing on the question of how much this discussion contributed to Soeharto’s decision to lay down the presidency. Takashi Shiraishi claimed that after the meeting with Wiranto, ‘Soeharto chose not to test the military’s resolve and resigned the following day.’ 133 It is more likely, however, that Soeharto had already made up his mind to resign when Wiranto arrived. The DPR had set Soeharto an ultimatum for 23 May to step down or face impeachment, and he had unsuccessfully tried to form a new cabinet and establish the Reform Council. Against this background, Wiranto explained to him that the use of violence in order to defend the government would most likely make matters worse:

“Personally, I think he agreed with this assessment. He didn’t want a repetition of Tiananmen either. (...) Did my reminder play a role in his resignation? I don’t know. I believe he was tired and had enough, he just wanted to get it over with.” 134

Soeharto’s immediate acceptance of both Wiranto’s political analysis and the recommendation it implied suggested that the President had arrived at the same conclusion. More than three decades earlier, Soeharto had witnessed the fruitless attempts of an ailing and isolated President to regain control over the military and the political system, ending in disgrace and personal decline. Soeharto must have been well aware of the historical parallels between Sukarno’s eroding powers in 1966 and his own loss of authority in the last days of his regime. Rather than being stripped of his presidency by the MPR (a procedure that Sukarno had suffered at the initiative of his eventual successor), Soeharto agreed to hand over the presidency to Habibie and retire from political life.

Soeharto announced his resignation the following morning at the palace, and Habibie was sworn in only minutes later. When the ceremony was over, Wiranto took the microphone and informed the nation that ABRI supported the new President fully, but warned that the armed forces were determined to guarantee the ‘dignity’ of ‘all former presidents and their families’.

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he could have taken over power easily but did not do so in order to avoid a bloodbath. See Peter Waldman, Raphael Pura and Marcus W Brauchli, ‘Changes Put Soeharto on Outside, Looking In’, The Asian Wall Street Journal 25 May 1998; Achmad Roestandi, Masuk Letnan, Keluar Letnan: Sisi Jenaka Pengemban Dwi Fungsi ABRI, Kreasi Wacana, Yogyakarta 2003: 132.
The warning pointed to Wiranto’s conservative understanding of the regime change that he had helped to negotiate: the transfer of power facilitated the replacement of the political leadership in order to accommodate demands for reform, but did not constitute a complete break with or denunciation of the New Order regime. This view had placed him among the reluctant reformers in the lead up to Soeharto’s fall, but set him on a path of conflict with more radical oppositional forces in the post-authoritarian transition. Before facing the difficulties of the post-Soeharto era, however, Wiranto was forced to engage in a final struggle with his adversaries in the New Order military.

Habibie’s ascension to the presidency triggered a last confrontation between the moderate and hardline factions in the armed forces. Despite Wiranto’s dominant role in the dying days of Soeharto’s regime, Prabowo felt confident that Habibie would remember the earlier promise to facilitate his rise to the helm of the armed forces. Prabowo went to see Habibie only hours after his inauguration, and according to the latter’s chief of staff,

"Prabowo came straight to the point. He proposed to promote Subagyo as Commander-in-Chief, and leave Wiranto only with his ministry. Of course, he thought of himself as the next army chief. He said all this in such an intimidating manner that Habibie began to have concerns about having such a guy in his military - at all." 135

Habibie did not only deny Prabowo the promotion he sought, he had him relieved of his Kostrad command. It appears that Habibie, Wiranto and the Soeharto family had all agreed that Prabowo could not stay on. The Soeharto family believed that it was Prabowo who had provoked the unrest that had led to their ouster; Habibie now viewed the ill-tempered officer as a potential source of instability for his government; and Wiranto took the welcome opportunity to remove his most serious competitor for the military leadership. When Prabowo learnt of his dismissal on 22 May, his allies in the armed forces encouraged him to disobey the order and lead an open challenge against Wiranto:

"I met some generals who were my supporters. Their message was: Let's have a confrontation. I said: Just keep quiet. (...) I knew that many of my soldiers would do what I say. But I did not want them to die fighting for my job. I wanted to show I placed the good of the country and the people above my own position." 136

While Prabowo obviously had at least contemplated resisting his removal, it remains unclear how far he and his associates were prepared to go. Prabowo went to see Habibie at his home to receive

a personal explanation for the decision to dismiss him, but his appearance was so threatening that Habibie had his family airlifted to the palace. After Subagyo endorsed the dismissal, however, Prabowo offered no further resistance. He was assigned to head the ABRI Staff and Command School in Bandung, leaving him without troops and isolating him from political events in Jakarta. The conflict between the two major factions within the armed forces that had marked and influenced many of the political events during the final months of the Soeharto regime had come to a dramatic and abrupt end.

VI. CONCLUSION: MILITARY FACTIONALISM, REGIME CHANGE AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The outcome of the factional dispute within the military in favor of the moderates was determined by a combination of internal and external factors. Most importantly, the steadily growing intensity of popular protest since March 1998 had reduced the chances for an effective hardline response to the crisis. The economic collapse drove more and more ordinary citizens onto the streets, joining a student movement determined not to relent before Soeharto had resigned. By May, the societal protest had spread throughout the archipelago, and even if Soeharto had decided to violently confront it, the overstretched resources of the military were incapable of managing all trouble spots at one time. Moreover, the hardliners were increasingly isolated from the political elite and influential societal forces. As the media accused hardline officers of involvement in severe human rights violations, regime figures like Habibie and oppositional leaders like Amien Rais began to distance themselves from Prabowo and his faction. This left only tiny ultra-modernist Islamic groups to provide societal legitimation for a possible hardline intervention, making such an option unsustainable. Finally, Soeharto’s decision not to order a last crackdown on his opponents and to hand in his resignation instead played an important role in deciding the intra-military competition. Although his political instincts had failed him throughout the crisis, he felt on 20 May that there was no way out for him. He knew that his power had all but evaporated, and had little interest in clinging on to his office as Sukarno had tried three decades before him. The inevitability of regime change, the public discrediting of the hardliners and Soeharto’s relatively quick surrender gave the moderates the decisive edge over their opponents.

137 Many reports circulating in the diplomatic corps at that time suggested that Habibie’s adjutants asked Prabowo to hand over a gun that he potentially could have displayed in Habibie’s presence. Prabowo has insisted, however, that it was standard protocol for every visitor to deposit dangerous items such as firearms with the presidential guards before seeing the President.
The victory of the moderate faction over the hardliners had a profound impact on both the character of regime change and the position of the armed forces in Indonesia's democratic transition. The moderates facilitated a controlled transfer of power within the constitutional format of the regime, assisting residual elements of the New Order in forming the first post-Soeharto government. Habibie's assumption of the presidency ended three decades of authoritarian rule, but it avoided a sharp break with the political power structures that had underpinned the regime. Consequently, key elements of the New Order, including the armed forces, were able to extend some of their privileges and informal powers into the new political system. This aspect of the moderate victory becomes evident if contrasted with the potential consequences of a triumph by the hardliners. The declaration of martial law, as demanded by the hardline faction, would have almost certainly led to a further escalation of protests and increased use of military coercion against demonstrators. This scenario was unlikely to prolong the life of the New Order, but could have resulted in the kind of tumultuous regime collapse that typically elevates oppositional forces to replace sultanistic rulers.

The defeat of the hardline faction also shaped perceptions within society and the political elite about the urgency of reforming the military in the post-Soeharto era. The removal of hardline officers viewed as responsible for the kidnappings and the May riots temporarily satisfied public demands for change in the armed forces and eased societal pressure for a more wide-ranging replacement of the New Order military leadership. The moderates, for their part, had helped to negotiate Soeharto's resignation, and thus were initially not counted among the most challenging hurdles for a successful democratic transition. This interpretation distracted from the fact, however, that there were substantial fissures in the moderate faction now in charge of the post-Soeharto military. The reluctant reformers under Wiranto had only in the escalating stages of the political crisis integrated ideas of regime change into their conceptual thinking. Before that, they had viewed the gradual and rapid reformers as helpful allies in the competition with the hardline faction, but had considered their ideas of political liberalisation and disengagement from the regime as too radical. For Wiranto, the leap from defending his patron to assisting in his resignation had exhausted much of his willingness to accommodate political change. Beyond that, he had not paid much thought to the political format of a post-authoritarian system and the way the military would operate in it. The gradual and rapid reformers, in contrast, had developed ideas for political reform since the mid-1990s, and despite the suddenness of Soeharto's demise, they appeared better prepared to engage with the new polity. The dividing lines between reluctant, gradual and rapid reformers would define newly emerging military factions in the post-Soeharto era, with each group developing highly diverse responses to the political change occurring around them.
CHAPTER FOUR

ELITE CONFLICT, POPULAR PROTEST AND REGIME CHANGE: MUSLIM GROUPS AND THE DOWNFALL OF SOEHARTO

Divisions within the armed forces have played a crucial role in shaping the character of regime change in 1998, and have impacted on the prospects for democratic consolidation in general and civil-military reforms in particular. The intra-systemic transfer of power, negotiated by moderate elements in the military, laid the foundation for strong lines of continuity between the New Order state and the post-authoritarian polity. The exclusion of oppositional forces from the first post-Soeharto government was not only the result of the regime change engineered by the military, however. It also pointed to the failure of major socio-political entities to seize upon the opportunities presented by Soeharto’s demise. Stepan asserted that ‘a crucial task for the active opposition is to integrate as many anti-authoritarian movements as possible into the institutions of the emerging democratic majority.’1 Groups opposed to the Soeharto regime gained almost no representation in, or influence over, the executive and legislative institutions of the state for the first 18 months of the post-authoritarian transition, leaving key decisions of structural reform to politicians (and military officers) associated with the New Order. This failure was to a large extent caused by cleavages in the civilian political sphere, most of them rooted in long-standing competition between major religio-political constituencies. The discussion in chapter 2 has identified political and ideological disputes within Indonesia’s Muslim community as one of the main sources of conflict in civilian politics, weakening the civilian capacity to maintain democratic rule in the 1950s and assisting two successive authoritarian regimes to establish and sustain their rule. If the political crisis of 1997-1998 offered the chance to overcome such traditional rivalries, unite against the struggling regime and set the preconditions for successful democratic transition and consolidation, this opportunity was largely missed.

Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner suggested that ‘unity of democratic purpose among civilian political elites’2 is crucial to ending military intervention in politics and creating democratic civil-military relations in post-authoritarian transitions. Conflict between key civilian protagonists, on the other hand, is likely to complicate, obstruct or even abort the process of regime change and democratic consolidation. Diamond and Plattner argued that ‘the failure of

2 Diamond and Plattner 1996: xxiv.
civilian politicians and parties in Nigeria to unite against the annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential election allowed the military to terminate the democratic transition (...). Similarly, Indonesia's leading non-regime politicians did not manage to form an alliance to remove Soeharto from office and install a transitional government that represented a clear break with the past; instead, the student movement and societal unrest damaged the President to an extent that encouraged the armed forces to negotiate his departure and secure a controlled transfer of authority to his deputy. Thus the complexities of inter-civilian conflict were as important for the nature of regime change as the dynamics of military factionalism. The failure of civilian elites to present a democratic alternative to the faltering regime did not only allow moderate military officers to negotiate the conditions of Soeharto's resignation, but also set the country's major socio-political forces on a path of confrontation in the post-authoritarian system.

This chapter will discuss the political interaction between Muslim organisations and other key non-regime groups in the crisis that led to Soeharto's downfall. Influential authors on Indonesian Islam have provided largely favourable accounts of the role that moderate Muslim leaders played in the democratic transition. Robert Hefner, for example, suggested that 'Soeharto galvanized moderate Muslim opposition to his rule'. He claimed that this oppositional campaign 'aligned Wahid with Amien Rais', and that 'the two leaders coordinated their actions sufficiently that each reinforced the other.' Abdurrahman, according to Hefner, was 'at the forefront of those demanding reforms', and had joined in the 'call for Soeharto to step down'. In Greg Barton's view, the Abdurrahman of 1997 'was calling for reform and was one of the first major public figures to speak out about the need for Soeharto to resign'. The following discussion will dispute such interpretations and argue that many Muslim leaders were reluctant to openly align with oppositional forces and demand Soeharto's resignation; instead, they were at various stages prepared to help stabilise the regime in exchange for political concessions. In doing so, they were motivated by the competition between Muslim groups over religio-political hegemony that had influenced Indonesian politics since the colonial period and continued to impact on the events of 1997-1998. The chapter will focus in particular on the political behaviour of the senior leadership of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah and ICMI during the crisis. Their Islamic credentials made them pivotal actors in the elite negotiations surrounding Soeharto's fall, with the secular-nationalist forces led by Megawati Soekarnoputri playing only a marginal role. The divisions and

6 Ibid: 199.
conflicts between these major non-regime organisations ran counter to Diamond’s and Plattner’s demand for ‘unity of democratic purpose among civilian political elites’, excluding them from the formation of the first post-authoritarian government and preparing the scene for the severe fragmentation of civilian political forces in the new democratic polity.

I. STABILITY FIRST: NAHDLATUL ULAMA AND THE CRISIS

As the largest organisation of traditionalist Islam in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama was certain to play an important role in deciding the fate of Soeharto’s regime in times of economic and political crisis. NU had in the past helped to establish and stabilise authoritarian regimes, but had also demonstrated in 1965 that it could be a decisive factor for regime change when it chose to withdraw its support for the incumbent government. For much of the New Order, however, the regime was sufficiently stable, and NU needed the regime more to secure its interests than the regime needed NU to consolidate its rule. Since 1984, Abdurrahman Wahid had navigated NU through the political minefield of the New Order, oscillating between strategies of accommodation and confrontation towards Soeharto and his government. Using his lineage as the grandson of NU’s founder Hasjim Asj’ari to legitimise his control over the organisation, he promoted doctrinal and social reforms within the traditionalist community. Many of the kiai questioned Abdurrahman’s adaptation of secular ideas and were concerned about his close relationship with non-Muslim and pro-democracy groups, but they revered him for his deep knowledge of traditionalist culture and unrivalled political skills. Abdurrahman’s erratic and idiosyncratic leadership style had been subjected to regular criticism at NU conferences, but his political longevity and frequent involvement in elite negotiations appeared to confirm the accuracy of his instincts.

The mounting problems confronting the government after 1996 and the widespread impression that the New Order had entered its political twilight presented NU once again with the choice of either backing up or helping to unseat a faltering regime. In the 1997 elections, viewed as highly manipulated even for New Order standards, Nahdlatul Ulama faced two alternatives: first, the organisation could try to establish itself as a moderate voice of protest against the anachronistic inflexibility of the Soeharto government. This option would have led NU back to confrontation with the regime, with political cooperation and material support most likely cut off by a

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bureaucracy determined to secure another Golkar victory. The second alternative, namely extending its course of reconciliation with the regime pursued since late 1996, guaranteed NU a stable political environment and continued financial support for the pesantren, but put its claim to democratic credentials at risk. Confronted with this strategic dilemma, Abdurrahman clearly chose to support the troubled regime. Even before the election campaign began, he invited Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana to visit a number of crucial pesantren in NU strongholds, courting her as a potential successor to her father and opening the NU constituency to Golkar’s electoral machine.

Consolidating the Regime: Institutional Interests or Personal Agenda?

The decision of the NU chairman to collaborate with the regime undermined the prospects for a more united opposition against Soeharto whose support in the general populace was fading. In defining his course, Abdurrahman was driven by three major considerations related to political strategy, personal ambition and the socio-economic and religious interests of his community. First of all, Megawati’s failure to build up a credible alternative to the government had contributed to Abdurrahman’s conclusion that the New Order could last much longer than the Soeharto opponents were ready to admit. Given Soeharto’s increasingly repressive approach, it appeared unwise to re-open the conflict with the President. Moreover, Abdurrahman saw the failure of other political actors as a chance to locate himself and his organisation once again in the centre of Indonesian politics:

“Many people looked to Megawati as a possible leader. But she did not have the courage to lead, and buried herself in Kebagusan (her residence, M.M.) Let alone Amien Rais. He has become a victim of his own flip-flopping. (...) In this situation, I am called upon, and NU has a great chance. I can help Pak Harto to secure an orderly succession.”

The exact role he intended to play in Soeharto’s succession remained unclear, but some within the Muslim elite believed that he ultimately sought to assume the presidency himself. The third element in Abdurrahman’s agenda was his concern for the religious and socio-economic interests of the Nahdlatul Ulama constituency. Many NU kiai were dependent on subsidies from the bureaucracy, and they pressured Abdurrahman to view cooperation with the government as his priority. Abdurrahman himself was well aware of NU’s economic backwardness, and he feared

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9 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Mataram/Lombok, 16 November 1997.
10 Interview with Nurcholish Madjid, Jakarta 28 May 1998.
11 According to Abdurrahman, in 1997 NU had 6,800 pesantren and 21,000 schools under its coordination. While money for development and civil society projects was increasingly coming through international
that other religio-political constituencies would develop faster than his own. One of the major themes in his addresses to NU crowds was ‘not to allow it to happen that others already take off, and the NU kids are left on the runway’. Good relations with the regime translated into access to the economic infrastructure of the state, and the memory of marginalisation in the past served as a reminder not to confront Soeharto again.

Abdurrahman’s support for the regime led to considerable irritation in pro-democracy circles, and even among some NU activists and kiai. Pro-democracy groups had hoped that Abdurrahman would protest against the exclusion of Megawati’s party from the elections scheduled for April 1997, and probably even support his long-time friend’s veiled recommendation to boycott the vote. Instead, the NU chief not only ordered his followers to go to the ballot box but also helped Golkar to secure its best result so far by attacking its only serious rival, PPP. Adam Schwarz noted that Abdurrahman’s support for Golkar was motivated by his inclination to ‘put the NU’s institutional interests ahead of the democratic agenda, and his credentials as a democratic reformer suffered as a result.’ For many within NU, however, it was more complicated than that. While the kiai supported his decision to ask NU members to participate in the elections in order to avoid confrontation with the regime, they criticised the open courship of Siti Hardiyanti and Golkar. Habieb Syarief Mohammad, Chairman of NU’s West Java branch, recalled the confusion among many kiai over NU’s relationship with Golkar:

“Many kiai called me and asked if Gus Dur’s alliance with Golkar was official NU policy or Gus Dur’s personal agenda. It was a good decision to call on NU members to vote. But bringing Tutut to our pesantren? That had more to do with his own agenda, and NU became a laughing stock as a consequence of this.”

The doubts within NU about Abdurrahman’s strategy were also nurtured by the latter’s own implausible explanations for his actions. Abdurrahman explained that he had supported Soeharto’s party in order to prevent an electoral victory for PPP, which he claimed would have been viewed by the international community as a dangerous resurgence of radical Islam in Indonesia. Many NU members appeared to disagree: in the elections, PPP gained significantly

channels, like the American and Australian governments, UNICEF or foundations like the Ford Foundation and The Asia Foundation, the majority of NU institutions remained dependent on funds from local governments. See ‘NU Kini Miliki 21,000 Sekolah dan 6,800 Pesantren’, Media Indonesia 21 October 1997.


14 Interview with Habieb Syarief Mohammad, Lombok 17 November 1997.

in traditional NU strongholds, suggesting that Abdurrahman’s dislike for the party was not shared at the grassroots.

Opposing the Opposition: NU and the Crisis

Despite the controversies over his leadership style, there was no doubt that the majority of kiai supported Abdurrahman’s decision to exclude NU from political initiatives towards a more united opposition against the regime. Most of the kiai enjoyed the newly obtained harmony with the government, and they shared Abdurrahman’s distrust of the reliability of oppositional figures like Amien Rais. Thus the monetary crisis hitting the country in August 1997 could not have come at a more inconvenient moment for both NU and Abdurrahman personally. The kiai feared that the economic crisis would affect their constituency seriously, with lower-class workers, peasants and underemployed most exposed to the impact of inflation and food shortages. Although many economists initially predicted that the largely rural-based NU constituency would be shielded from the crisis by its strong network in the informal sector, imported inflation soon began to cross urban borders, causing severe loss of purchasing power in rural areas. 16 In addition, much of rural Indonesia was affected by a serious drought related to El Nino, a specific climatic condition. The kiai therefore faced the prospect of increasing discontent within their constituency, raising expectations that they take a more critical stand towards the government. A more confrontational approach, however, endangered the flow of subsidies facilitated by the strategy of accommodation, which in times of crisis played an even more crucial role than during the years of constant economic growth.

Thus the crisis presented itself to most NU leaders not as an opportunity to remove an unpopular authoritarian government, but as a disturbance in their search for a comfortable space in Soeharto’s polity. For Abdurrahman personally, the crisis also threatened the consolidation of his position within Nahdlatul Ulama. He had aimed to strengthen his grip over the organisation at an NU conference scheduled for November 1997 in Lombok, hoping that the smooth relations with the government would translate into increased support of Nahdlatul Ulama officials for his leadership. Previous conferences had seen enormous outbreaks of dissent against Abdurrahman, with critics attacking both his tendency to make erratic statements and his lack of managerial skills. The last major NU gathering, the Cipasung Congress in 1994, had voted for Abdurrahman

only by a narrow margin. Since then, he had changed his approach to the Soeharto regime, and the Lombok conference was therefore viewed as the first internal test of Abdurrahman's new policy of non-confrontation.

Nahdlatul Ulama's response to the crisis was defined by spiritual and political support for the embattled government. In this regard, three different types of assistance were prominent. First, NU echoed the assessment of the Soeharto regime that the crisis was not a political phenomenon, but an unfortunate external shock. Consequently, the NU leadership refrained from analysing the structural roots of the problem, asking its members instead to pray for the recovery of the economy. Second, NU issued statements of support for Soeharto's leadership, not only consolidating his position during the crisis but also assisting his re-election bid. The chairman of NU's religious advisory board, Kiai Ilyas Ruchiat, underlined in mid-September 1997 that the country still needed Soeharto as its leader. The third element consisted of attacks on Soeharto's opponents, largely carried out by Abdurrahman himself. After Amien declared in late September that he was ready to succeed Soeharto, Abdurrahman attacked the Muhammadiyah chairman as a publicity-seeking self-promoter with a hidden political agenda, and threatened to mobilise one million NU members against possible 'unconstitutional moves'. Furthermore, Abdurrahman demanded that Soeharto alone be given the authority to arrange his succession, as too many participants in the debate would only produce a chaotic outcome. Abdurrahman's attacks on Amien and his repeated pro-regime statements appear to be at odds with Hefner's analysis that 'the two leaders coordinated their actions' and were 'aligned' against the regime. Abdurrahman made little effort to hide his hostility towards the Muhammadiyah chairman, and used every occasion to demonstrate that his current interests lay in standing by the regime and not in trying to overthrow it.

NU's decision to distance itself from the growing opposition against the regime allowed it to hold its conference in Lombok in November 1997 without experiencing the high levels of government intervention so typical of previous events. In his opening speech, Ilyas Ruchiat

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17 Nahdlatul Ulama conducts congresses every five years, with mid-term conferences (Konferensi Besar, or Konbes) organised in between to evaluate the performance of the leadership elected at the congresses. The Lombok conference was one of these mid-term conferences.


mentioned the devastating impact of the crisis, but did not link the economic misfortune to questions about the quality of political leadership. Ilyas had been a tacit supporter of Golkar in the past, and in a separate interview, left no doubts about his loyalty to Soeharto:

"We can’t desert Pak Harto now. He has made a great contribution to our country, and he is a great friend of NU. We will do all we can to overcome this crisis, and assist Pak Harto in every possible way."

Abdurrahman, for his part, told the delegates that ‘NU supports the leadership of President Soeharto in organising a safe and smooth succession’. He repeated his attacks on Amien, underlining that NU would not support anybody who promoted his candidacy in the press. With this, Abdurrahman effectively ruled out the possibility of using the crisis to unite Indonesia’s oppositional forces against the New Order, and exposed long-standing religio-political cleavages as the major reason for doing so. NU branches generally welcomed the de-escalation vis-a-vis the bureaucracy, reporting that they now faced the opposite problem of being accused of ‘collaboration’. Ultimately, a large majority of NU’s regional chapters endorsed Abdurrahman’s leadership. A group of young activists, who had a more critical view of NU’s support for the regime but hoped that it was only temporary, chose not to speak up at the conference.

**Change Yes, Opposition No: The Crisis Escalates**

The cooperation between NU and the regime stabilised Abdurrahman’s leadership of the organisation, but he was also aware of the negative side effects this strategy incurred. His reputation as a democratic reformer had been severely damaged, and NU was more and more isolated from the key forces of civil society that promoted political change. In order to counterbalance this trend, Abdurrahman declared only a couple of days after the Lombok conference that NU was opposed to the status quo and demanded substantial political reform. The escalating crisis had ultimately forced Abdurrahman to adjust his public rhetoric, but he remained opposed to any form of organised challenge to the political framework of the New Order. Based on the news that Soeharto had suffered a mild stroke in early December,

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23 Interview with Ilyas Ruchiat, Mataram 19 November 1997.
24 Abdurrahman Wahid during his accountability speech at the Konbes NU, Mataram 19 November 1997, personal notes by the author.
Abdurrahman now believed that the President could die soon, and left no doubt that NU would support Try Sutrisno as Soeharto’s constitutional successor. William Liddle asserted that Try had been Abdurrahman’s preferred presidential candidate for some time, expecting him to neutralise the threat of political Islam and ‘be less authoritarian, more consensual, and more attentive to the needs of ordinary Indonesians than Soeharto had been.’ The other alternative, a collective leadership of political, societal and military leaders, as proposed by Amien Rais, was anathema to the NU chairman. It was in this phase of the crisis that the foundations for an intra-systemic change of government were laid, with key societal leaders ruling out the possibility of forming an oppositional collective prepared to take over from the crumbling regime:

“What is in it for me if I joined Amien in bringing down Soeharto and forming the next government? Amien and his friends are not to be trusted. They now suck up (menjilat) to me and NU because they know we are important, but once Soeharto is gone, they want power for themselves. I know them. (...) We are much better off by supporting Try. He is a good nationalist, and when he assumes power, everything will be according to the constitution. Amien, in contrast, wants chaos.”

In mid-January, Abdurrahman declined an invitation to meet Amien and Megawati, holding political talks with Siti Hardiyanti instead in which he assured Soeharto’s daughter that he had no plans of joining the opposition against the government. Despite Soeharto’s waning political fortunes, Abdurrahman preferred the benefits of cooperation with the regime to the uncertainty of building a coalition with his religio-political rivals. The ‘unity of democratic purpose among civilian political elites’, which Diamond and Plattner viewed as crucial for ending military-backed authoritarian rule, appeared impossible to achieve.

**Crisis and Convalescence: Abdurrahman and the Struggle for Hegemony in NU**

Ironically, Abdurrahman’s expectation of a quick Soeharto death almost turned against himself. On 19 January 1998, he suffered a serious stroke, resulting in the complete loss of his already impaired eyesight and causing severe damage to his motor skills. During his convalescence, Abdurrahman struggled to stay informed about political events, but he lost operational control.

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28 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Jakarta 17 December 1997.
29 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Jakarta 17 December 1997.
31 In an interview with a Dutch radio station, Abdurrahman added another reason: ‘So, if you ask me why NU is not mobilised to, let’s say, topple Soeharto, then the answer is easy: I don’t want my people to be slaughtered by the military.’ See ‘Gus Dur: Soeharto Harus Turun’, *Kabar dari Pijar* 13 January 1998.
over NU.\textsuperscript{32} Given the previous concentration of power in Abdurrahman’s hands, however, no obvious replacement emerged to lead NU in the same authoritative way as the three-term chairman had done.\textsuperscript{33} There were at least three groups competing for control of the organisation: first, the religious leadership around Ilyas Ruchiat and Sahal Mahfudz, who were apolitical in the sense that they wanted to maintain close relations to the power centre in order to promote the interests of NU’s \textit{pesantren}. They demonstrated loyalty to both Soeharto and the military, opposing initiatives that were likely to lead NU on the path of opposition to the New Order. Second, the Abdurrahman loyalists coordinated by Deputy Secretary-General Arifin Djunaidi, who wanted to integrate Nahdlatul Ulama into the discourse about political alternatives to Soeharto, but refrained from openly antagonising him. As Abdurrahman recovered from the stroke at his residence in South Jakarta, the loyalists established a temporary office there to maintain control over the Central Board. The third group consisted of young NU activists, who staged open demonstrations against Soeharto and demanded his resignation.\textsuperscript{34} The various factions pursued their own strategies, but the majority still backed a policy of non-confrontation. Consequently, an NU leadership meeting in mid-February decided to support the president to be elected by the upcoming MPR session, i.e. Soeharto.\textsuperscript{35}

After Soeharto’s re-election in March 1998, Abdurrahman developed a double strategy that was difficult to read for both his followers and his increasingly numerous critics. While blasting the Soeharto government in interviews with foreign media and meetings with diplomats, he assisted the President in his efforts to consolidate power in the domestic context. After the formation of a cabinet widely seen as ridiculously nepotistic, Abdurrahman contended that NU was satisfied with it as some NU members had been included. Asked who exactly these NU representatives were, he had to pass on the question.\textsuperscript{36} In mid-April, he claimed that demonstrating students in Yogyakarta had been paid by certain parties, undermining the credibility of the protest movement

\textsuperscript{32} Abdurrahman spent more than two months in hospital, returning to his home on 22 March. See ‘Gus Dur Sudah Boleh Pulang’, \textit{Jawa Pos} 20 March 1998.

\textsuperscript{33} NU Deputy Chairman Hafidz Utsman was appointed Acting Chairman of NU on the day after Abdurrahman’s stroke, and Secretary-General Ahmad Bagdja was given the mandate to act as spokesman for the organisation. Hafidz and Ahmad Bagdja were both low-profile functionaries without significant powerbases. See ‘Hafidz Utsman Ditunjuk Pimpin NU Sehari-hari’, \textit{Media Indonesia} 21 January 1998.

\textsuperscript{34} The activists were organised in three major NU-affiliated associations: IPNU (Ikatan Pelajar Nahdlatul Ulama, Nahdlatul Ulama Students’ Association), IPPNU (Ikatan Pelajar Putri Nahdlatul Ulama, Nahdlatul Ulama Female Students’ Association) and PMII (Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia, Indonesian Movement of Islamic Students). ‘Generasi Muda NU: Krisis Ekonomi Akibat Mismanajemen’, \textit{Suara Pembaruan} 22 February 1998; Forum Aliansi OKP/LSM/MAHASISWA, ‘Seruan Suksesi Damai dan Terbuka Untuk Keselamatan dan Masa Depan Rakyat dan Bangsa Indonesia’, Jakarta 5 February 1998.


\textsuperscript{36} ‘Tinggalkan RSCM, Gus Dur Langsung Komentari Kabinet’, \textit{Media Indonesia} 23 March 1998. Within the cabinet, only the Minister of Religious Affairs Quraish Shihab and the Minister for Women Affairs Tuti Alawiyah had NU backgrounds.

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at a time when radical elements within the regime were desperately looking for a pretext to crush the dissent.37 Overwhelmed by the growing societal dissent, and fearful that Abdurrahman's manoeuvres might damage NU's reputation irreversibly, NU officials from all three camps took the initiative to politically incapacitate their chairman. Even Ilyas and Sahal, now sensing the shift in the power constellation, were worried that NU might ruin its prospects in the coming post-authoritarian era if it collaborated too closely with a doomed regime. A week after Abdurrahman's heedless statement about the venality of the student movement, the NU central board issued a declaration supporting the demands of the protesters, and called on the military to listen to the aspirations of the people.38 Abdurrahman was deliberately excluded from the drafting of the press release.39 Although contradicted by his subordinates, Abdurrahman did not argue against the declaration, suggesting that he enjoyed watching his organisation undermining Soeharto while he personally continued to maintain good relations with the President.

NU's policy shift reflected the rapid decline of Soeharto's authority. Even conservative kiai in the regions strove to reconcile their traditionalist fikih with the popular demands for reform.40 The turn against the embattled ruler was not followed, however, by attempts to forge a broad coalition to prepare for the imminent succession. In this, the NU board shared the scepticism of its chairman. Like Abdurrahman, many NU kiai still feared a possible backlash by the residual powers of the regime against their constituency, and they too had little interest in helping their modernist rivals to replace the faltering government. The ulama were concerned, however, that Abdurrahman allowed NU's general policy to be defined by what Kevin O'Rourke called 'his

37 The Muslim poet Emha Ainun Nadjib wrote a sharp critique of Abdurrahman's behavior, cynically expressing his admiration for the latter's ability to analyse events despite his physical shortcomings and his non-involvement in the incidents he claimed to know everything about. He criticised the press for publishing every single piece of Abdurrahman's 'gossip', while hardly reporting about the objects of the dispute, the students themselves. See Emha Ainin Nadjib, Saat-Saat Terakhir Bersama Soeharto, Jakarta 1998: 161-162.
38 'PB NU: ABRI Sebaiknya Dukung Reformasi', Kompas 16 April 1998.
39 Arifin Djunaidi attempted in vain to convince the Central Board to listen to Abdurrahman before completing the draft, but his suggestion was ignored. Arifin had to engage in a heated argument with NU Deputy Chair Fajrul Falaakh, who was put in charge of writing the release in cooperation with senior kiai Mustofa Bistri. Fajrul reminded Arifin that it was unnecessary to carry Abdurrahman's name for all purposes, and that the latter was sick anyway. Interview with Fajrul Falaakh, Yogyakarta 22 November 2000.
40 Nur Iskandar al-Barsany, one of Central Java’s leading kiai, complained that NU should have popularised the ideas of reform much earlier: 'If ideas like (those in the NU declaration in April) had been developed by NU Headquarters earlier, and had those ideas become the theological foundation in the NU community, especially in the communities of the kiai and the pesantren, I am sure that in times when the state is facing a crisis like this, the culture of silence would not have been so evident.' He therefore demanded that the kiai immediately begin developing a theological foundation for the debate of politics in the pesantren (fikih siyasah), including the discussion of social issues (al-fiqh al-ijtim'iy). KH Nur Iskandar al-Barsany, 'Ulama, Santri dan Reformasi', Suara Merdeka 21 April 1998.
determination to thwart Amien Rais. The majority in the NU board did not believe that Amien’s leadership of the protest movement was sufficient reason for Nahdlatul Ulama to reject its goals. In the words of one NU deputy chair:

“Between Gus Dur and Amien, that was personal. Whenever Amien said ‘A’, Gus Dur said ‘B’. If Amien said ‘B’, Gus Dur said ‘A’. (...) We, however, had to defend the interests of NU. And by April and May, it was clear for everybody to see that the regime had no future.”

Despite Soeharto’s eroding power, the diversity of views within Nahdlatul Ulama offered the President opportunities to divide the opposition towards him. It was in particular Abdurrahman’s continued confrontation with Amien Rais and other modernists that allowed Soeharto to hope that the fragmentation of political Islam, used and nurtured since the late 1950s to sustain authoritarian rule, would secure his survival in the crisis of 1998. So long as the goal of excluding competitors from power motivated non-regime forces to align with Soeharto rather than with reformist groups, the President’s chances of maintaining his grip on the political elite remained high. Unfortunately for the President, however, the importance of elite politics for the solidity of the regime was on the decline. In the months of April and May 1998, the political initiative shifted more and more from the divided elites to the uncontrollable force of the student movement, with substantial consequences for the character of regime change that was about to occur.

II. CHALLENGING SOEHARTO: MUHAMMADIYAH, AMIEN RAIS AND THE PRESIDENCY

Like Abdurrahman Wahid in Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah’s leader Amien Rais had experienced high levels of fluctuation in his relationship with the New Order regime. In his earlier years, he had criticised what he saw as anti-Islamic policies of the Soeharto government, condemning the disproportionate representation of non-Muslims in the bureaucracy and economic privileges for the Chinese. His predilection for sharp, witty comments, often in defence of the modernist community, made him popular among Islamic intellectuals, but also consolidated his reputation as a ‘radical’ in the eyes of traditionalist, secular and non-Muslim constituencies. After Soeharto’s endorsement of the foundation of ICMI in 1990, Amien changed his stand towards the government. He now believed that the interests of the Muslim community vis-à-vis the regime

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41 O’Rourke 2002: 83.
42 Interview with Fajrul Falaakh, Yogyakarta 22 November 2000.
were best served by seeking representation in it, and thought that ICMI provided a political platform to achieve this goal. Amien built political networks with Muslim bureaucrats around Habibie and defended the Soeharto government against accusations that it politicised Islam for the purpose of regime maintenance. Amien’s cooperation with the government also reflected the political interests of Muhammadiyah, and facilitated his rapid rise in the organisation. For most of the New Order period, Muhammadiyah had cultivated good relations with the regime, declaring itself a non-political organisation in 1971. Subsequently, many Muhammadiyah members held important positions in the bureaucracy and Golkar. For Muhammadiyah, Amien appeared to have all the qualifications to lead the organisation. On the one hand, he represented a new generation of Islamic intellectuals, promoting reforms and breaking with the conservative leadership style of Fachruddin and Azhar Basyir. On the other hand, his easy access to government circles offered protection for the vast network of schools and social institutions run by Muhammadiyah throughout the archipelago. In 1994, Amien became Muhammadiyah’s chairman.

Once in charge, however, Amien began to question the effectiveness of cooperation with the New Order. He acknowledged that the Muslim community had received a number of legal-political concessions, but admitted that the regime had not changed its repressive character. On balance, Amien concluded, the New Order had profited more from his regime participation than Muhammadiyah and the modernist Muslim constituency:

“What have we achieved? Yes, our wives and daughters can wear jilbab now, we have Islamic banking, and we are more free in exercising our religious practices. But have we achieved a more just, equal and open society? Soeharto and his cronies are firmly in power, and yes, our policy of engagement might have actually contributed to that.”

In late 1996 and early 1997, Amien issued a series of statements critical of the regime, mostly focusing on the excesses of economic cronyism in Soeharto’s family and inner circle. The regime reacted by forcing Amien to resign from his senior position in ICMI, and it put pressure on the Muhammadiyah Central Board to distance itself from its Chairman. Lukman Harun, a former Parmusi politician and Dewan Dakwah official who had joined Golkar in the 1990s, was the most prominent critic of Amien’s confrontational course against the regime. The majority of the organisation, however, stood firm behind its Chairman. Muhammadiyah representatives reported from the regions that while the bureaucracy had issued continued warnings against the organisation, there was no significant regime backlash against their educational and social

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The high representation of Muhammadiyah officials in the local bureaucracies and Golkar boards, and the deep entrenchment of its socio-religious network throughout the New Order state, helped to protect Amien from regime-initiated punishment for his criticism.

Crisis and Opportunity: Amien's Challenge

Ironically, the crisis that began to unfold in August 1997 consolidated Amien's authority within Muhammadiyah. In the eyes of many Muhammadiyah functionaries, the economic decline of the New Order confirmed the accuracy of Amien's earlier criticisms of the regime, which were now echoed in the standard commentaries of political observers. The crisis transformed Amien from a prominent Muslim leader into a key national figure, especially after he, rather spontaneously, declared his preparedness to run for the presidency in September 1997. The challenge to Soeharto's bid for re-election was a cultural revolution in a regime that had previously used its tools of repression and political engineering to secure the President's unanimous re-appointment. Megawati's ouster in 1996, following rumours she might challenge Soeharto for the presidency, had underlined the President's insistence on undivided support for his rule. While Amien did not command a political party in the Assembly, and could therefore not directly intervene in the electoral process, the progressing crisis provided his candidacy with a momentum difficult to control by the regime. In anticipation of potential manoeuvres by Amien in the Assembly, Soeharto had in August already removed his name from a list of candidates for MPR membership. This decision excluded Amien from the formal structures of the New Order regime and strengthened his determination to undermine them from outside.

The regime criticism launched by the Muhammadiyah chairman was unique not only in its trenchant intensity, but also in its outreach to other socio-political constituencies. Among the leaders of Indonesia's major socio-political forces, Amien emerged as the only key figure...
working towards a united opposition against the authoritarian regime. Megawati followed Abdurrahman in rejecting active regime opposition because she felt responsible for the security of her followers. This reluctance was underpinned and aggravated further by her non-combative personal style. Believing that the New Order might crack down on a possible protest movement, Megawati avoided any public statement that her supporters or the regime could interpret as an appeal for active resistance against Soeharto. Her husband contended that

“I know everybody was critical of Ibu Mega because she didn’t do more. But these people have no idea how it’s like to have the responsibility for millions of people. One wrong word, and there could have been a bloodbath.” 47

Amien, on the other hand, was confident that the entrenchment of Muhammadiyah’s socio-religious institutions in the regime would grant them immunity from potential acts of retribution, allowing him to ignore advice by some of his sympathisers in the government to drive a less confrontational course. Thus, instead of toning down his criticism, he developed strategies to build up a broad-based alliance against Soeharto. By December, he contemplated ways of cooperating with both Abdurrahman and Megawati. A coalition between nationalist elements, traditionalist Islam and modernist Muslims would have been a serious challenge to the crisis-ridden government, possibly overcoming the very disunity among Indonesia’s civilian forces that had allowed non-democratic actors to establish and sustain decades of authoritarian rule. The response Amien received from Abdurrahman, however, was negative. Abdurrahman had no intention of aligning himself with anti-Soeharto forces and thereby putting his good relationship with the regime at risk. 48 Megawati, for her part, was slightly more sympathetic. She was deeply suspicious of Amien because of the latter's reputation for Islamic exclusivism, but acknowledged his contribution to undermining the regime that had excluded her from political life since 1996. 49 Megawati agreed to two public appearances with Amien in January. 50 The meetings failed, however, to overcome their mutual prejudices: Megawati saw no reason to revise her view of Amien as a political opportunist, and Amien felt that his perception of Megawati as an intellectually limited and politically overrated amateur had been confirmed. 51 By early February, the contact broke off.

48 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Jakarta 17 December 1997.
49 Laksamana Sukardi, a leading PDI official, maintained that 'of course they (Amien and Megawati, M.M.) had a difficult relationship. But one thing Ibu Mega knew: Amien was as disgusted about the machinations of the New Order as she was, and there appeared to be some common ground.' Interview with Laksamana Sukardi, Sanur/Bali 10 October 1998.
Failure and Temptation: Amien’s Short-lived Truce with the Regime

The failure of Amien’s efforts to forge an anti-regime alliance between key elites reflected the fragmentation of Indonesia’s civilian forces, and highlighted once again why the New Order had been able to survive for such a long time. The unwillingness of traditionalist and nationalist leaders to join him in eroding the regime had a profound impact on Amien, causing him to reconsider his opposition towards Soeharto and the inclusivist character it was supposed to acquire. Furthermore, Soeharto’s decision to anoint Habibie as his vice-presidential candidate provided an additional incentive for revising his oppositional attitude towards the government. Indicating his shifting position, he returned to some of his pre-crisis prejudices. He supported, for example, the President’s attacks on Chinese conglomerates, identifying them as the source for the country’s economic problems. The regime’s increased use of Islamic sentiments in the crisis and the prospect of a Habibie presidency, under which Amien was likely to play a prominent role, apparently softened the latter’s criticism of the Soeharto government. In mid-February, Amien told a Muhammadiyah gathering that Habibie had assured him Soeharto would do all he could to overcome the economic crisis. In addition, Amien advised Emil Salim, a widely respected former minister and fellow ICMI associate, to drop his public candidacy for the vice-presidential nomination, which the latter had launched in protest against Soeharto’s monopolistic dominance over the political system. For Amien, Emil’s move carried the risk that Soeharto might view Emil’s campaign as representing ICMI as a whole and thus feel encouraged to cancel Habibie’s nomination.

The opposition to Emil’s candidacy suggested that Amien was about to redefine his political priorities. The efforts to secure the rise of an Islamic ally to one of the top posts of the regime had taken precedence over the support for expressions of protest against the non-democratic format of the New Order polity. Speculation was rife that Amien had suspended his criticism of Soeharto and thrown his support behind Habibie because he aimed at cabinet posts for Muhammadiyah. The subsequent accusations of opportunism damaged Amien’s reputation, and his critics appeared unconvinced by assurances that he only followed the political advice of the former Masyumi

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54 Amien offered to have his head shaved if it turned out that he sought cabinet seats for himself or his organisation. ‘If he (Amien himself) has ambitions to get one of the ministerial seats, then it’s not him anymore. If that happens, this is no Amien who is a Rais (leader) any longer. Or no Rais who is Amien (trusted) any longer. I receive bets for shaving my hair.’ See ‘Beri Pak Harto Kesempatan Lagi’, Jawa Pos 19 February 1998.
leader Muhammad Natsir ‘to build up good communication channels with all segments of this state, but don't make commitments’. As Soeharto was re-elected in March with Habibie as his Vice-president, Amien called on his followers to remain calm and pray for the success of the new government. The fundamental opposition of the previous months, driven by the analysis that Soeharto’s continued rule was certain to result in Indonesia’s political and economic collapse, seemed now far away.

From Elite Politics to Populist Power: Amien and the Student Movement

Amien’s sudden reconciliation with the regime raised questions about the motivation of the reform agenda he had driven so ferociously, and pointed to a general pattern of strategic interests within the non-regime elite. Many of his critics suspected that Amien had sought to remove the regime mainly because it had broken its promises of increased political powers for Islamic leaders, and that he had hoped democratic change would deliver the levels of regime participation that the Muslim majority deserved. The prospect of a Habibie presidency, however, re-opened the possibility of achieving fair political representation for Muslims without replacing the foundations of the New Order polity. From this perspective, regime change was largely a function of serving sectoral interests of political elites, and not a rejection of non-democratic rule as such. Richard Robison and Vedi Hadiz have suggested that Abdurrahman, Megawati and Amien ‘still considered that their ambitions could be achieved from within the regime’, and that one of their main fears was ‘losing control to more radical and populist forces’. While this observation is accurate for the political behavior of both Abdurrahman and Megawati throughout the crisis, it only partially captures the complexity of Amien’s rapidly changing regime relations. After only one month of conciliatory interaction, Amien concluded that Habibie was unable to serve his interests ‘from within the regime’. Consequently, he aligned himself with the very ‘radical and populist forces’ Robison and Hadiz asserted were contradictory to his interests. Hoping to combine his influence in elite politics with the moral authority and mass-driven force of popular protest, the chairman of Muhammadiyah linked up with the student movement in order to seek Soeharto’s ultimate removal from power.

Amien’s abrupt switch from regime support to fundamental opposition was reflective of the many strategic choices and dilemmas that political actors faced in the constantly changing context

of the crisis. But it also consolidated the view among Amien's critics in the elite that he was too unstable a partner to form a coalition with. The two main factors that led Amien to cancel his temporary support for Soeharto underlined, in the eyes of his political rivals, that his interests were largely defined by tactical and constituency-based considerations. First, the announcement of what David Jenkins called a 'Caligulean' cabinet in mid-March convinced Amien that Soeharto had no intention of granting Habibie greater political influence, let alone of preparing him as his successor. Instead of appointing critical Islamic figures from the activist faction of ICMI, Soeharto had chosen a cabinet of cronies, with his Chinese business associate Bob Hasan taking the crucial trade portfolio. Second, popular protest had replaced elite politics as the main factor driving political change, leading Amien to believe that Soeharto's fate would be decided on the streets rather than in political backroom deals. After the cabinet line-up was made public, Amien started immediately to tour the campuses, ridiculing the quality of the ministers and gaining the sympathy of the students by mediating in their conflicts with the security forces. He stepped up his international media campaign against Soeharto, and attempted to drive a wedge between the armed forces and the President by stating that the hope of the people now rested with the military. With Abdurrahman branding the students as paid agents of unnamed group interests and Megawati refusing to play an active role in the opposition, Amien emerged as the spiritus rector of the student movement.

The failure to build an elite-based alliance with central figures of other religio-political constituencies led Amien to apply his pluralist strategy to the new coalition with students and grassroots groups. The student movement included significant non-Muslim and pluralist elements, and their leaders were apparently more prepared to believe in Amien's inclusivist turn than his traditional rivals in the political elite. Meeting with church leaders and Chinese

57 David Jenkins, 'Suharto Digs in With His All-Crony Cabinet', in: Edward Aspinall, Herb Feith and Gerry van Klinken (editors), The Last Days of Suharto, Monash Asia Institute, Clayton 1999: 32.
58 Amien openly acknowledged that he had previously underestimated the student movement as a political force. Speaking at the UI (Universitas Indonesia, University of Indonesia) campus on 12 March, Amien admitted that two months earlier, he thought that the young generation was already exhausted (loyo), but 'obviously we, the older generation, were wrong. Yesterday, the students of Gadjah Mada organised similar protest activities, and I gave them eight out of ten. This time, I give eight and a half.' See 'Amien Tampil di Tengah Ribuan Mahasiswa UI', Jawa Pos 13 March 1998.
60 At several occasions, Amien invited ABRI 'to march together with the people while maintaining Pancasila, the Constitution and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika'. By calling on the military to join the movement, and assuring it that the fundamentals of the state were not at risk if Soeharto was to be deserted, Amien hoped that ABRI would finally conclude that supporting reform was a better choice than defending the President at all cost. Without ABRI's 'green light', Amien declared on 21 March, a People's Power movement would never happen. See 'Amien Rais: Reformasi Dari Kampus Jangan Dianggap Enteng', Suara Pembaruan 19 April 1998; 'Amien: Saya Siap Diperiksa 24 Jam', Jawa Pos 22 March 1998.
businessmen, Amien tried to alter his predominant image as an Islamic politician. But like his earlier attempts to forge a pluralist elite coalition, Amien’s efforts to expand his grassroots support attracted accusations of political opportunism. His critics were quick to point out that Amien’s courting of non-Muslim groups was a calculated move to enhance his position in the crisis negotiations and improve his political career prospects for the post-crisis period. In addition, Amien’s new pluralist outlook also appeared designed to polish his international image. The international community was likely to play an important role in determining both Soeharto’s fate and the shape of the political landscape in the post-New Order era, encouraging Amien to lobby Western capitals for their support. In the midst of the student demonstrations in early May, Amien travelled to the United States and Europe, presenting himself as the political alternative to Soeharto and promoting his new pluralist agenda.

The tension between Amien’s Islamic image and the pluralist design of the coalition he tried to create was reflected in the continued use of Muhammadiyah as his political vehicle. While it provided him with the necessary operational resources, the explicit identification with his modernist home base discouraged the leaders of other constituencies, most notably Abdurrahman and Megawati, from joining his alliance. Members of the Muhammadiyah Central Board had for some time allowed Amien to use the Muhammadiyah offices in Yogyakarta and Jakarta for political purposes. Since the beginning of the student demonstrations, Muhammadiyah universities had figured prominently in the protest movement, and banners supporting Amien’s nomination as president were common on Muhammadiyah-affiliated campuses. In institutional terms, the organisation remained neutral, but prominent Muhammadiyah figures expressed their support openly. Deputy Chairman Malik Fajar was one of them:

“I was extremely proud of Amien. I think everybody understood that he was expressing Muhammadiyah’s views of reform, so there was no need for us to come out with additional calls for change. (…) My house became some kind of operational

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61 Interview with Abdrurahman Wahid, Jakarta 26 May 1998.
62 During a discussion in Washington on 30 April, Amien underlined that for the ‘last seven months, I have actively conducted dialogues with the leaders of other religions, like the bishops. They come to my house in Yogyakarta and have regular meetings with me. I am also invited to speak in front of Christian students. I am convinced that with meetings like these, we can cultivate a common understanding.’ See ‘Amien: Pemimpin Golkar Kehilangan Arah’, Jawa Pos 1 May 1998.
63 Amien often stressed that he criticised the government ‘as chairman of Muhammadiyah’, and he frequently started his catalogue of demands with sentences like ‘for Muhammadiyah, reform has to contain three aspects (…).’ The reference to the organisation he led added weight to his demands, but also strengthened the protection against possible punishment by the regime. See ‘Amien Rais: Reformasi Dari Kampus Jangan Dianggap Enteng’, Suara Pembaruan 19 April 1998.
centre of Amien’s campaign, and of course Muhammadiyah people helped us a lot.”

Returning from his overseas trip on 11 May, Amien announced at a gathering of 5,000 Muhammadiyah santri in Jakarta that he would establish a People’s Leadership Council (Majelis Kepemimpinan Rakyat) by the end of May. For Megawati and Abdurrahman, the event represented the very combination of Amien’s personal leadership ambitions, calculated pluralist outreach and sectoral modernist interests that had fed their skepticism about Amien for several years. Consequently, they stayed away from the Council although Amien had earlier claimed that he had secured their participation.

The refusal of important constituency leaders to support the protest movement against Soeharto, while Amien had assumed its leadership, pointed to the continued divisions within Indonesia’s non-regime elite. Amien’s efforts to forge an alliance of modernist Muslims, traditionalist Islam and secular nationalism to challenge and eventually replace the regime had failed. Abdurrahman and Megawati harboured deep doubts about Amien’s political sincerity, consistency and reliability, leading them to believe that the chairman of Muhammadiyah pursued the goal of alliance building and regime change largely to satisfy personal ambitions and constituency interests. As a result, the initiative for overthrowing the New Order polity shifted from societal leaders to the student movement, with Amien playing an intellectual, but by no means operational leadership role. The absence of coordination between the main oppositional forces not only allowed the government to prolong its rule, but impacted also on the nature of the eventual regime change. With the civilian elite unprepared to seize power, and the student movement seeking a quick change of government, moderate elements in the armed forces took the lead in securing a negotiated, intra-systemic transfer of power. This hand-over of authority within the constitutional framework of the regime lifted its main beneficiaries into the limelight: B.J. Habibie and his ICMI associates.

65 Interview with Malik Fajar, Jakarta 3 June 1998.

66 The shape and the function the Council evolved as Amien developed the idea. On 7 May he had told a radio reporter in Germany that the ‘team’ was to be formed by the leading political figures of the country, including himself, Megawati and Abdurrahman. The task of the team was to meet with Soeharto and his cabinet to discuss ways out of the crisis. On 8 May, Amien explained to a Kompas journalist in Den Haag that the main agenda of the team was to work out a reform platform and then, interestingly, a power sharing arrangement. After 11 May, Amien used the term ‘council’, but Megawati’s and Abdurrahman’s participation was no longer scheduled. Instead, he suggested the formation of a board of political and academic figures sympathetic to him, with the leadership of the council clearly in his hands. See ‘Amien Rais Ingin Bentuk Tim Kepemimpinan Rakyat’, Suara Pembaruan 8 May 1998; and ‘Amien Rais: Akan Dibentuk Majelis Kepemimpinan Rakyat’, Kompas 12 May 1998.
III. BETWEEN REBELLION AND COLLABORATION: ICMI, SOEHARTO AND HABIBIE

The difficulty of creating a united front against the regime was aggravated by the continued ability of the Soeharto government to tie key civilian elites, including some Muslim leaders, to its fate. Amien's oscillation between support for the regime and fundamental opposition towards it was not a unique political phenomenon, but was also reflective of the debate within ICMI, the organisation that had sidelined him in early 1997. ICMI had since its inception in 1990 accommodated a variety of divergent interests, balancing critical activists, government bureaucrats, and moderate Muslim intellectuals. The activists around Adi Sasono, ICMI's Secretary-General, had been highly critical of Soeharto, especially of his economic policies. They hoped that cooperation with the regime would grant them greater access to the policy debates within the government elite and allow them to realise their strategic goal of redistributing Chinese-controlled economic assets to Muslim small-scale businesses. By 1997, however, many members of the activist faction were deeply frustrated with the limitations of their political influence. They filled only marginal posts in the lower bureaucracy as well as in think tanks and were largely excluded from the decision-making in Soeharto's power centre. Similar to Amien, the activist group felt that the regime had failed to deliver on its promises of higher political representation for Muslims, but in contrast to the Muhammadiyah chairman, they had no power base of their own. Consequently, they continued to rely on Habibie's patronage and his appeals for patience. The bureaucrats, on the other hand, had gained a number of important positions in cabinet, Golkar and the armed forces. Their Islamic credentials were often doubtful, however, with many career bureaucrats only aligning themselves with ICMI in order to improve their standing in the elite competition over crucial government posts. ICMI bureaucrats had very diverse agendas, ranging from the advancement of high technology to influence over military appointments. Often, these goals appeared to have little relevance for the social, cultural or political needs of the Muslim community, encouraging the third ICMI faction, consisting of

67 Schwarz 2004: 176-177.
68 Adi wanted to develop 'a national distribution system that reaches the whole society and reduces the risks of exclusive distribution as it happens these days'. See 'Sekum Adi Sasono: Unjuk Rasa itu Wajar dan Sehat', Ummat 4 March 1998.
69 The military group in ICMI was led by Achmad Tirtosudiro, a retired Lieutenant-General with extensive experience in military business, bureaucratic jobs and diplomatic postings, who had met Habibie in Germany in 1973 and had maintained a close relationship ever since, becoming chairman of ICMI's Jakarta chapter. Rayani Sriwidodo, Jenderal dari Pesantren Legok: 80 Tahun Achmad Tirtosudiro, Pustaka Jaya, Jakarta 2002.
moderate Islamic intellectuals like Nurcholish Madjid, to almost completely disengage from the organisation.

Crisis and Exclusion: Habibie on the Decline?

The attitudes of ICMI leaders vis-à-vis the New Order regime mirrored not only factional divisions within the organisation, but were also defined by the fluctuating political fortunes of their main patron. For much of the 1990s, Habibie was considered a strong candidate for the vice-presidency. Despite his failure to win the nomination in 1993, he had continued to work ambitiously towards the 1998 anointment. Changes in the composition of the regime in the second half of the 1990s, however, had not always worked in Habibie’s favor. Soeharto's dislike for the critical comments on his government by ICMI activists had cast doubts over Habibie's prospects, and new political figures had entered the inner circle of the President. Soeharto began to contemplate a dynastic solution to the succession problem, and other loyalists like Hartono, Ginandjar Kartasasmita or Wiranto were also mentioned as potential vice-presidential candidates.

The impact of the economic crisis further added to Habibie's apparent decline. With Soeharto forced to call for international help to acquire emergency credits, and Indonesia increasingly exposed to the fluctuations of the currency market and stock exchanges, the economic reputation of vice-presidential candidates attracted particular attention. Habibie's unorthodox view on economic mechanisms and industrial policy, in the better days of the New Order called 'Habibienomics', now appeared as a heavy burden for the minister. International donor agencies and domestic critics viewed his import-substitution program in the high-technology sector, with billions of dollars spent to develop national aircraft and other prestigious projects, as an irresponsible waste of funds. As Habibie's chances to secure the post as Soeharto's deputy and possible successor appeared to wane, so did the loyalty of the ICMI group around Adi Sasono towards their patron.

The impression of Habibie’s declining career prospects sharpened the factional divisions within ICMI and drove the activist group closer to regime opposition. While the camp associated with the bureaucratic and military elite still believed that Habibie had a realistic chance of becoming Soeharto's deputy,70 the activists around Adi Sasono were convinced that Habibie's campaign had

70 Achmad created an uproar in Golkar when he stated in September 1997 that Habibie was ready to take up the vice-presidency. Supporters of Golkar chairman Harmoko, who had vice-presidential ambitions himself, deplored the statement publicly, and Habibie finally had to distance himself from it. See 'Golkar Merasa Di-Fait-a-compli ICMI', Sinar 19 September 1997. ZA Maulani, another retired general active in
been severely damaged. In addition, Soeharto had taken the names of Adi Sasono, Watik Pratikna, Jimly Assidique and Dawam Rahardjo from the list of MPR candidates, further distancing the activist wing of ICMI from the New Order establishment. The feeling of exclusion from the regime and the expectation of Habibie’s political demise led the ICMI activists to change their strategic goal from the penetration of state institutions to regime change. In line with Amien Rais, Adi Sasono now believed that only an alliance of Indonesia’s leading societal figures could force Soeharto to resign. In this coalition, ICMI was to be a major element, neutralising its image of a collaborator with the regime and positioning itself for the post-authoritarian era. In early January 1998, Adi went public with the proposal for a national dialogue to overcome the economic crisis. The dialogue was to engage Amien, Megawati, Abdurrahman and other relevant society leaders in a discussion forum, with regime change as the ultimate goal:

“We say generally that the goal is coalition building for a better future, but I think everybody understands that our aim is to prepare the political landscape for the post-Soeharto era. (...) It is clear that this country needs new leadership.”

Like Amien, however, Adi earned little more than suspicion from the socio-political leaders he sought to include in the coalition. Abdurrahman ruled out his involvement in the dialogue, and Megawati sent no clear signals as to whether she would participate. As the press still speculated about if and when the summit would take place, Adi suddenly called the meeting off.

**Habibie In, Opposition Out: ICMI and the Vice-presidency**

The cancellation of the national dialogue pointed to the multitude of political interests and motives that drove oppositional forces during the crisis. It highlighted both the often tactical nature of their political considerations and the extreme uncertainty of the environment they operated in. ICMI had given up on the idea of the national dialogue because its position in the political landscape had changed dramatically, and literally over night: Soeharto had strongly indicated that Habibie was his vice-presidential candidate for the upcoming MPR session in March 1998. With this, ICMI was transformed from an increasingly marginalised group with large oppositional elements into a political force with a substantial stake in defending the regime.

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ICMI, was convinced that Habibie would surprise everybody and become the next vice-president. Interview with Z.A. Maulani, 11 December 1997.

71 Interview with Adi Sasono, Jakarta 8 January 1998.


73 Interview with Adi Sasono, Jakarta 8 January 1998.

at least until Habibie was securely installed. The sudden turn of events surprised not only ICMI, but sent shock waves throughout the political system. Only days before, Soeharto had signed a second agreement with the IMF, which political analysts believed had excluded Habibie from the vice-presidential competition as it increased pressure on Indonesia to deliver concrete evidence of economic and political reform. Soeharto's political logic, however, worked contrary to the rationalism of the observers. Instead of bowing to the pressure, Soeharto chose to defy the international finance community and demonstrate his unchanged control over domestic politics. In addition, the choice of a controversial vice-president allowed him to make the succession issue, in the words of John McBeth, ‘unpalatable’. Had he anointed a candidate popular with both foreign governments and domestic political forces, the pressure on Soeharto to resign in favour of his deputy might have become irresistible if the crisis continued.

Habibie’s anointment facilitated the temporary revival of the concept of regime penetration that many modernist intellectuals had abandoned in the mid-1990s after it was considered a failure. The prospect of a Habibie presidency appeared to contradict their assessment that Soeharto had misused the promise of regime participation to lure Muslim groups into backing his rule, but had proved unwilling to delegate substantial political powers to Islamic politicians. With Habibie a heartbeat away from the presidency, the strategy of participating in the regime appeared to have succeeded. Thus within days of the announcement, Adi Sasono terminated his criticism of the government, and saw his new task as bringing ICMI back on the track of loyalty towards Habibie and, by implication, the Soeharto regime. In conceptual terms, Adi spoke now of an ‘accelerated evolution’ instead of regime change. The adjusted terminology tried to cover the fact that, once again, offers of increased representation in the New Order had led a major religio-political force to give up, at least temporarily, criticising the non-democratic nature of the regime. Most importantly, Adi and Achmad Tirtosudiro lobbied Amien Rais to end his policy of confrontation and put his trust in the prospect of a Habibie presidency. They persuaded Amien to accept a truce with the regime, and for a while it seemed as if the promises of a prosperous era under

76 Adi Sasono expressed ICMI’s view that ‘the office of the vice-president in the upcoming term will be of strategic importance in the effort to change the economic and political system in Indonesia.’ Even Nurcholish Madjid was convinced that ‘if Habibie is elected vice-president, the future of Indonesian democracy will be brighter.’ Nurcholish had been one of the most vocal critics of ICMI’s pro-regime approach. See ‘ICMI Siap Lepaskan Habibie Jadi Wapres’, Kompas 26 January 1998; ‘15 Tokoh Muslim Bertemu Habibie’, Republika 25 February 1998.
Habibie’s leadership had reunited the Muhammadiyah chairman with his former companions in ICMI.

ICMI’s Dual Option: Defending or Overthrowing Soeharto

Soeharto’s re-election and Habibie’s installation as his deputy in March broadened ICMI’s strategic options and anticipated yet another change in its relations with the regime. Before March, loyalty to Soeharto’s rule was essential in order to secure Habibie’s ascension to the vice-presidency. After the MPR session, however, ICMI possessed two political options that were easily adjustable to the changing political environment: first, continued support for Soeharto if the latter granted enough concessions to modernist Muslims in general and ICMI in particular; or, alternatively, joining the opposition, eroding Soeharto’s government and working towards Habibie’s constitutional rise to power. It was primarily the formation of the cabinet that pushed ICMI into endorsing the second option. After it had become known that Siti Hardiyanti was in charge of distributing the portfolios, Adi Sasono warned on 13 March that if the names rumoured to hold key posts in the government turned out to be true, Indonesia’s international reputation was at risk. In response to the rumours, an ICMI leadership meeting asked Habibie to secure cabinet positions for several critical ICMI activists. At the same time, Achmad Tirtosudiro took over the acting chairmanship of the organisation, increasing its autonomy vis-a-vis Habibie and preparing the organisation for its turn against the regime. On the day before the cabinet announcement, Habibie accompanied Soeharto to his Friday prayers to remind him of the importance of ICMI participation in the cabinet. The President, obviously unnerved, reprimanded his deputy in an unusually harsh tone. When the cabinet was announced a day later, none of Habibie's nominees from ICMI's activist faction had been included. Instead, Soeharto re-appointed the ICMI bureaucrat Haryanto Dhanutirto, whose questionable record had made him a controversial figure even within his own organisation.

The disappointment within ICMI over the composition of the cabinet drove the organisation back to the course of opposing the regime. This high fluctuation in ICMI’s attitudes exposed the volatility of the political context in which societal groups had to make quick and immensely

80 Interview with Adi Sasono, Jakarta 8 June 1998.
81 In late 1995, Haryanto had been in the centre of a corruption scandal, with the government’s Inspector-General accusing him of financial misconduct involving around 3 million US dollars. Gerry van Klinken, ‘Clash of Interests’, Inside Indonesia 46, March 1996.
consequential decisions for their constituencies. Amidst the collective uncertainty, however, a general pattern emerged that appeared to guide socio-political leaders in defining their position vis-à-vis non-democratic rule. Offers of participation in the regime were likely to silence concerns over its authoritarian nature, while exclusion from it led almost certainly to demands for democratic regime change. Soeharto's omission of Islamic activists led the ICMI leadership to believe that the President had no intention of granting Habibie a significant role in running the government.\(^{82}\) Within ICMI, it was now not only Adi Sasono and his critical associates who pushed for fundamental opposition towards the Soeharto government, but also the senior leadership with bureaucratic and military backgrounds. Achmad Tirtosudiro began to sense that Soeharto was about to lose control, and he feared that continued support for him might drag ICMI down into the political abyss. As the student demonstrations gained momentum, ICMI took concrete steps to dissociate itself from the Soeharto government. At a leadership forum on 6 May, ICMI endorsed calls for a special session of the MPR to change the national leadership. This suggestion, however, presented Habibie with severe political problems. Balancing loyalty to Soeharto and the institutional interests of ICMI, Habibie was forced to publicly disavow the statement of his own organisation.\(^{83}\)

Habibie’s public rejection of ICMI’s oppositional stand could barely mask the fact, however, that the Vice-president was the main beneficiary of the growing protest against the regime. Many within the political elite believed that Habibie encouraged ICMI’s criticism of Soeharto in order to promote his own succession to the presidency.\(^{84}\) Abdurrahman even suspected that Adi Sasono financed the student movement against Soeharto in order to catalyse the downfall of his regime and facilitate Habibie’s rise.\(^{85}\) These widespread suspicions were based on Habibie’s unique constitutional position within Soeharto’s web of political patronage. Habibie was the only central figure of the regime Soeharto could not dispose of, and was therefore largely immune from potential reprisals for ICMI’s increased criticism. Not only did ICMI’s regime opposition do no harm to Habibie’s constitutional rights as vice-president, but it in fact served his interests as the most likely successor should a popular uprising force Soeharto from office:


\(^{84}\) Abdurrahman, for example, was convinced that ‘this was all just a shadow play. In public Habibie said “Don’t be so harsh with the poor Pak Harto”. Behind the scenes he instructed them to demolish him so he could take his seat. Very predictable, but smart, I must admit. (...) But see, this is exactly why you can’t work with these people. They always stab you in the back.”’ Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Jakarta 26 May 1998.

"Of course we did not finance the student demonstrations, that's absurd. There was no need for that. (...) We had given Soeharto a chance, but he wasted it. So we supported the next best option, and that was a constitutional hand-over to the Vice-president. And I will not lie to you by saying that it did not help that we knew this person very well, and trusted his leadership." 86

In this context, Habibie's public distancing from ICMI's demands for leadership change appeared as little more than a tactical manoeuvre to avoid the impression that he actively worked towards replacing Soeharto. Accordingly, Achmad Tirtosudiro and Habibie engaged in a public, but inconsequential dispute over the leadership of ICMI. Achmad asserted that it was he, not Habibie, who led the organisation, and that the controversial call for an MPR session had been issued through proper channels and procedures. 87 Satisfied with this explanation, Habibie never raised the issue again.

Between Soeharto, Habibie and Prabowo: Islamist Groups and the Crisis

ICMI was not the only political force that had a strategic interest in Habibie's rise to the presidency. Maj.Gen. Prabowo, the Kopassus Commander, believed that he had an arrangement with Habibie to make him chief of the armed forces once Habibie was in power. In Prabowo's entourage were a number of ultra-modernist Muslim groups with an Islamist religio-political agenda. Their political relevance was based less on numerical strength than their capacity to mobilise demonstrations against selected targets. KISDI (Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam, Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Muslim World), founded in 1986, and DDII formed the core of this loose association of Islamist groups, with some senior PPP politicians offering protection and limited access to the political infrastructure. 88 KISDI had participated in the demonstrations against Sofyan Wanandi in late January 1998, but otherwise appeared reluctant to formulate a clear position on the political crisis. 89 As their political

86 Interview with Adi Sasono, Jakarta 8 June 1998.
87 'Pak Habibie Sebaiknya Konsentrasi sebagai Wapres', Kompas 18 May 1998.
88 As a political force, PPP remained insignificant throughout the crisis. Its leader, Ismael Hasan Metareum, took no political risks and remained a Soeharto loyalist until a few days before the collapse. On 21 April, Metareum met Wiranto and assured him that there was one demand of the reform movement PPP would never agree with, and that was Soeharto's resignation. See 'Ada Isyarat Aliansi FPP-FABRI', Jawa Pos 22 April 1998.
89 KISDI's pro-regime attitude also led to a rift with Amien Rais. KISDI distanced itself from Amien as much as Amien turned his back on the organisation. In October 1997, Amien still spoke at a KISDI event in the Al-Azhar mosque, but afterwards Amien's confrontation with the regime and his lobbying of non-Muslim constituencies resulted in cool relations between the Muhammadiyah leader and the ultra-modernist group. See 'Amien Rais: Ada yang tak Wajar dalam Kehidupan Nasional', Kompas 6 October 1997; 'Dibentuk Front Solidaritas Nasional Muslim Indonesia', Kompas 9 February 1998.
affiliation with Prabowo was stronger than their ties with Habibie, the radical Islamic groups had difficulties in following ICMI's anti-regime turn after the March announcement of the cabinet. In contrast to Habibie, whose constitutional position protected him from possible Soeharto-initiated reprisals, Prabowo was politically vulnerable. The competition between Wiranto and Prabowo exposed the latter to the risk of dismissal if Soeharto concluded that Prabowo's political allies worked against him. Thus they could not afford to confront Soeharto in the way ICMI did. In fact, as Schwarz observed, 'their fervent support for Soeharto put them in a distinct minority of defenders of Soeharto's family.'

KISDI leaders knew, however, that Prabowo began promoting the possibility of a Soeharto resignation in Habibie's favour, which in turn would result in increased political access for Islamist groups. The leaders of KISDI and DDII therefore maintained a low profile for most of the crisis, but made political preparations for the increasingly likely scenario of a Habibie presidency.

Elite Divisions and Popular Protest: Faltering Regime, Disoriented Opposition

ICMI's interest in facilitating Habibie's elevation to the presidency by fuelling opposition to Soeharto added another variant to the already highly heterogenous list of political positions taken by influential societal groups towards the troubled regime. Nahdlatul Ulama and Megawati's PDI appeared reluctant to challenge the government, and the deterrent of Habibie's potential rise to power served as a further incentive to maintain their non-confrontational stance; Amien, and with him many Muhammadiyah functionaries, had linked up with the student movement to achieve regime change; ICMI, finally, aimed at a controlled transfer of power from Soeharto to Habibie, confronting the organisation with the delicate task of damaging the regime to cause Soeharto's removal, but leaving it functional enough to organise the orderly succession of Habibie. The diametrically opposed interests of major socio-political forces obstructed the formation of effective elite opposition to Soeharto and prevented the establishment of a political alternative to the faltering regime. The initiative for removing Soeharto thus shifted to the student movement

90 Schwarz 2004: 331.
91 A prayer meeting for Habibie was organised by the Cooperation Body of Indonesian Pesantren (BKSPPI, Badan Kerja Sama Pondok Pesantren Indonesia) on 19 February. At the event, the complex of common interests between ICMI, Habibie, Prabowo and the ultra-modernist Islamic groups became evident. BKSPPI had close relations to DDII and KISDI. At the meeting, speeches were given by Adi Sasono, Prabowo and Jakarta military commander Syafie Syamsuddin, and the event culminated in a prayer for Habibie's successful election. See 'BKSPPI Doakan Habibie Jadi Wapres', Republika 20 February 1998. One week later, BKSPPI, DDII and KISDI leaders met Habibie to remind him of the hopes of the modernist Muslim constituency regarding his upcoming vice-presidency. See '15 Tokoh Muslim Bertemu Habibie', Republika 25 February 1998.
and other non-elite actors, setting the country on a course of regime change driven by popular protest and mass violence rather than the institutional assumption of power by oppositional groups. With societal forces fragmented and unprepared to take over government, the moderate faction of the armed forces used the opportunity to counter the populist power of the students with attempts to negotiate an orderly transfer of authority. It was only when the populist attempt to overthrow the regime and the military manoeuvring for an intra-systemic change of government had reached their concluding stages that Indonesia’s largest societal groups began to unite behind the demand for Soeharto’s departure. This newly emerging unity would mark the ultimate end of the New Order, but came too late to influence the character of regime change. Their reluctance to unite against Soeharto in the early phase of the crisis had turned most of the crucial socio-political organisations into spectators of rather than participants in Soeharto’s demise. As the shape of post-New Order Indonesia was decided in the final days of Soeharto’s rule, its major actors had to observe from the margins how elements within the disintegrating regime managed to extend some of its political structures into the post-authoritarian era.

IV. DIVIDED AGAINST SOEHARTO: POPULAR PROTEST, FRAGMENTED OPPOSITION AND INTRA-SYSTEMIC REGIME CHANGE

The political divisions within Indonesia’s Muslim community had allowed authoritarian regimes since the late 1950s to establish and sustain their rule. But just as the turmoil of 1965 saw Sukarno losing control over his carefully balanced polity, so the socio-economic upheaval of 1998 eroded the political foundations of the New Order. The disunity among key civilian constituencies had helped Soeharto to survive the early period of the crisis, but the anarchic force of the student movement and other forms of societal protest made the machinations of elite politics an insufficient tool of regime maintenance. The power of the populist protest, continuously growing between March and May 1998, rendered Soeharto’s resignation inevitable, despite the continued absence of cohesive elite opposition and intensive conflict among civilian groups. The street protests were not, as Edward Aspinall suggested, part of ‘an ultimately successful two-pronged attack’ launched by ‘the opposition’. On the contrary, many of the oppositional elites, except for Amien Rais, found it difficult to connect with and understand the dynamics of a populist force outside of their control. In this, they were not unlike Soeharto who, as Robert Elson remarked, was ‘still unable to grasp the significance of the mounting (mass)

movement against him'. Accordingly, the final weeks of Soeharto's rule would witness desperate attempts of the President to apply traditional methods of dividing the elite to a political process that was now largely driven by the forces of popular resistance. One by one, important socio-political forces felt it necessary to join with the students in calling for Soeharto's departure, but they maintained their deep mutual suspicions in regard to forming an alliance to take his place.

Violence, Protest and Consensus-building in the Elite: Regime Change Yes, But What Next?

The emerging political consensus between Muslim groups that the President had to step down was catalysed by the Medan riots in early May 1998, when fuel price increases triggered widespread violence in Sumatra's most important city. The NU Central Board had declared its support for the student movement in mid-April, but the Medan incident accelerated its gradual desertion of Soeharto. Shortly after Soeharto's departure to Egypt, NU official Said Agil Siraj declared that NU would prepare its own reform proposals. He assigned special spiritual powers to these plans by underlining that the word 'reform' was mentioned 41 times in the Qu'ran. On 12 May, leading NU kiai met in Surabaya and proclaimed their commitment to reform. In addition, two NU deputy chairmen, Fajrul Falaakh and Rozy Munir, became involved in efforts to establish a forum of opposition figures in order to maximise the pressure on the regime. The preparatory meetings of the association, named Forum Kerja Indonesia (Forki, Indonesia Working Forum), were mostly held in the office of the NU-affiliated LKKNU (Lembaga Kemaslahatan Keluarga Nahdlatul Ulama, Institute for the Benefit of Nahdlatul Ulama Families). Abdurrahman, on the other hand, was largely excluded from the formulation of NU's new position vis-à-vis the regime. While this was explained with references to his poor health, many NU figures doubted that their chairman had a coherent concept for protecting the interests of the organisation in the expected


94 Mustafa Bisri contended that not only the students, but also the kiai wanted 'total reform' - the frequently used euphemism for Soeharto's resignation. See 'Para Tokoh Agama Dukung Reformasi', Kompas 13 May 1998.

95 The idea for Forki was born earlier in the year. It was conceptualised as a solidarity forum to organise food deliveries to poverty-stricken areas. After having disappeared for a couple of months, the political dynamics of May provided Forki with the momentum for not only implementing its initial aims, but also for bringing together political figures with different backgrounds to unite against Soeharto. Interview with Fajrul Falaakh, Yogyakarta 22 November 2000.
regime change. Given his apparent lack of judgement and direction, NU activists intended to use Forki to maneuver Abdurrahman closer to the opposition around Amien and Megawati, who were both expected to join. But not only Abdurrahman and Megawati appeared reluctant to engage in the forum; Amien too had at that stage concluded that an elite-based coalition was illusionary. While Amien's private secretary Muhammad Najib took part in some of Forki's coordinating sessions, his boss preferred to focus on the preparations for his own opposition forum, the People's Leadership Council.

Amien's blueprint for the planned Council reflected his failed effort to form a broad elite alliance, but also demonstrated his belief that he no longer needed the latter to achieve regime change. While still presented as a pluralist association of regime critics, the Council now targeted intellectuals close to Amien rather than influential religio-political leaders. According to David Bourchier, it was to consist ‘of people with moral authority’ and form a ‘temporary repository of political power if need arose.' The former editor of the banned news magazine TEMPO, Goenawan Mohammad, assisted Amien in drafting a list of potential members, including human rights activists Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara and Adnan Buyung Nasution, academic Arbi Sanit and veteran politician Emil Salim. Involvement in the Council was not without risks, however. After Amien had announced its imminent formation, the regime prepared to respond with its conventional catalogue of sanctions. Interior Minister Hartono questioned whether the Council was a rival institution to the MPR, in which case the government would be forced to crack down on it. As Goenawan and Amien were preparing the official announcement of the Council, the killing of four students at Trisakti University on 12 May provided the plan with a new, significantly radicalised momentum. The subsequent chaos generated by mass protests, declining state authority and open rifts within the regime prepared the stage for dramatic political change. The significance of the paradigmatic shift was captured in Amien's tour of the city on 13 May. As Amien passed the rioters, they applauded and shouted his name, and soldiers saluted him. The procedural insigniae of power, introduced and defended by the New Order for decades, were gradually transferred to those who challenged it.

With Soeharto out of the country, and the security forces losing control over the capital, the inauguration of Amien's leadership forum on 14 May underscored the collective impression of imminent regime change. The name eventually chosen for the forum was 'Popular Mandate Council' (Majelis Amanat Rakyat, MAR), not coincidentally featuring Mohammad Amien Rais'
initials. The organisation was now tailored exclusively to the needs of the Muhammadiyah chairman, and its first press statement echoed Amien’s political priorities. The release contained three major demands and appeals: first, Soeharto had to step down immediately; second, the security forces had to exercise restraint in handling the riots; and third, the students and the broader population had to remain calm to ensure the unobstructed continuation of the reform process. Both in terms of form and substance, the declaration of MAR constituted a further step in the disintegration process of Soeharto’s system of socio-political control. The New Order had subjected all socio-political organisations in Indonesia to a process of uniformisation, forcing them to obtain a series of licenses and permits, adopt the national ideology and accept their subordination to the Ministry of the Interior. The rules imposed by Soeharto’s state began to lose their power of intimidation, encouraging oppositional forces to intensify their attacks on the regime.

Between Pluralism and Islamic Identity: Amien’s Dilemma

The foundation of a pluralist association of regime critics not only widened the gap between Amien and the government, but also threatened to antagonise long-time political allies in the modernist faction of Indonesian Islam. Only one hour after the MAR press conference had concluded, Adi Sasono asked Amien to visit him at ICMI headquarters. There, the two Muslim leaders engaged in a heated debate about both the strategy behind MAR’s formation and the plurality of its composition. Adi objected to MAR’s membership that included Christians, secular nationalists and particularly a gay activist. The ICMI Secretary-General warned Amien that his core supporters in the modernist constituency felt increasingly alienated by his courtship of non-Muslim groups, and recommended that he reassert his Islamic image by speaking at a mass event of Muslim groups at the Al-Azhar mosque a couple of days later. The invitation exposed Amien’s structural dilemma that, in its various manifestations, had contributed to his reputation as a political chameleon: serving the interests of his own constituency while at the same time expanding his interaction with other religio-political groups was not only a delicate, but often impossible task. His cross-constituency approach led to confusion over his political and ideological positions, with Amien more often than not surrendering to the temptation of adopting the stance of the crowd he addressed or the person he debated with. In the discussion with Adi, he reassured his fellow modernist activist that the inclusion of Christians in MAR was

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inconsequential as he was determined to define the direction of the organisation himself. He managed to excuse himself from the Al-Azhar event, but agreed to give a speech after the Friday prayers at the same place. Adi Sasono appeared satisfied, for the time being, and the two Muslim figures continued their exchange of views throughout the night as they awaited Soeharto’s return from Egypt in the early morning of 15 May.99

Amien’s temporary success in reducing the skepticism of his core Islamic constituency towards MAR confirmed his belief that he could bring down the regime without a broad-based coalition of key socio-political leaders. Although representatives from both ends of the political spectrum, like the conservative Muslim politician Husein Umar and the leftist gay rights activist Dede Oetomo, decided not to join MAR,100 Amien appeared confident that his popularity was sufficient to guarantee the success of the organisation and the agenda it pursued. Thus he refused to cooperate when the idea of an alliance between Abdurrahman, Megawati and himself was revived by several civil society figures. Remaining conspicuously absent from the declaration ceremony of Forki on 15 May, Amien signalled that he had given up the idea of overthrowing the New Order government with an alliance of non-regime constituency leaders. Abdurrahman and Megawati did not turn up either to the event, disappointing a crowd of domestic and international journalists who had hoped that the three national figures would finally come together and claim the right to executive leadership from the disintegrating regime. It was most likely the tangible inevitability of Soeharto’s departure, brought about by the student movement and widespread popular unrest, that convinced the three leaders that the regime’s days were numbered even without their forming an alliance. In addition, Amien apparently saw Forki as an act of undeserved assistance for Abdurrahman and Megawati who had kept a convenient distance to the popular protests and only emerged when the regime had almost collapsed.101

Preparing the Post-Soeharto Polity: Continuity or Radical Change?

Despite continued disunity among them, the major religio-political organisations began to prepare their constituencies for the end of Soeharto’s rule. NU issued a statement on 15 May that welcomed Soeharto’s contemplations in Egypt about resigning from office. Within Nahdlatul

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101 One of Megawati’s advisers explained that Megawati refrained from visiting the campuses because she had been told by intelligence sources that she was the target of Prabowo-affiliated military units. The same applied to her brother Guruh. Interview with Mochtar Buchori, leading PDI official, Jakarta 5 June 1998.
Ulama, the view was now prevailing that defending the lost cause of the regime would damage the organisation more than taking the risk of a final retaliation from Soeharto’s side:

“We had a leadership meeting on that Friday (15 May), during which we were bombarded with phone calls from the regions, all pushing us to do something. Kiai Imron Hamzah (a respected kiai from Surabaya, M.M.) shouted through the phone that he found it inconceivable that NU remained silent while everything fell apart. We said ‘yes, yes, be patient, we are working on it.’ (...) At the end, we endorsed Soeharto’s alleged plan to resign.”\textsuperscript{102}

Abdurrahman, however, still preferred a negotiated settlement with Soeharto to a chaotic transfer of power to a council of oppositional politicians. On 16 May, Abdurrahman predicted that the student movement ‘will fade away like its predecessors, the 1974 and 1978 movements’. He brushed aside calls for Soeharto’s resignation, saying that the President had been provided with strong legitimation from the MPR.\textsuperscript{103} Van Dijk claimed that Abdurrahman made the remarks because he was ‘shocked by the violence in the middle of May’.\textsuperscript{104} They did, however, follow an established pattern of his thinking reaching back to much earlier periods of the crisis, and appeared to have more do with his political strategy than with the distressing images of the riots. The prospect of either a populist transitional government dominated by Amien Rais or a constitutional hand-over of authority to Habibie were nightmares for both Abdurrahman and the Nahdlatul Ulama constituency. Accordingly, he engaged with moderate elements in the armed forces that lobbied for a gradual withdrawal of Soeharto from politics, but were prepared to leave the latter in charge of its details and schedule. In a meeting with Wiranto, Abdurrahman underlined the necessity for close cooperation between NU and ABRI. Wiranto emerged from the encounter with the impression that Abdurrahman was a loyal ally in his efforts to seek an orderly transition, and asked his staff in ABRI Headquarters to draft a press release that emphasised the importance of ABRI-NU relations.\textsuperscript{105} It was this press release that led to considerable irritation on Soeharto’s part and, as described above, sparked a further escalation in the competition between Prabowo and Wiranto.

After key political forces had agreed on the necessity of Soeharto’s removal, their differences began to focus on the form and composition of a possible post-New Order government. Amien aimed at the disposal of Soeharto and the political system that carried him, while Abdurrahman supported an orderly transition process largely controlled by the outgoing President. ICMI, on the

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\item \textsuperscript{102} Abdurrahman was neither involved in nor informed of the press release. Interview with Fajrul Falaakh, Yogyakarta 22 November 2000.
\item \textsuperscript{103} 'Ada Pembelokan Arah Reformasi', \textit{Jawa Pos} 17 May 1998.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Dijk 2001: 199.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Interview with General (ret) Wiranto, Jakarta 13 October 2000.
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other hand, began to promote the constitutional solution to the crisis. On Sunday, 17 May, Adi Sasono suggested in a discussion with Amien that the most likely scenario was the hand-over of presidential powers from Soeharto to Habibie. Amien, however, was aware that a Habibie presidency was not what the students had been demonstrating for. The mere replacement of political leaders within the paradigmatic framework of the New Order system might have been satisfactory to the protesters only a couple of months ago, but the increased radicalism of the student movement after the Trisakti incident aimed at the radical reform of the political foundations of the state. While personally inclined to believe in Habibie’s commitment to the interests of political openness in general and modernist Islam in particular, Amien felt that he could not promote an intra-regime solution to the crisis without jeopardising his reformist credentials. But with Soeharto still clinging to power, and the threat of a military crack down hanging over the protesters, Amien conceded that removing Soeharto had absolute priority over everything else.

The Search for Compromise: Elite Negotiations and Soeharto’s Endgame

The dispute among major societal forces over the conditions of Soeharto’s withdrawal and the format of the post-New Order sparked a hectic search for compromise. Nurcholish Madjid, who was widely acknowledged as a mediator between traditionalist and modernist Islam and even respected by the New Order authorities, appeared to be the ideal candidate to offer solutions acceptable to all. On 14 May, Nurcholish had presented his ideas to ABRI Headquarters, outlining the timetable for Soeharto’s gradual withdrawal from politics. The interaction over the following days with a large number of political leaders, however, convinced Nurcholish that his plan was unsustainable. It was most of all Amien whose arguments made Nurcholish conclude that the country could not afford taking the risk of allowing more time for Soeharto’s withdrawal as the latter might well use the opportunity to consolidate his power:

“First I thought Soeharto could be given some time to organise the transfer of power. But Amien convinced me that Soeharto might just want exactly that, and that he might come out on top again.”

106 Some ICMI regional branches went public over the weekend with their demands for a special session of the MPR with the explicit agenda of replacing Soeharto. The Central Java branch even demanded the resignation of House Speaker Harmoko for failing to follow up on the popular aspirations regarding Soeharto’s position. ICMI’s central board would ‘only’ call for the President’s resignation on Monday, 18 May. See ‘ICMI Jateng Tuntut Ketua DPR/MPR Diganti’, Suara Merdeka 17 May 1998.
107 Interview with Nurcholish Madjid, Jakarta 28 May 1998.
108 Interview with Nurcholish Madjid, Jakarta 28 May 1998.
Unaware that Nurcholish had changed his mind, Soeharto felt attracted to the idea of a controlled, loosely scheduled departure from the power centre. The Nurcholish initiative, in its initial form, provided Soeharto with the opportunity of influencing the negotiations about his replacement, reach agreements over the legal aspects of his retirement and seek long-term solutions for the business interests of his family. With the parliament demanding his resignation on Monday, 18 May, Soeharto sent for Nurcholish to discuss the details of his plan.

Soeharto’s main concern, it appeared, was to avoid a concrete time frame and to use Nurcholish’s moral authority for the propagation of his long-term withdrawal plans. As the discussion began, Soeharto ignored Nurcholish’s opening remark that developments had overtaken his earlier proposals, and that reform was now identical with the President’s immediate resignation. Soeharto replied that he wanted to withdraw constitutionally, but suggested that general elections had to be held beforehand:

“I told him that the elections and his resignation had to be completed within six months. He got irritated, and went off about how big Indonesia is and how long electoral preparations would take. I signalled him that I was not convinced, so he tried to increase his offer by proposing to step down ‘as soon as possible’ after general elections.”

Suspecting that his political credibility was irreversibly exhausted, Soeharto asked Nurcholish to assemble a team of Muslim leaders to announce his retirement proposals. As they went through the list of possible candidates for what Donald Emmerson has termed Soeharto’s ‘Muslims of last resort’,

it emerged that the President intended to revive the cleavages in the Islamic community for his political purposes: he nominated five representatives from Nahdlatul Ulama, including Abdurrahman and Ilyas Ruchiat, but insisted on the exclusion of Amien Rais. Using the divisive tactics practised under Guided Democracy and much of the New Order, Soeharto hoped that Nahdlatul Ulama once again could be tempted to back his regime. Offers of increased regime participation and privileged access to government resources had convinced previous NU leaders to give up their concerns towards authoritarian rulers, and the moderate attitude displayed by NU throughout the crisis apparently led Soeharto to believe that his approach could work once again. Amien’s central role in the protest movement as well as the prospect of a Habibie presidency

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109 Interview with Nurcholish Madjid, Jakarta 28 May 1998.
provided Soeharto with deterrents potentially strong enough to lure Nahdlatul Ulama into supporting his embattled government.

Soeharto’s courting of NU in order to outplay Amien Rais triggered an intense debate in Abdurrahman’s inner circle over the question whether to participate in the presidential meeting or not. For Soeharto, Abdurrahman’s participation was crucial. His socio-political status equalled Amien’s, and he was therefore potentially able to neutralise the latter’s radicalism. In order to ensure Abdurrahman’s involvement in the gathering, Soeharto asked Siti Hardiyanti and Hartono for help. Both had been politically aligned with the NU leader in the 1997 election campaign, and a loose personal contact had been maintained. Siti Hardiyanti phoned Abdurrahman in the early evening, explaining the reasons for the meeting. Abdurrahman immediately agreed to take part, provided that his health allowed him to do so. Fearing that the NU leader might finally back down from the event, Hartono visited Abdurrahman two hours later. As the Interior Minister left, he even asked Abdurrahman’s assistant to make sure that the NU leader showed up the following day. While Abdurrahman had made up his mind and was determined to participate, some of the younger intellectuals in his circle warned that he might be forced to lend moral legitimation to Soeharto’s consolidation plans. Muhaimin Iskandar, his nephew and a leader of PMII, suspected that the President had the draft for his political future already completed and wanted only Abdurrahman’s public blessing for it:

“We knew what Soeharto was up to. Soeharto was cornered by Amien, and Gus Dur was expected to help him out. Of course we had to be concerned about Gus Dur’s image and NU’s reputation.”

Others feared that rival political leaders participating in the meeting would overpower an unprepared Abdurrahman with their scenarios for solving the crisis. With Abdurrahman’s younger brother, Hasyim Wahid, and Fajrul Falaakh arguing the case for participation, the NU chairman decided to go ahead as planned.

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111 Abdurrahman and Siti Hardiyanti had been scheduled to take part in an IPNU initiative to distribute money to poor school students on 25 May, before events determined otherwise. See ‘PP IPNU dan Gerakan Berbagi’, Republika 6 May 1998.
112 Interview with Al-Zastrouw Ng, Jakarta 26 May 1998.
113 Interview with Muhaimin Iskandar, Jakarta 26 September 1999.
114 Interview with Hasyim Wahid, Jakarta 14 November 1998. Fajrul compared the inter-elite politicking to a game of chess. As the game had already begun, and the major players already participated, NU had to play its part as well. Even if Abdurrahman refused to attend, Fajrul continued, there was no guarantee that he would not be manipulated in his absence. See Al-Zastrouw Ng, Gus Dur, Siapa Sih Sampeyan?: Tafsir Teritik atas Tindakan dan Pernyataan Gus Dur, Penerbit Erlangga, Jakarta 1999: 41-42.
Abdurrahman was not the only Islamic leader who was inclined to grant Soeharto a dignified, generously scheduled departure from politics. Within the Islamist groups around KISDI and DDII, there was a widespread view that Soeharto’s withdrawal came at a stage when doctrinaire modernists were profiting most from his regime. On Monday evening, when Nurcholish met Soeharto and ABRI rejected the DPR call for the President’s resignation, DDII patriarch Anwar Haryono sent for Amien Rais. In an attempt to deradicalise the Muhammadiyah chairman, the ailing Dewan Dakwah leader presented a list of Soeharto’s achievements in defending Muslim interests since the early 1990s: the foundation of ICMI, the establishment of Bank Muamalat, the publication of the Islamic newspaper Republika, the termination of the controversial state lottery SDSB, and the lifting of the ban on wearing scarves in schools. In addition, according to Anwar, the composition of the last Soeharto cabinet fulfilled in quantitative terms the expectations of the Muslim community, meaning that the number of non-Muslim ministers had been reduced to a minimum. Based on his positive Islamic record, Anwar recommended that all Muslim groups support Soeharto in the implementation of his reform project. Anwar’s explanation highlighted the suspicions of Islamist forces over the political uncertainty that might succeed the authoritarian regime. While a Habibie presidency was expected to promote Islamic interests better than the previous government, other scenarios were as likely as they were frightening: the military could take over and return to the anti-Muslim policies of the 1970s; a transitional government with representatives from all socio-religious backgrounds could be installed, watering down Muslim demands in the name of compromise; or, as in 1955, parliamentary democracy could split the Muslim forces and hand victory to the nationalists. Anwar’s lecture, however, failed to convince Amien. When Amien left Anwar’s house, he kissed his senior’s hand, adding that he wanted to do so for Anwar, but ‘I won’t to do it for Pak Harto’.

Divide et Impera, The Final Act: Soeharto and his ‘Muslims of Last Resort’

The deep divisions within the civilian elite over Soeharto’s fate appeared to offer the President a final chance to play the various factions off against each other. The leaders of Nahdlatul Ulama and the Islamist groups were leaning towards a settlement with Soeharto, while the modernist organisations Muhammadiyah and ICMI openly demanded his immediate resignation. That Soeharto’s efforts were ultimately in vain was not only due to the unstoppable force of the popular protest, but was also the result of Nurcholish’s decision to include Amien in the

preparations for the presidential meeting with the Muslim leaders. On Tuesday morning, 19 May, one hour before the meeting, Nurcholish and Amien met with three modernist Muslim figures invited to the encounter with Soeharto, among them Yusril Ihza Mahendra, an Islamist activist but also a speech writer in Soeharto’s State Secretariat, and Malik Fadjar. Amien demanded that Soeharto not be given a chance to consolidate his position:

“I think this meeting was extremely important. None of us had Amien’s resolve, determination and public standing. He warned us to be firm. You know how Pak Harto can be, charming, persuasive. After hearing Amien, it was clear to me that we could not afford to fail.”

The Muhammadiyah leader insisted on Soeharto’s resignation and elections within six months or, alternatively, the surrender of presidential authority through a decree similar to the 1966 letter that handed executive powers from Sukarno to Soeharto. Equipped with Amien’s proposals, Yusril, Malik and Nurcholish left for the palace and met with the NU-affiliated participants. Nurcholish addressed the group before they entered the meeting room, stressing that it was Soeharto who had invited them, and not the ulama who had sought the encounter. As Nurcholish conveyed Amien’s message, he reminded the participants that they had to pass on the people’s aspirations to Soeharto, and these aspirations clearly demanded the President’s resignation. Abdurrahman and some military officers who listened to Nurcholish’s words, remained silent.

The coordination between Nurcholish and Amien destroyed Soeharto’s hopes for a gradual withdrawal on his own terms. Nurcholish and former NU leader Ali Yafie made it clear from the beginning that Soeharto’s resignation was not negotiable. They also objected to Soeharto’s plans for the establishment of a Reform Council under his own coordination. Yusril raised concerns about the legality of the Council:

“I pointed out that a Council is a political-legal institution that needed to be anchored in the constitution and related laws. Pak Harto seemed confused, and called in Wiranto who had proposed the Council. (...) Wiranto was rushed in, and he said he had used political, not legal language when making the suggestion.”

Finally, the participants agreed on the foundation of a Reform Committee, elections at the earliest occasion possible and Soeharto’s resignation afterwards. They added, however, that none of them was ready to sit either on the Committee or in any reshuffled cabinet. They also declined Soeharto’s request to line up behind him during the announcement. Not only Soeharto was taken

117 Interview with Malik Fadjar, Jakarta 3 June 1998.
118 Interview with Nurcholish Madjid, Jakarta 27 May 1998.
119 Interview with Yusril Ihza Mahendra, Jakarta 25 August 1998.
aback by the intransigence of the Nurcholish-led team. Abdurrahman, surprised about the extent of detailed coordination between Nurcholish and the modernist participants, remarked that he was amazed that Nurcholish had the guts to ask Soeharto to resign. Abdurrahman's generous biographer, Greg Barton, explained Abdurrahman's behaviour in the meeting in cultural terms, quoting him as saying that 'now that the knife had been thrust deftly into Soeharto's side there was no need to twist it for it to accomplish its work'. In addition, he also referred to Abdurrahman's continued concerns over a possible regime backlash. It is more likely, however, that Abdurrahman's indignation was triggered by his increasing fear of political marginalisation. Amien and Nurcholish had taken the political initiative away from him, positioning themselves in the forefront of those deciding over the succession issue. When Abdurrahman left the meeting, he called on the students to stop their demonstrations in order to give Soeharto a chance to implement his reform program.

Despite Soeharto's failure to force his initial agenda on the Muslim group, he had succeeded in creating significant levels of irritation among its participants and other societal leaders. Nurcholish and Amien, for example, had very different interpretations concerning Soeharto's concessions to the gathering. Nurcholish felt that he had resisted Soeharto's attempts for a succession mechanism on his own terms, and viewed the result as the best possible outcome. Amien, on the other hand, saw his fears confirmed that Soeharto might use the meeting to consolidate his power. He questioned why Soeharto had only invited Muslim leaders to the encounter, and criticised the use of Islamic symbols for political ends. At the center of his criticism was, of course, Soeharto's failure to provide a clear date for his resignation. Accordingly, Amien decided to proceed with his preparations for a mass demonstration at the Monas Square on the following day, 20 May. Student leaders also made it very clear that Soeharto's announcement was insufficient to satisfy their demands, and that they were determined to continue their protest. It was once again the forceful initiative of the student movement that drove the process of regime change, exposing the elite debate over the quality and reliability of Soeharto's offers as a hypothetical deliberation with limited political impact.

120 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Jakarta 26 May 1998.
122 Interview Nurcholish Madjid, Jakarta 28 May 1998.
Collapse and Uncertainty: Soeharto’s Exit

The most significant outcome of the palace gathering was that Soeharto’s efforts to sideline Amien and regain control of the political process had failed. Both in terms of his elite relations and his intellectual leadership of the student protest, the momentum remained with the Muhammadiyah chairman. This was reflected in public announcements of student leaders that they intended to continue their protests as well as in the political manoeuvres of elements within the regime struggling to save their career prospects. Amien’s two operational centres, the Muhammadiyah office and Malik Fajar’s house, were now crowded with ICMI leaders and prominent cabinet ministers keen on cutting their ties with the falling regime. Ministers Tanri Abeng, Fuad Bawazier and Akbar Tanjung felt it necessary to demonstrate their presence in Amien’s company on Tuesday evening, preparing the stage for their resignations on the following day. The cabinet ministers knew that Soeharto’s attempts to prolong his rule had no chance of succeeding. In Yogyakarta, students geared up for a huge demonstration protected by the Sultan, and despite Amien’s cancellation of the Jakarta rally in the early morning of 20 May because of warnings from inside the armed forces, the disintegration of the regime proceeded at a rapid pace. Even Wiranto viewed the banning of the protest not so much as an effort to sustain the regime, but as a final service to Soeharto, allowing him to withdraw in dignity rather than going down in the chaos of a populist revolt.

The last full day of the Soeharto polity saw a stream of former loyalists turning their backs on the crumbling regime. With Yogyakarta witnessing one of the biggest rallies in its history, combining the power of the masses with the cultural strength of the sultanate, there was no hope that the protest would subside. In Jakarta, Amien made his way through the street blockades to the DPR building, where the students celebrated the third day of their occupation. With external pressure remaining strong, the internal erosion of the regime continued. As Soeharto’s assistants tried in vain to convince credible figures to sit on his reform committee, fourteen of his ministers handed in their resignations. Habibie, now convinced that he would be president within days, undertook no attempt to save the regime of his patron. He had been deeply hurt by Soeharto’s efforts to use the prospects of a Habibie presidency as a means of political deterrence, and felt no pity watching his mentor being deserted by former loyalists:

124 In a TV address, Amien had called on his followers to pray at home. The cancellation obviously did not harm his image as the leader of the protest movement. Newspapers quoted students as saying that the decision had underscored Amien’s stature as a rational and responsible politician. See ‘Amien Rais: Cegah Jatuhnya Korban Sia-Sia’, Surabaya Post 20 May 1998.
“Habibie knew that Soeharto had told the gathering of Muslim leaders on the day before that if he had to go immediately, Habibie would be president. Then he asked: ‘Do you really want that?’ Habibie was very upset and demanded an apology from Soeharto, but that never came.”126

After the Minister of Religious Affairs, Quraish Shihab, had made several unsuccessful attempts to talk Nurcholish into joining the President’s reform team, Soeharto dropped first hints to his aides about a possible resignation. The desertion of key loyalists and the collapse of his reform ideas left Soeharto trapped in a situation where only the military could keep him in power. Soeharto knew, however, that the power constellation had irreversibly shifted to his disadvantage, and that military intervention was unlikely to prolong his rule, let alone restore the unchallenged authority he was used to exercise. When Wiranto suggested that the armed forces were not supportive of a military crackdown, Soeharto immediately concurred and asked his inner circle to prepare for the transfer of power to Habibie. In acknowledgement of the central role played by his main opponent, Soeharto sent a personal message to Amien, informing him of his imminent resignation and asking him to refrain from further protests.127

Soeharto’s departure sparked markedly different reactions in the various factions of Indonesia’s Muslim community. While Amien was undoubtedly the central figure in the movement that brought the regime down, he was not completely satisfied with the outcome. Habibie’s replacement of Soeharto constituted the very intra-systemic solution that Amien feared might put his credibility at stake. Habibie’s presidency certainly offered rewards for the modernist Muslim constituency, but Amien suspected that the entrenched New Order structures had a better chance of surviving under Soeharto’s handpicked former deputy than they would have had after a revolutionary disintegration of the regime.128 As Amien came to terms with the compromise resulting from his struggle, his friends from ICMI were electrified by the opportunities the new constellation provided. Only days after Soeharto had used Habibie to fend off demands for his resignation, ICMI functionaries were now sitting until the early morning hours to draft Habibie’s first speech as new President and collect names for his cabinet. The Islamist groups around DDII and KISDI, having failed to maintain the Soeharto presidency, directed their pro-regime activism now towards Habibie. Within hours, they mobilised thousands of supporters and led them to the parliament, fearing that the student movement might reject the political compromise and seek its cancellation. The confrontation between student protesters and pro-regime demonstrators at the

126 Interview with Z.A. Maulani, Habibie’s Chief of Staff, Jakarta 5 June 1998.
127 Interview with Yusril Ihza Mahendra, Jakarta 25 August 1998.
parliament complex exposed Habibie’s vulnerable legitimacy, anticipating an influential political pattern for the remainder of the latter’s term in office. Nahdlatul Ulama, for its part, expressed opposition to the sudden transfer of presidential authority to Habibie. Some of Abdurrahman’s fiercest opponents were now likely to exert a dominating influence over government policies, blocking the few gates of political access for traditionalist politicians that the Soeharto administration had opened in exchange for contributions to the maintenance of the regime. In short, Soeharto’s downfall had done little to overcome the divisions within Indonesia’s Muslim community, but had rather shaped the preconditions for the intense political conflicts of the post-New Order era.

CONCLUSION: CIVILIAN DISUNITY, POPULAR PROTEST AND THE END OF MILITARY-BACKED AUTHORITARIAN RULE

Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner maintained that militaries or authoritarian figures supported by them are able to seize power and sustain it over long periods of time when ‘civilian politicians are weak and divided.’ Indonesia’s New Order has been an obvious example of this linkage between the level of democratic unity among civilian forces and the likelihood and duration of military intervention in politics. Cleavages in the civilian political sphere, and particularly within the Muslim community, allowed Soeharto to seize, expand and sustain authoritarian rule for more than three decades. This conclusion has led some analysts to explain Soeharto’s downfall with the reverse argument: that his demise was due to the sudden unification of civilian oppositional forces against him. Robert Hefner, for example, argued that ‘for the first time, that opposition now united under Wahid’s NU, Megawati’s nationalists and the reform-minded modernists around Rais.’ The discussion in this chapter has shown, however, that no such coalition existed, and that the leaders of key socio-political organisations continued their long-standing religio-political disputes throughout the crisis. Some of them appeared prepared to engage with the regime and secure its survival at various junctures of the evolving crisis, while others simply isolated themselves from the popular protest engulfing the New Order state. That they finally agreed that Soeharto had to resign had to do less with a genuine political consensus between Indonesia’s main societal groups, but with the fact that the uncontrollable force of the student movement, combined with widespread social unrest, had driven the regime to the brink of

130 Hefner 2000: 199.
collapse. The demands for Soeharto’s departure were, in most cases, post-factum endorsements of the inevitable.

The theory of a united opposition causing Soeharto’s fall has been challenged by several authors stressing the non-involvement of major religio-political forces in the movement against the regime. Andree Feillard conceded that ‘Nahdlatul Ulama was not a decisive factor in the 1998 political change’, blaming the fact that Abdurrahman was ‘quasi-absent’ during the crisis as he was ‘laying in bed during most of this crucial time.’ Ken Young concurred that Abdurrahman’s stroke had such an impact that ‘he and NU have not been at the forefront of the movement for change.’ These assessments, while contradicting the assumption of a united front against Soeharto, still do not capture the systematic unwillingness of key religio-political leaders to join forces with their rivals against the regime. Abdurrahman’s inclination to favor cooperation with the regime over the agenda for democratic change predated his stroke, and was pursued consistently until the very end of Soeharto’s government. His endorsement of Golkar in the 1997 elections, the attacks on Amien Rais’ candidacy, the public denunciation of plans to unite the opposition and his calls to leave the succession to Soeharto were perfectly compatible with the post-stroke criticism of the student movement and his lobbying for a negotiated settlement with Soeharto. In fact, many NU leaders acknowledged in private that a healthy Abdurrahman would probably have put even more effort into opposing the popular movement for Soeharto’s resignation than the ill chairman eventually did. His political stance was defined by long-term considerations of strategy, religio-ideological convictions, constituency interests and personal ambition that were largely immune to the effects of his medical condition. The NU Central Board, on the other hand, shared many of Abdurrahman’s sentiments, but felt overwhelmed by the force of popular protests and finally withdrew its support for Soeharto when his position had become indefensible.

Abdurrahman’s fears that his support for a cross-constituency coalition against Soeharto would open the door for the forces of political Islam to seize power turned him into one of the largest obstacles to a united opposition against the struggling New Order government. He was by no means the only key leader, however, who harboured deep suspicions about his religio-political rivals and thus refused to forge an anti-regime alliance. Megawati Soekarnoputri, the leader of the secular-nationalist segment of Indonesian politics, was equally reluctant to align herself with

133 Confidential interview with a NU Deputy Chairman, Jakarta 27 May 1998.
modernist Muslim leaders and the populist force of the student movement. She too had concerns about the possible rise of Islam as a political factor, and she was not prepared to expose her constituency to the risk of retaliation by the embattled Soeharto regime. Accordingly, she was hardly heard of throughout the crisis, except for a half-hearted declaration in January 1998 that she was prepared to accept the presidency if it was offered to her. Amien Rais, for his part, saw himself confronted with accusations that he temporarily suspended his opposition towards Soeharto because Habibie had promised him increased regime participation for modernist Muslims. He also had little confidence in Abdurrahman’s reliability and Megawati’s political skills, opting to link up with the student movement and critical intellectuals instead. In contrast to Abdurrahman, Amien immediately understood the significance of the student protest. He was convinced that it would not just ‘fade away’ like its 1974 and 1978 predecessors, but that it was to become the decisive political force in the crisis. Unlike Megawati, Amien was prepared to put his personal safety and that of his followers at risk, earning him the respect of the students who subsequently allowed him to use their movement as his political vehicle. Established as informal leader of the popular protest, Amien extracted himself from last-minute efforts to form a coalition with Megawati and Abdurrahman. ICMI, finally, only supported a broad-based elite coalition against Soeharto when it felt excluded from the regime, but turned to promote an intra-systemic transfer of power when its leader became the main beneficiary of such a solution.

The fact that it was the anarchic force of popular protest rather than a coalition of oppositional groups that caused the regime to collapse had a profound impact on the character of regime change and the political structures of the post-authoritarian era. When the protest movement succeeded in removing Soeharto from office, the most important societal forces were unprepared and too fragmented to take his place. The resulting power vacuum was filled by moderate elements in the military who negotiated an orderly transfer of authority within the constitutional framework of the regime. Instead of a non-regime alliance of societal leaders, it was Soeharto’s deputy who was put in charge of the first 18 months of the post-authoritarian period. Under his tutelage, patronage networks and power structures of the New Order state, including those associated with the armed forces, managed to extend their influence into the new polity. The continuity of authoritarian structures and forces in the post-Soeharto state was certain to complicate and delay the process of democratic consolidation, with the area of civil-military reforms particularly vulnerable to pressure from residual powers of the old regime. In addition, many of the religio-political cleavages that marked the pattern of elite politics during Soeharto’s fall were destined to remain influential under the post-authoritarian arena, with serious consequences for the prospects of democratic change.
THIRD PART

THE POST-AUTHORITARIAN TRANSITION,
1998-2004
CHAPTER FIVE

ADAPTING TO DEMOCRACY:
THE ARMED FORCES IN THE POST-AUTHORITARIAN POLITY

Six years into Indonesia’s post-authoritarian transition, politicians and analysts remain deeply divided over the question of just how far the efforts of establishing democratic control over the armed forces have progressed since 1998. The assessments range from Megawati’s claim during the 2004 presidential campaign that democratic civilian supremacy had been firmly anchored during her rule to the reports of human rights groups and activists that the armed forces had in fact consolidated their political powers.1 Writing in 2003, William Liddle tried to weigh the arguments put forward by the various camps. On the one hand, he asserted, the armed forces ‘did not attempt to prevent then Vice-President B.J. Habibie, a civilian disliked by the military from becoming president.’ They also refrained from undermining the ‘project to democratize Indonesia by holding free parliamentary elections, the first since 1955.’ In addition, the military ‘formally rescinded its twin-functions doctrine.’ Despite all these positive indicators, Liddle concluded that there is ‘a slowly dawning recognition that nothing fundamental has in fact changed since 1998.’ The armed forces, he maintained, ‘continue to hold a self-image and possess resources that predispose and enable them to intervene in national political life in a manner and at a time of their own choosing.’2 Even within intellectual circles of the armed forces, there was acknowledgement that ‘while the post-New Order civilian governments (...) managed to reduce some of the institutional privileges of the military, this reduction did not result in a significant decline in the political powers of the armed forces.’3

The explanation for these contrasting characterisations of Indonesia’s civil-military transition is partially rooted in the way the 1998 regime change occurred. Chapter 3 demonstrated that moderate military officers succeeded in negotiating the terms of regime change, which secured a central place for the armed forces in the power constellation of the new polity. Chapter 4, for its part, showed how the inability of non-regime forces to assume government allowed important

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3 Arif Yulianto, Hubungan Sipil Militer di Indonesia Pasca Orba ditengah Pusaran Demokrasi, Rajawali Pers, Jakarta 2002: 612. Arif Yulianto, the author of the study, was a staff officer at Air Force Headquarters.
structures of the New Order to survive Soeharto's fall. The intra-systemic transfer of power shaped the preconditions for the post-authoritarian transition and caused many of its problems, but other factors appear to be important as well. The success of civil-military reforms depends on a number of variables, including the quality of civilian governance, the appropriate selection of reform targets and a supportive international environment. This chapter will discuss the development of civil-military relations under three post-Soeharto governments and evaluate the reasons for their successes and failures. In an additional section, it focuses on the post-Soeharto career of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, exemplifying the gradual assimilation of military officers to the conditions of democratic political competition. The final section presents a comparative application of the two-generation model of military reform developed by Cottee, Edmunds and Forster to the case of Indonesia. Reviewing the material presented so far, the chapter will argue that Indonesia's armed forces succeeded in preserving their fundamental interests by adapting effectively to the framework of the democratic polity, indicating that institutional change was incomplete and second-generation reforms could not even begin.


The ambivalent character of regime change, marked simultaneously by reformative and conservative features, had a profound impact on the development of the post-authoritarian polity. The new political system exposed sharp breaks with the authoritarian past but also strong lines of continuity. It was this tension between radical change and the survival of parts of the old regime that nurtured the evolution of post-Soeharto civil-military relations.

The reformative aspects of the change in government led to considerable confusion within the armed forces. Habibie, under strong societal pressure to demonstrate his reformist credentials, launched a bold political reform program within days of assuming office. He decided to lift the limitations on establishing new political parties, allowed unrestricted freedom of the press and promised free and fair elections for the near future. Although observers like Horowitz believed that 'Indonesian society is expecting – and is certainly ready for – a more complete democratization,' the surprisingly swift liberalisation of the political system had serious

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consequences for the military and its top brass. The press began to publish articles on past human rights abuses committed by the security forces, leading to a widespread sense that the political invulnerability of the military had come to an end. Political parties of all colours and ideologies sprang up between June and August 1998, colliding with the traditional military paradigm of societal control and its obsession with the perceived dangers of political pluralism. The new atmosphere of open political competition, which allowed all politico-ideological groups except for the communists to organise and participate in the struggle for power in the post-Soeharto-polity, disturbed many within the officer corps and left them in doubt about their role, function and careers. The reforms initiated by Habibie were designed to empower civilian groups and entrench them in the executive and legislative institutions of the state, and were likely to lead in the long term to the marginalisation of the armed forces from political life. In terms of internal military organisation, on the other hand, Habibie ordered the removal of the most prominent hardline officers from their commands. Prabowo and Muchdi were first dismissed and later discharged from active service after being found guilty of involvement in the kidnapping of anti-government activists.

The elements of rapid change were balanced, however, by the strong lines of continuity that extended from the New Order into the new democratic polity. The government that took over from Soeharto’s last cabinet in May 1998 consisted largely of politicians and bureaucrats produced by the old regime. The legislature, established after the 1997 elections, remained in place until fresh polls could be held and a new parliament inaugurated. Thus the institutional structures of the immediate post-Soeharto administration excluded those groups that had been in open opposition to the New Order. In the armed forces, Habibie opted to leave the majority of Soeharto’s top generals in their positions. The reasons for this decision were manifold. Most importantly, there was a widely held view in Habibie’s circle and much of the political elite that the removal of the military hardliners was sufficient to satisfy initial public demands for change in the armed forces. Personally, Habibie thought that Wiranto had to be rewarded for the orderly transition of presidential power and, as Harold Crouch pointed out, both men had a joint interest in preventing investigations into the benefits they had received under authoritarian rule. Consequently, Wiranto held on to his control over the armed forces and the Department of Defence and Security, and many of his associates retained their commands or were promoted to

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6 Interview with Z.A. Maulani, Jakarta 5 June 1998.
higher offices. Even in the marginalisation of the most prominent hardliners from the armed forces, the residual powers of their elite relationships proved sufficiently strong to facilitate both their escape from legal consequences and their quest for alternative careers. Prabowo went on to build a successful business empire and, in 2003, launched a political comeback in the Golkar party. Muchdi, for his part, rose to become the Deputy Head of BIN (Badan Intelijen Negara, National Intelligence Agency) under the Megawati government. In addition, most of their military associates, such as Syafrie Syamsuddin and Zacky Anwar Makarim, continued their service within the armed forces and were given influential posts and assignments.8

The combination of change and continuity was reflected in the political attitudes of the military top brass towards the new polity. There was a strong sense of satisfaction within Wiranto’s group over its success in negotiating Soeharto’s resignation and assuming control over the post-New Order armed forces.9 The military elite had avoided the example of countries like South Korea that embarked on their post-authoritarian reform of civil-military relations by replacing large sections of their armed forces leadership.10 In contrast, the composition of Indonesia’s top brass experienced only marginal changes, allowing senior officers attached to the old regime to defend their personal interests against demands for fundamental reform. The retention of their old positions was offset, however, by radical changes in the political system. The idea of autonomous parties, a critical press and unrestricted political competition clashed with core elements of military ideology incubated during forty years of authoritarian rule. Comments made by senior officers on the character of Habibie’s political reforms reflected this collision. Agum Gumelar, for example, stated that "now that the New Order is gone, we should think about why we had it. We had it because liberal democracy had failed. We had it because economic growth needs stability. We had it because many Indonesians are politically immature. (...) Let’s not pull down all the fences we have erected to protect us. There was actually a reason why we had erected them."11

In the same vein, Susilo Bambang Yudhuyono warned that ‘we shouldn’t suddenly have 26, 34, and so forth, political parties, because we have had experiences in the past.’12 Wiranto, for his part, spoke of the need to limit the scope of the reform efforts, and he defined those limits with

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8 Syafrie, despite losing his post as Commander of the Jakarta Garrison, later became spokesman of the armed forces. Zacky, who was replaced as head of BIA in January 1999, subsequently received several important tasks in sensitive areas, most notably in Aceh and East Timor.
10 Jun 2001: 130.
11 Interview with Agum Gumelar, Jakarta 9 June 1998.
the political terminology of the New Order: ‘Pancasila, the Constitution, nationalism and unity.’

Labeled as moderates in the late New Order for their implicit endorsement of Soeharto’s removal, key officers around Wiranto quickly found themselves portrayed as hardliners in the new democratic polity.

Controlling the Armed Forces: ‘Persuasion’ and Common Interests

In addition to their reservations vis-à-vis the new political system, the armed forces also had to come to terms with a civilian president who tried to enlist senior generals to support his own political and personal agenda. In general terms, Habibie had to convince the military to refrain from sabotaging democratic reforms and, by implication, undermining the credibility of his rule.

Adi Sasono, now Minister for Cooperatives and Small Enterprises, frequently discussed this issue with Habibie:

“The problem is that we have the old military leadership in a new political system. Of course we are afraid that Wiranto and his clique will try to express their disagreement with Pak Habibie’s reform by trying to undermine him. We have to find ways to anticipate that.”

Besides aiming to reduce the risk of military intervention in the process of democratic consolidation, Habibie also sought to enforce presidential authority over the armed forces in order to compensate for his political vulnerability. Habibie enjoyed little support from key societal forces and the newly emerging political parties, leaving the military as one of his major sources of power. Using his authority over military appointments as an instrument of ‘persuasion’, Habibie convinced senior officers to assist him in consolidating his political position and in fending off challenges from opponents. There were three major events in which Habibie evoked his supremacy over the military to improve his political standing. To begin with, Habibie forced Wiranto on 23 May 1998 to dismiss the newly appointed Johnny Lumintang as Commander of Kostrad. Some of Habibie’s advisers had warned that a Christian in such a crucial military post could seriously undermine Habibie’s popularity in the Muslim community. Then, when Golkar

14 Interview with Adi Sasono, Jakarta 11 June 1998.
15 Lumintang had replaced Prabowo after the latter’s dismissal on 22 May, but held the post only for several hours. Wiranto’s official explanation was that Lumintang had been installed as caretaker for Djamari Chaniago, the eventual Commander, but both Lumintang and Djamari were surprised by the abrupt change. Lumintang had been actively coordinating the Kostrad troops when he was informed of his removal. In an interview, her referred to the length of his term as a ‘record’ in Indonesian military history.
held its congress in July 1998 to elect a new chairman, Habibie demanded that the military support the candidacy of his associate Akbar Tandjung.\textsuperscript{16} Akbar’s rival for the post was former ABRI Commander Edi Sudradjat, a declared Habibie opponent and keen to end the latter’s presidency as soon as possible. Edi was popular within the ranks, but Habibie’s intervention with Wiranto secured Akbar’s election. Finally, Habibie engaged the armed forces into efforts by his associates to mobilise paid crowds armed with bamboo sticks in defence of a special MPR session in November 1998 designed to legitimate Habibie’s presidency and his political program.\textsuperscript{17}

The support of the military leadership for Habibie’s political agenda was not only motivated by the effective enforcement of presidential authority, however. There was a growing awareness on both sides that they had common interests on a variety of issues, largely relating to the protection of their residual powers inherited from the New Order regime. Consequently, Habibie granted a number of important concessions to the armed forces in exchange for supporting his rule. Most significantly, Habibie left the specifics of military reform to Wiranto and his advisers.\textsuperscript{18} This crucial concession put the armed forces in charge of defining and executing its own reform agenda. With this, the civilian government surrendered authority over one of the most crucial areas of structural reform. As one observer said,

“Imagine you have a bankrupt company run into the ground by a bunch of corrupt managers. Then, as the owner, you ask the same managers to draft a blueprint for making the company profitable again. That’s what Habibie did with the military.”\textsuperscript{19}

Thus in the first 18 months of Indonesia’s democratic transition, there were no executive orders by civilian authorities to the military elite as to how to revise its command system, doctrine and political mindset. In fact, as David Bourchier pointed out, the military of the Habibie period had

\textsuperscript{16} Wiranto’s influence on Golkar’s regional boards was significant as many of their chairmen were retired military officers.

\textsuperscript{17} According to an officer deeply involved in the operation, Wiranto described the mobilisation of the pro-government mob as ‘Habibie’s order’. The mob was supposed to confront the anti-Habibie protesters, mostly students. On the last day of the MPR session, security forces killed several students demonstrating against Habibie at the Semanggi interchange close to the MPR building. The protesters had been particularly outraged by a clause passed by the Assembly that guaranteed continued parliamentary representation to the armed forces. Kivlan Zen, \textit{Konflik dan Integrasi TNI-AD}, Institute for Policy Studies, Jakarta 2004: 95.

\textsuperscript{18} Habibie asked the public on 23 June to ‘give ABRI time’ to handle its ‘internal problems’, suggesting that the reform of the armed forces was an internal military matter rather than a policy issue for the civilian government. See ‘Pangab: ABRI Harus Mereformasi Diri’, \textit{Kompas} 24 June 1998

\textsuperscript{19} Interview with Kusnanto Anggoro, Jakarta 25 June 1999.

Djamari, for his part, was woken up at one o’clock in the morning to learn of his appointment. Interview with Let.Gen. Johnny Lumintang, Jakarta 29 July 1999; and Let.Gen. Djamari Chaniago, Jakarta 11 November 1998.
arguably 'more control over its own affairs than it had under Soeharto.' Wiranto, in his double
function as Minister of Defence and Security and Armed Forces Commander, represented the
civilian government vis-à-vis the very military whose institutional interests he was determined to
defend. The military's power to define its own reform process contrasted sharply with the
emphasis Cottey, Edmunds and Forster put on the importance of selecting the right reform targets
when launching institutional changes to the defence sector. If allowed to set reform agendas for
themselves, militaries are likely to address a large number of institutional areas that are of
secondary importance to their interests in order to cover for the omission of more important
issues. This omission of primary institutional targets from the reform agenda, in turn, is certain to
cause long-term damage to the goal of establishing democratic control over the armed forces. As
it would turn out, that was precisely what occurred in Indonesia.

Designing Self-reform: Wiranto and the ‘New Paradigm’

The armed forces made extensive use of the authority to select their own reform targets by
announcing a number of internal reforms between July and November 1998 that produced
relevant institutional changes but protected the military’s primary source of power. Wiranto
proclaimed in July that the military was prepared to follow a ‘New Paradigm’. This new concept,
however, was in content and wording identical with the reform ideas formulated by moderate
officers in 1996 and 1997. Like the drafts circulating at that time, Wiranto’s post-Soeharto
paradigm consisted of four points: first, the military was content not to be in the forefront of all
national affairs; second, the previous approach of occupying was changed into influencing; third,
this influence was to be exerted indirectly rather than directly; and fourth, the armed forces
acknowledged the necessity for role-sharing with other national forces. The reuse of ideas
developed in the context of the late New Order to address the challenges of the post-authoritarian
transition led the rapid reformers in Wiranto’s circle to grumble in protest:

"The new paradigm wasn’t new at all. It was the same concept that we had written
up earlier in preparation for the time when Soeharto would allow limited reforms.
Now he had fallen, with a big bang, and all we could come up with was to take that
old paper out of the drawer. Pretty saddening, actually. But hey, it was a start - they
said."\(^{23}\)

\(^{20}\) David Bourchier, ‘Habibie’s Interregnum: Reformasi, Elections, Regionalism and the Struggle for
Power’, in: Chris Manning and Pieter van Diermen (editors), \textit{Indonesia in Transition: Social Aspects of
\(^{21}\) Honna 2003: 164-165.
\(^{23}\) Interview with Agus Wirahadikusumah, Jakarta 12 November 1998.
Furthermore, the military gradually disposed of its Dual Function, changing its name into ‘combined function’ (*peran terpadu*) before declaring it officially terminated in 2000.\(^{24}\) The doctrinal change was accompanied by several measures designed to underline the military’s determination to extract itself from active politics. In November, a new policy was implemented that no longer allowed active officers to hold civilian positions in the bureaucracy. In January 1999, the armed forces accepted a reduction of its legislative representation to 38 delegates in national parliament (down from 75) and 10 percent of the seats in local legislatures. Wiranto also initiated the separation of the police from the military, which had been united under the institutional roof of Armed Forces Headquarters since 1962. This split allowed Wiranto to rename ABRI as TNI, the term used for the armed forces during the glory days of the revolution. In addition, the armed forces cut their formal ties with Golkar and pledged neutrality in the parliamentary elections scheduled for June 1999.\(^{25}\)

Wiranto’s efforts marked the early phase of what Cottee, Edmunds and Forster have called the ‘first generation’ of civil-military reforms. In this phase of the post-authoritarian transition, the institutions of the old regime are reviewed, disbanded and replaced by new bodies reflecting the changed political conditions under the democratic polity. Successful completion of first-generation reforms is dependent on the accurate identification and substantial restructuring of those power foundations that enabled militaries to function as pillars of authoritarian rule. In Indonesia, the character and scope of reforms proposed by the armed forces suggested that the problem of military intervention in politics was created by and limited to the participation of senior officers in political institutions. Thus the solution, the armed forces concluded, lay in simply extracting the military from the political bodies it had penetrated; the macro-structures of military organisation, on the other hand, were not to be affected:

> “The main target of our reform program was to get out of politics. Militaries should not be involved in active politics. We left the government, disbanded our socio-political branches and gradually reduced our presence in the legislatures. (...) The Dual Function was over once we implemented those steps. The structure of our military itself has nothing to do with that. There is nothing wrong with that structure. It is needed for defence purposes.”\(^{26}\)

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\(^{26}\) Interview with Johnny Lumintang, Jakarta 29 July 1999.
The exclusion of active personnel from government and the gradual reduction of its representation in the legislature were important steps in the formal depoliticisation of the armed forces. They led to a widespread sense of uncertainty and concern within an officer corps that for decades had viewed high-profile bureaucratic careers as part of its guaranteed professional benefits.27 But the heavy emphasis on terminating military engagement in civilian institutions also distracted the attention of the public and political elite from other, more consequential areas of reform. Most importantly, the territorial command structure, the backbone of military presence in socio-political life in the regions, was left untouched for the entirety of Habibie’s interregnum.

The institutional and doctrinal dismantling of the Dual Function masked the fact that the political role of the armed forces had been the result of, rather than the reason for, the entrenchment of the military in Indonesia’s society. The military had been granted direct participation in government in the late 1950s in acknowledgement of its capacity to stabilise (or destabilise) civilian governments. This capacity, in turn, was based on the military’s territorial presence, its autonomy from central funding sources and mediation in conflicts between political parties and other societal forces. The military reform measures initiated under the Habibie government, on the other hand, scrapped the Dual Function without addressing the structural causes that had produced it. In the same vein, the outpouring of societal criticism of the military’s violent past cornered the armed forces and persuaded them to present a reformed image, but it did not cut to the core of TNI’s institutional interests. In fact, many observers cited the trenchant public critiques of the military as the main evidence for the diminished powers of the armed forces. Bourchier, for example, argued in 1999 that ‘ABRI’s public disgracing and the graphic exposure of systematic human rights violations in the media seemed to signal a significant shift in the constellation of power.’28 Such assessments, however, overlooked the entrenched nature of the military’s structure that enabled it, in spite of continuing institutional reform and sharp societal scrutiny of its history, to adjust effectively to the changed political context of the post-authoritarian era. The increasing levels of competition between civilian groups offered it opportunities of political mediation, and many of the structural reforms initiated by the Habibie government worked in its favor. The decentralisation laws of 1999, for example, prepared the scene for a substantial transfer of political authority and financial resources into the regions,

27 In July 1998, there were 6,899 active officers seconded to civilian posts in the government bureaucracy. If retired members of the armed forces were added, the total number was 12,446. Ikrar Nusa Bakti et.al, Tentara Yang Gelisah: Hasil Penelitian Ypika tentang Postisi ABRI dalam Gerakan Reformasi, Mizan, Bandung 1999: 143.
28 David Bourchier, 'Skeletons, Vigilantes and the Armed Forces' Fall from Grace', in: Arief Budiman, Barbara Hatley and Damien Kingsbury (editors), Reformasi: Crisis and Change in Indonesia, Monash Asia Institute, Clayton 1999: 166.
where the armed forces had a strong presence through their network of territorial units. With political parties struggling to establish a presence at the grassroots, and legislatures and bureaucracies trying to cope with their new roles, the military stood out as the only institution with a deeply rooted, functioning infrastructure. 29

Adapting to Democracy: TNI and the 1999 Elections

The adaptation of the military to the political system of the post-Soeharto era was accelerated by growing intra-elite tensions surrounding the parliamentary and presidential elections in June and October 1999. The impact of this struggle for political hegemony was reflected in the changing relationship between the armed forces and the President in the second half of Habibie’s term. In the early period of his government, Habibie was able to rein in the military elite by applying a combination of ‘persuasion’ and compromise. The electoral process, however, substantially weakened Habibie’s position and strengthened that of the armed forces. Habibie’s Golkar party came only second in the parliamentary elections in June 1999, in which TNI had remained neutral both in rhetoric and in practice. The party of Megawati Sukarnoputri, PDI-Perjuangan (PDI-Struggle), finished first with 33.7 percent of the votes, turning Megawati into the front-runner for the election of the president by the MPR in October. Furthermore, a number of political and financial scandals crippled the Habibie government throughout 1999, motivating even Golkar to consider other presidential candidates. Deserted by large segments of civil society and the political elite, Habibie’s hopes for a second term rested on Wiranto’s readiness to throw the full weight of the military behind the presidential campaign of the embattled incumbent. Wiranto, however, was in contact with other contenders as well, particularly with Megawati, but also with Abdurrahman Wahid, who was supported by a coalition of Muslim parties. Only one year after the end of authoritarian rule, the actors of the new democratic polity were lobbying the armed forces for their political support.

29 The strength of TNI’s territorial network has motivated some observers to not only predict, but in fact demand a continued role of the armed forces in politics. Patrick Walters, for example, argued that the ‘military must continue to play an active role in national politics’ as it ‘remains the only truly national institution in Indonesia with a cohesive and disciplined network that stretches down to the village level’. Civilian institutions, Walters argued, were too weak to manage the transition. It was, of course, the territorial command structure that obstructed the establishment of strong civilian institutions in the regions, and the demand for its maintenance was certain to perpetuate the problem rather than solve it. Patrick Walters, ‘The Indonesian Armed Forces in the Post-Soeharto Era’, in: Geoff Forrester (editor), Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Chaos or Renewal?, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore 1999: 59-60.
The competition for the leadership of the first democratic government since the late 1950s ended with Habibie’s defeat and the election of Abdurrahman Wahid as Indonesia’s fourth president in October 1999. Sensing that Habibie’s chances were minimal, Wiranto had earlier publicly declined his offer to run as his vice-presidential candidate. The armed forces chief had received assurances from Abdurrahman that he would play a prominent role in the latter’s government; even the possibility of a Wiranto vice-presidency was discussed. Equally important were Abdurrahman’s guarantees that the military’s interests would be ‘protected’ if he won the election. After intense last minute lobbying, the armed forces leadership instructed its representatives to vote for Abdurrahman, who subsequently beat Megawati by a margin of 373 to 313. Wiranto’s hopes for the vice-presidency were dashed, however, when Abdurrahman decided to support Megawati for the post. The disappointed TNI leader was compensated with a key cabinet seat, with Susilo and Agum also obtaining ministerial positions. The inclusion of prominent military figures in the post-Habibie government pointed to the political transformation of the armed forces in the first 18 months of the democratic system. From the main pillar of Soeharto’s regime, with the clearly defined and enforced agenda of prolonging the rule of the incumbent, the armed forces had grown into an entity with reduced institutional privileges, but expanded political flexibility, internal autonomy and informal influence on the outcome of inter-elite competition. Abdurrahman admitted as much before securing his victory:

“You still can’t become President in Indonesia without the military. They’re out of the bureaucracy, and all of that, but that’s nonsense. Nonsense! They’re still strong, and Wiranto will support me to become President.”

Abdurrahman’s analysis reflected pride in his ability to use military support in outplaying his civilian opponents and assuming power, but it would also turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy affecting his own term in office. The events of the following two years would demonstrate that in

30 'Wiranto Tarik Diri Dari Calon Wapres', Media Indonesia 19 October 1999.
31 Wiranto had initially favored Megawati for the presidency, but had received no concrete offers as far as possible concessions were concerned. Instead, senior PDI-P officials declared publicly that Megawati was unlikely to invite Wiranto to form a coalition, given the latter’s unfavorable reputation with foreign governments. In response to the negative PDI-P attitude, Wiranto’s assistants sponsored an organisation named ‘Perkasa’ to call for an Abdurrahman-Wiranto leadership team. ‘PDI Perjuangan “Unlikely to Pick Wiranto as Partner”’, Jakarta Post 18 October 1999; interview with Subagio Anam, Member of Parliament for PDI-P, Jakarta 5 October 1999; and Perkasa, ‘Rakyat Perintahkan Dwi Tunggal Gus Dur-Wiranto Selamatkan Bangsa Indonesia’, Jakarta 19 October 1999.
32 It remains unclear if the 38 members of the military faction in the MPR voted en bloc for Abdurrahman or whether the vote was split. Traditionally, the military faction in the legislature voted according to the instruction of Armed Forces Headquarters, but the secret ballot may have allowed some members to vote for Megawati. Based on the calculations of the voting behaviour of other factions, however, it seems likely that at least a majority of military members opted for Abdurrahman.
33 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Jakarta 18 October 1999.
addition to obtaining military support to gain the presidency, it was equally essential for the incumbent to maintain that support if he wanted to stay in power.

The early phase of ‘first-generation reforms’ initiated during Habibie’s interregnum had apparently changed the way the armed forces engaged in politics, but had produced rather mixed results as far establishing democratic civilian control over the military was concerned. Besides the continued entanglement of the armed forces in the political competition between civilian actors, the main reason for the slow progress in the civil-military transition was the persistence of TNI’s primary power base despite ongoing institutional reforms. The territorial command system had been excluded from the reform agenda, allowing the armed forces to continue the practice of military self-financing. Largely independent from budget allocations provided by the state, the military was still able to define its own operational and strategic agenda in spite of cuts to its political privileges. In addition, Richard Gunther argued that TNI’s continued representation in parliament, albeit reduced, endowed ‘the military with “reserve powers” that might be invoked to frustrate a democratic mandate.’

The most striking evidence for the success of the armed forces in avoiding subordination to civilian control was its independent political operation in East Timor, where a referendum was to decide the future status of the territory occupied by Indonesia since 1975.

II. CIVILIAN DECISIONS AND TERRITORIAL POWER: TNI’S DEBACLE IN EAST TIMOR

The attitude of the armed forces vis-a-vis Habibie’s decision in January 1999 to allow the East Timorese to decide their future status mirrored accurately the gap between institutional reform and the resistance of military power structures in the regions. Officially, Wiranto supported Habibie’s plan to allow the territory to separate from Indonesia if a final offer of special autonomy was rejected by the majority of East Timorese in a ‘popular consultation’. In a cabinet meeting on 27 January, Wiranto only insisted on three conditions: first, that the policy of intervening in East Timor in 1975 should not be repudiated; second, that the conduct of military operations in the province since then should not be criticised; and third, that the remains of Indonesian soldiers in the territory should be respected and returned to Indonesia if Jakarta lost

the vote. On the ground, however, the armed forces launched a massive intelligence operation to intimidate East Timorese into voting for Indonesia’s offer.

The reason for Wiranto’s endorsement of the ballot in cabinet has been subject to debate between analysts. There was widespread opposition in the army mainstream to the referendum. Many within the senior military leadership had fought in East Timor at several stages of their career, and they were well aware of the crucial importance of the territory for TNI’s self-perception as the guarantor of Indonesia’s territorial integrity. These sentiments within the officer corps led Kevin O’Rourke to believe that ‘Wiranto adamantly opposed Habibie’s ballot offer’, 35 in spite of cabinet records pointing to the contrary. Don Greenlees and Robert Garran, on the other hand, noted that Wiranto’s endorsement was all the more surprising as ‘it is unlikely that Habibie could have overcome concerted opposition’ to his decision. 36 It seems that Wiranto’s move was motivated by a combination of factors. To begin with, his relationship with Habibie was still in transition. Habibie’s authority over the armed forces declined only when his chances of winning a second term began to falter amidst intense electoral competition from around March 1999. Thus when the East Timor decision was made in January, Wiranto did not feel sufficiently strong to oppose it without risking dismissal. In addition, Wiranto apparently believed that the undiminished military powers of territorial control would be able to deliver victory for both Indonesia and the armed forces:

“Of course we wanted East Timor to remain part of Indonesia. We loved East Timor. And despite all the difficulties, people there appreciated the efforts of the government and the military in promoting economic growth in the province. (…) We as military officers had a special relationship with East Timor. We were closest to the people, even in the reform era (zaman reformasi). And although we were determined to do our job professionally and neutrally, our hearts were confident that the people of East Timor would embrace Indonesia.” 37

Against this background, the prospect of a popular poll presented itself as an opportunity to settle the East Timor issue once and for all. As Greenlees and Garran explained, the ‘attraction of an act of self-determination might have been to finally prove the legitimacy of Indonesia’s claims to popular assent to its rule.’ 38 At the same time, victory for Indonesia would have demonstrated the indispensability of TNI’s territorial machinery for every civilian government, regardless of the outcome of the 1999 presidential election.

35 O’Rourke 2002: 256.
37 Interview with Wiranto, Jakarta 13 October 2000.
'Culture of Violence': TNI and the Militias

In reaching his decision, Wiranto had relied on reports from his assistants that conventional military methods of mass control and elite manipulation were certain to decide the ballot in favour of Indonesia. These assessments discounted the potential impact of diplomatic scrutiny and media reports on the credibility of the poll and ignored the wide-ranging political change that had occurred since Soeharto's fall. Robert Cribb pointed to the deep entrenchment of the officer corps in traditional paradigms of military doctrine and dominance to explain 'why the army should have been so blind to the counter-productive effects of its violence'.

One of Wiranto's closest associates concurred that

"East Timor was military territory. We had our people at every corner. People couldn't even cough without us knowing. We had spies in every pro-independence group. We knew everything, the central government knew nothing. There was no doubt that we could win this referendum or whatever they called it. Without the manipulation by the UN, we would have won."

It appears that Wiranto's trust in the capacity of his apparatus was so high that no concrete instructions were issued to ensure proper implementation of TNI policies on the ground. In this, Wiranto followed the example of Soeharto, who rarely explained in detail how he wanted to see his orders executed, but left it to the internal mechanism of the system he had created to produce the expected outcome. Geoffrey Robinson has called this 'deeply embedded system of knowledge, discourse, norms, and behaviour within the TNI (...) a culture of violence.' This system 'entails an almost reflexive, though constantly changing, understanding of a certain language, technology, and repertoire of violence and terror', and 'arguably means that no explicit order or plan was necessary in order to trigger the actions that were observed.'

It was this non-institutional organism through which orders were conveyed and interpreted that blurred the lines of responsibility and made it impossible to identify the origin of TNI's plan for East Timor. The search for a 'smoking gun', Robinson concluded, is therefore 'fruitless'.

Despite its obscure origins, the pattern of TNI behaviour in East Timor that emerged soon after the announcement of Habibie's offer was of remarkable coherence and consistency. TNI officers

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40 Confidential Interview, Jakarta 17 May 2000.

on the ground began in December 1998, when Habibie’s plan was not yet public but already internally discussed, to mobilise and expand their network of civilian militias that had assisted the military in previous guerilla and intelligence operations. These militias were built up, financed, equipped and directed by local military leaders, and were now tasked with campaigning for the pro-integrationist cause and intimidating the supporters of independence. The militias clashed with pro-independence groups as early as February 1999, and soon launched a program of systematic terror against prominent opponents of Jakarta’s rule. At the same time, TNI portrayed itself as a neutral mediator between the conflicting parties, appealing for calm and peaceful negotiations. In a brochure produced and distributed by Wiranto in 2000, TNI’s role in East Timor was explained as that of a neutral referee executing the decisions of the civilian government:

“On the one hand, TNI had to face the facts and see the horizontal conflict between the two fighting factions and on the other hand, TNI had to provide full support and backing to the political decisions of the central government by placing itself in a position of complete neutrality. (...) TNI was now fully impartial and did not take sides with either of the fighting groups whatsoever.”

The reality was, of course, strikingly different. The Task Force to Oversee the Popular Consultation in East Timor, set up by Wiranto and headed by former Prabowo ally Zacky Anwar Makarim, was the major institutional mechanism through which the military controlled the militias. Douglas Kammen maintained that "by using controlled violence and terror, the Task Force and military personnel on the ground in East Timor hoped both to intimidate East Timorese into voting in favor of broad autonomy and to scare others away from the polls." Robinson concurred that "despite efforts to conceal it (...), the direct link between the TNI and the militias remained clear." 

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42 As early as February Army Chief of Staff Subagyo had insisted that the military would not engineer a civil war in East Timor to legitimise the continued integration of the territory. The mobilisation of loyalist elements against pro-independence groups, however, indicated exactly that. See ‘ABRI Takkan Rekayasa Perang Saudara di Timtim’, Kompas 9 February 1999.
43 Wiranto, ‘Strive for Peace in East Timor: The Events in East Timor Prior to and Post August 30, 1999 Popular Consultation Period,’ no place, no date: 7.
45 Robinson 2002: 266.
Escalation and Insubordination: Indonesia’s Exit from East Timor

Despite its continued optimism that military intelligence operations would be able to ‘pull off’ a favourable result at the referendum, the armed forces leadership began in June to prepare for a possible rejection of the autonomy package. The discussed options ranged from using the militias to reject the outcome of the ballot to the partitioning of East Timor (with the Western districts to remain with Indonesia) and a large-scale relocation of pro-integration refugees to West Timor.46 It was these emergency plans, more than anything else, that exposed the blatant disconnect between the policy directives given by civilian authorities in Jakarta and their translation by military officers on the ground. It is likely that Habibie raised little objections to military efforts to win the ballot for Indonesia, but in contrast to the armed forces elite, he was prepared to let East Timor go in an orderly fashion if it rejected the autonomy offer. In fact, many within Habibie’s circle of advisers had anticipated that East Timor’s peaceful separation would not only result in the disposal of a domestic trouble spot, but also in rising international sympathy for Indonesia and its President. Instead, military officers continued to contemplate ways of overturning a possibly negative result. Kammen asserted that the plans made by these officers ‘lie at the root of the post-referendum events’.47

The massive destruction inflicted by militias on East Timor’s infrastructure and population after the clear rejection of the special autonomy package in September 1999 was a consistent extension of the logic of violence that Robinson described as an inherent feature of TNI’s thinking and operational behavior. It also suggested that one and a half years of institutional military reforms had led to only marginal change in the way the armed forces functioned. Despite its formal repositioning as an apolitical defence force, it appeared that the military, or at least influential elements within it, had decided to circumvent the civilian government’s instructions, engineer a vote that was in its institutional interests and allow the militias to go on a rampage when that goal was not achieved. As a result, Indonesia suffered a major international embarrassment when it had planned to score a diplomatic victory, and the President who was widely believed to have eyed the Nobel Peace Prize was voted out of office one month after Australia and the United

46 East Timor District Commander Col. Noer Muis said a few days before the referendum that ‘the security authorities would face a big problem if pro-independence forces won (...) as it would certainly incite harsh reactions from their opponents.’ The military, according to Noer, had also made preparations to ‘evacuate people by air, sea and land.’ Atambua in West Timor was chosen as a ‘safe gate out of the territory’. Noer added that ‘security personnel will be the last to leave the territory.’ See ‘Military Ready for “Civil War” in East Timor’, Jakarta Post 26 August 1999.
47 Kammen 2001: 186.
Nations moved into East Timor. Dewi Fortuna Anwar, Habibie’s spokesperson, made no secret of her view on TNI’s insubordination:

“If you ask whether TNI’s behavior can be classified as insubordination towards the civilian government, I advise you to look at Habibie’s instructions to Wiranto and other military leaders. There is nothing said about a militia build-up, nothing said about supporting one side in the ballot, nothing said about destruction if we lose. All it said was stay neutral, contain violence, and make sure that the ballot proceeds peacefully. Now look at the outcome of this. Does that look like Habibie’s instructions were implemented?”

The events in East Timor pointed not only to the ineffectiveness of the ‘first generation’ of military reforms, however. They also served as a painful reminder to the officer corps that in an environment of increased public scrutiny, conventional intelligence operations had ceased to be effective tools for intervening in political affairs. The military’s adaptation to post-authoritarian politics had rested upon its ability to use the new democratic polity for its purposes; the operation in East Timor, in contrast, was driven by the false assumption that the referendum could be won with traditional New Order instruments of intimidation and political manipulation. In many ways, the failure to orchestrate the East Timor ballot in Indonesia’s favor marked the end of a transitional period that had seen many New Order practices simply extending into the democratic polity. The East Timor debacle and the election of Abdurrahman Wahid as Habibie’s successor in October 1999 symbolised the beginning of a new phase in post-authoritarian politics in which these practices were no longer applied in their traditional forms, but needed to be adapted to the norms and rules of democratic competition.


The ascension of Abdurrahman Wahid to the presidency offered improved prospects for democratic consolidation in general and accelerated civil-military reforms in particular. The establishment of the first democratically elected executive since 1955 removed large segments of the former New Order elite from government, and the participation of most political parties in the cabinet appeared to provide the very ‘unity of democratic purpose among civilian elites’ that Diamond and Plattner viewed as a precondition for successful military reform in democratic

49 Interview with Dewi Fortuna Anwar, Jakarta 18 October 1999.
In addition, the armed forces had just suffered a humiliating defeat in East Timor, leading to increased external pressure on Indonesia to reform its military structures. Abdurrahman Wahid, for his part, was widely viewed as a democratic reformer, despite his controversial role in late New Order politics. Kammen and Chandra noted that Abdurrahman’s ‘strong Islamic credentials, political savvy, and wit were expected to tame the military beast.” The new President took office with a sound understanding of the depth of military intervention in Indonesian politics, and he lost no time in dismantling the network on which it was based. Starting with his immediate personal surroundings, he sought to marginalise armed forces officers in the palace bureaucracy. His secretary Ratih Hardjono recalled how she removed military tapping devices from the presidential residence and office:

“I couldn’t believe it. There were bugs hanging from the wall, literally in our faces. I called in Pak Wiranto and said: ‘Do you really have to do it that openly?’ Wiranto appeared embarrassed, and it stopped from thereon.”

In the first months of his administration, Abdurrahman ‘took a series of measures to exert civilian control over the military and rein in the Army.” He appointed Admiral Widodo, a navy officer, as TNI Commander, drawing from the service that, according to Eric Heginbotham, was ‘significantly more sympathetic to liberal political and economic positions’ than the army. Compensating key army officers like Wiranto, Susilo and Agum with cabinet posts carrying considerable patronage potential, Abdurrahman removed them from command positions and effectively ended their military careers. He also appointed a widely respected civilian academic as Minister of Defence (the first since the early 1950s), disbanded a military-coordinated security agency notorious for its political surveillance activities, and abolished the socio-political offices at the Ministry of the Interior, a traditional military stronghold. Abdurrahman, it appeared, was determined to catalyse a radical process of military reform and enforce civilian supremacy over the political sphere.

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52 An edict of 1 December 1999 deprived the President’s four adjutants of the right to monitor Abdurrahman’s visitors and outgoing correspondence. In addition, the number of senior military officers in the President’s office was reduced from 35 to 15. John McBeth, ‘Wahid’s Coming Clash’, *Far Eastern Economic Review* 3 February 2000.

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Replacing Figures and Structures: Abdurrahman’s Radical Reform Initiative

The replacement of several army generals who had risen to prominence under Soeharto’s rule aimed at the very break with the New Order military that Habibie had not achieved. Abdurrahman had identified Wiranto as the major obstacle to further military reform and consequently moved to destroy the latter’s patronage network spread throughout the TNI hierarchy. In this context, he asked his personal confidant Matori Abdul Djalil, the chairman of the NU-affiliated PKB, to come up with a list of military officers who could be expected to take the lead in revamping TNI’s institutional structures.\[56\] Topping the list was Maj.Gen. Agus Wirahadikusumah, the leader of the rapid military reformers during the final years of Soeharto’s rule. He was dissatisfied with Wiranto’s slow pace of internal reform, exposing the fissures within the moderate military faction that had defeated the New Order hardliners and assumed leadership of the post-1998 military. In a last-minute reshuffle before joining the cabinet as Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs, Wiranto had sent Wirahadikusumah off to Makassar as regional Commander of Sulawesi.\[57\] Abdurrahman decided in January to bring him back to Jakarta and groom him as the future leader of the armed forces:

“He is exactly the right person to lead TNI into the future. He understands the issues, he knows what has to be done. I’ll make him Army Chief of Staff soon, and then he can take over as TNI Commander later on.”\[58\]

Abdurrahman forced Wiranto to resign from cabinet in February 2000, citing the result of an official enquiry into the violence in East Timor, which identified Wiranto as ultimately responsible, as the main reason. Shortly afterwards, in early March, he appointed Wirahadikusumah to head Kostrad, replacing close Wiranto associate Let.Gen. Djadja Suparman. Several other officers with strong ties to Wirahadikusumah and his reformist agenda were rushed into crucial positions, among them Saurip Kadi as Assistant for Territorial Affairs at Army Headquarters. The President was about to take the same path as Taiwan’s Lee Teng-hui who in the early 1990s had disposed of General Hau Pei-tsun, the country’s military strongman, after

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56 Interview with Matori Abdul Djalil, Jakarta 28 February 2000.
58 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Jakarta 2 March 2000.
long and difficult conflicts between the civilian executive and the leadership of the armed forces.\(^{59}\)

The most important indication of Abdurrahman’s seriousness in pushing the reform of the armed forces forward was his encouragement of debates on the future of the territorial command structure. The command system, with its fund-raising capacities and opportunities of political intervention, was at the core of TNI’s institutional interests, and had survived the post-authoritarian transition almost unchanged. Defence Minister Juwono Sudarsono estimated that ‘over 70 percent of our defence spending are accrued from off-budget sources’ at the national and local levels.\(^{60}\) Thus the vast majority of officers wanted to maintain the territorial concept and the benefits attached to it, with only a small number recommending its reform.\(^{61}\) It was Agus Wirahadikusumah’s trenchant criticism of the system - most eloquently presented at a parliamentary hearing in December 1999 - that had caught Abdurrahman’s attention and made him the President’s choice to lead the military into a new phase of reforms. In Wirahadikusumah’s view, the lower levels of the command structure were leftovers of the authoritarian past and therefore completely disposable:

"Why do we need a territorial unit in Wonosobo? Will the enemy attack us there? No, we have those units because lazy, inflexible officers have become complacent playing politics, making money and retire on a nice civilian post out there. That has nothing to do with defence."\(^{62}\)

The speed with which TNI Headquarters adopted the reform rhetoric appeared to confirm Abdurrahman’s strategy of rapid and extensive change. In April 2000, a TNI leadership meeting endorsed Saurip Kadi’s proposal for a pilot project aimed at the partial disbandment of the two lowest levels of the command system in selected urban areas. The project was designed as a starting point for a much larger effort, namely the gradual dismantling of the territorial structure

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\(^{62}\) Interview with Agus Wirahadikusumah, Makasar 23 February 2000.
from the Korem level downwards. \(^63\) Wirahadikusumah had already begun in February to cooperate with several universities and think tanks on the development of such plans, and the official TNI endorsement seemed to clear the way for the most substantial reform of the armed forces since the late 1950s. Abdurrahman's biographer concluded, rather prematurely, that the President had 'tamed' the military, calling it one of his 'greatest successes'.\(^{64}\)

Radical Reform, Radical Fragmentation: Military Factionalism under Abdurrahman

The unprecedented depth and scope of the reform effort triggered the most extensive fragmentation of the military elite since May 1998. After negotiating Soeharto's orderly departure, the moderate faction under Wiranto had been relatively homogeneous during Habibie's interregnum. The increased pressure for structural change in the armed forces generated by the new government, however, brought the differences between the various moderate sub-groups into the open. The split was so severe that the previous sub-groups emerged as distinct and antagonistic factions. Wirahadikusumah led the faction of rapid reformers who, according to Bourchier and Hadiz, were 'in favor of much more sweeping reforms than his commanding officers were prepared to countenance'.\(^{65}\) Its goal was to accelerate the assimilation of military structures and norms to the conditions of the new democratic polity. To achieve this, Wirahadikusumah aimed to interact with politicians and state institutions, create a favorable public image in the media, and develop ties with civil society groups:

"This is a new era. In the past, an officer had to suck up to Soeharto to get promoted and have influence. Now it is much more complicated. You have to play your cards right. The politicians must like you, the media must like you, only then you're a winner. They call me the multi-media officer. Let them do that, I don't care.\(^{66}\)

Chandra and Kammen noted that the faction led by Wirahadikusumah consisted almost exclusively of members of the military academy class that graduated in 1973.\(^{67}\) They maintained that the large size of the 1973 class and its entanglement in an unsupportive promotion pattern

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\(^{63}\) The project aimed at the withdrawal of 33,000 personnel from the community level (babinsa). They were to be concentrated at the district commands (kodim), where they would have received training as members of regional defence units. As a result, 3,309 local commands (koramil) were also to be dissolved. Saurip's end goal was the establishment of multi-service bases with rapid deployment facilities. Saurip Kadi, TNI-AD: Dahulu, Sekarang, dan Masa Depan, Grafiti, Jakarta 2000: 79.

\(^{64}\) Barton 2002: 384.


\(^{66}\) Interview with Agus Wirahadikusumah, Makassar 23 February 2000.

\(^{67}\) Chandra and Kammen 2002: 114.
had significantly reduced the career prospects of its members. The reformist attitude of 1973 officers was, in this view, a logical attempt to break the monopolisation of top positions by the 1970 and 1971 classes. This explanation is questionable for a number of reasons. First, the reformist attitudes of Wirahadikusumah and some of his associates could be traced back at least to the 1980s, well before the reshuffle cycles of 2000 became apparent.68 Second, many rapid reformers in the 1973 class, including Wirahadikusumah, were on track for promotions to senior positions when the split within the ranks occurred. Third, some prominent graduates of 1973 did not belong to the group of rapid reformers, like Susilo and Ryamizard, who both were members of different factions. Fourth, Chandra and Kammen’s excessive emphasis on the technical aspects of promotion patterns ignores the political and personal attitudes of senior officers that reflect individual family backgrounds, socio-economic conditions and intellectual development. It appears that the latter combination of factors played a much larger role in determining conceptual positions than the inconclusive reference to reshuffle patterns.69

The second faction comprised reluctant reformers previously led by Wiranto. Under Abdurrahman, they felt marginalised by the removal of their patron from both the military leadership and cabinet. Accusing the rapid reformers of sacrificing TNI’s institutional interests to promote their own careers, the reluctant reformers were opposed to what they saw as Wirahadikusumah’s excessive proposals for radical change in the armed forces. After Wiranto’s dismissal, Djadja Supannan emerged as the informal leader of this faction. He had not only lost his Kostrad command to Wirahadikusumah, but was also the target of corruption charges initiated and publicised by his successor. Djadja felt that his reputation and career had been destroyed, and his personal resentment of Wirahadikusumah culminated in his challenge to the latter for a duel:

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68 According to Chandra and Kammen, particular classes tend to monopolise key posts at specific periods of time. These reshuffle and monopolisation patterns are difficult to predict beforehand, however. In the case of the 1970 and 1971 classes, for example, Chandra and Kammen concede that ‘the monopolization by these classes was specific to the period of Indonesia’s transition from authoritarian rule and the early phase of the democratic consolidation’ between 1998 and 2000. This means that the allegedly unfavorable career prospects for the 1973 class only became apparent at a time when many of its members had already developed public profiles as gradual and rapid reformers. Consequently, the structural promotion pattern of 2000 cannot be cited as a decisive factor in forming their attitudes toward reform. Chandra and Kammen: 111.

69 It is evident, for example, that many of the reformist officers served longer than their colleagues in positions at TNI’s educational institutions. Many members of the Wirahadikusumah faction had been lecturers in the staff and command schools of the armed forces in Bandung in the 1980s and 1990s. They were also much more likely to be recipients of international military training than officers who opposed reform. Honna 2003: 77.
"My life was ruined. My career was ruined. I decided that I wanted to solve this issue with honour, between men, between military officers. I called in my family to inform them of my decision. Unfortunately, Agus did not react to my challenge." 70

In accordance with their argument on the 1973 class, Chandra and Kammen asserted that the opponents of accelerated reform originated largely from the 1970 and 1971 classes which had occupied the majority of command posts in the period leading up to Abdurrahman’s ascension to power. 71 Their rejection of reform, Chandra and Kammen argued, was an instrument for excluding the 1973 class from further rising through the ranks. Once more, this argument has several loopholes. Tyasno Sudarto, Army Chief of Staff and a 1970 graduate, initially supported Wirahadikusumah’s calls for reform in the hope that this support might improve his political standing. This shows that opposition to reform was not an inevitable choice for the 1970 and 1971 classes, but that it could in fact obstruct their careers. On the other hand, some of the most vocal members of the anti-reform group were graduates from the classes of 1972 and 1973, like Djadja, Bibit Waluyo and Ryamizard. Opposition to reform, therefore, appeared to have been rooted in much more specific circumstances than attachment to a certain class.

The resentment of Wirahadikusumah and his reform proposals aligned Djadja and his associates with the third faction in the armed forces, the gradual reformers. After Susilo joined the cabinet, the most prominent officer in this group was Agus Widjojo, the new Chief of Staff of Territorial Affairs. 72 Widojo and Wirahadikusumah had been close associates in the 1980s and most of the 1990s, but their relationship had disintegrated with the latter’s rapid ascent under Abdurrahman. Widjojo believed that reform had to proceed at a faster pace than envisaged by Wiranto but not as rapid and less radical than that driven by Wirahadikusumah. In the short term, however, he viewed Wirahadikusumah’s populism as a more immediate threat to the coherence and dignity of the armed forces:

"Wirahadikusumah is prepared to sell TNI for a headline. He’s very smart in portraying himself in the media. But what’s the content? Zero." 73

Widjojo and his office refused to cooperate with the army’s pilot project to disband segments of the territorial command structure and began to develop counter-proposals instead. 74 Widjojo was

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70 Interview with Djadja Suparman, Bandung 15 January 2002.
71 Chandra and Kammen 2002: 141.
72 The office of the Chief of Staff of Socio-Political Affairs had been renamed in November 1998, becoming Chief of Staff of Territorial Affairs. Susilo had held the position until his appointment to the Abdurrahman cabinet in October 1999.
73 Interview with Agus Widjojo, Jakarta 5 March 2000.
74 Djoko Mulono, Widjojo’s Assistant for Territorial Affairs, denied Saurip the authority to run the pilot project in territorial units. He maintained that Saurip’s office was only responsible for technical planning.
not, however, 'vehemently opposed to the liquidation' of territorial units, as some observers assumed. His plan envisioned that territorial tasks previously carried out by the armed forces be handed over to provincial administrations within a timeframe of up to twenty years, accompanied by the gradual dismantling of the lower levels of the command structure. This gradual approach, Widjojo argued, would allow for institutional adjustments and avoid uncertainty within the officer corps over possible consequences for individual careers.

Subversion or Disintegration? The 'Sudden Death' of Reform

The broad power base of the ruling coalition, the replacement of senior commanders affiliated with the old regime and the launch of radical reform initiatives appeared to provide a solid foundation for efforts to accelerate the establishment of democratic control over the armed forces. Yet the reform drive began to stagnate only months after it had begun, and many of the initial plans and projects never materialised. Agus Wirahadikusumah and his associates were removed from their positions by August 2000, the pilot project to disband parts of the territorial command system was abandoned, and opponents of reform regained control over key posts in the armed forces. In the academic debate on the reasons for this abrupt termination of radical military reform, two divergent sets of propositions have been put forward. Damien Kingsbury, on the one hand, argued that the armed forces sabotaged Abdurrahman's reform projects, working behind the scenes to orchestrate his downfall. Authors like Jun Honna, on the other hand, focused more on the political blunders of the President that put him 'in a position in which he was forced to make concessions to ensure the loyalty of the military, or at least to avert a show of defiance.'

There is no doubt that the mainstream of the armed forces opposed the radical reform measures introduced in the early phase of Abdurrahman's rule and that it used every opportunity to halt and overturn them. Kiki Syahnakri, then Deputy Army Chief of Staff, admitted that the military rejected Abdurrahman's 'tendency and attitude to break into technical military areas', violating

and supply, while TNI Headquarters held the right to determine long-term policies. Interview with Maj.Gen. Djoko Mulono, Jakarta 30 November 2000.


It was the President himself, however, who created the political context in which such opposition proved effective. In his study on the period, Malik Haramain pointed to the 'conflict between the President and Parliament that provided TNI with the opportunity and self-confidence to show open opposition and insubordination to the President.' From virtually the first week in office, Abdurrahman began to dismantle the civilian support network that had voted him into office. Between November 1999 and May 2000, he fired ministers from Golkar, PDI-P and PPP, the largest parties in Parliament, and replaced them with personal loyalists. In addition, Abdurrahman intervened in legal proceedings and the internal affairs of state enterprises, apparently in order to promote the political and economic interests of his major financial patrons. Moreover, the President appeared increasingly erratic, threatening to arrest his political adversaries and producing headlines with controversial statements and policies on an almost daily basis. Gradually excluded from power and disillusioned with the President’s leadership, the parties that had secured Abdurrahman’s election began to unite against him. By mid-2000, the majority of the political elite had come to the conclusion that he had to go.

The erosion of Abdurrahman’s civilian support base removed one of the major preconditions for the successful implementation of radical military reform. The further the alienation between the President and key political parties and organisations progressed, the more conservative elements in the military elite felt encouraged to oppose structural reform of the armed forces. In the lead-up to the annual session of the MPR in August 2000, during which Abdurrahman had to account for his first ten months in office, the President withdrew his support for Agus Wirahadikusumah and the reform ideas he represented. The move was designed to secure political backing from the armed forces mainstream, compensating for the dramatic loss of support from civilian groups in and outside the legislature. During the MPR session, Abdurrahman agreed to delegate responsibility for internal TNI affairs to his deputy Megawati Soekarnoputri. Megawati had been in contact with conservative elements in the top brass for some time, largely in order to express frustration over her own isolation from government business. Using a rare chance to display her potential influence, she had joined forces with conservative officers in June and demanded the dismissal of Bondan Gunawan, Abdurrahman’s State Secretary and a close civilian ally of Wirahadikusumah. Shortly before the MPR session

82 Bondan Gunawan had been close to Abdurrahman since their membership in the Democracy Forum in the early 1990s. As State Secretary, he continued his sharp criticism of the military. In April 2000, he
commenced, Wirahadikusumah himself was relieved of his Kostrad command and assigned to a desk job at TNI Headquarters. Evidently, the opponents of accelerated reform in the armed forces had successfully used the conflict between the presidency and the legislature to pursue their interests, and the initial rapid pace of military reform quickly lost momentum as a result.

The political events surrounding the 2000 MPR session suggest that it was the President’s rapid loss of civilian support, rather than subversion by the armed forces, that caused the sudden stagnation in military reform. William Case asserted that Abdurrahman needed ‘to avoid antagonizing the hard-liners’ in the armed forces ‘if Indonesia’s new democracy was to persist.’ It is almost certain, however, that sufficient levels of backing in the legislature would have allowed Abdurrahman to isolate conservative officers effectively and continue with the rapid reform of TNI. None of the major political groups had serious objections to the presidential goal of subordinating the armed forces to civilian rule, but they disagreed with him over almost every other policy issue. They felt that Abdurrahman had unilaterally dissolved the coalition that had paved his way to power and had therefore lost the legitimacy to govern. As one senior parliamentarian put it:

“Gus Dur’s reform of the military is fine. We could all support him in that. But how can we allow him to monopolise political power, humiliate parliament, ridicule political parties, place his cronies in state enterprises and talk nonsense almost every day?”

The armed forces, it appeared, were only in a position to oppose presidential authority when political circumstances allowed them to do so. In the months of February and March 2000, when the scope of Abdurrahman’s political decline was still unclear, the armed forces leadership felt institutionally obliged to comply with his instructions. Only several months later, after the implications of the President’s isolation from the political elite were fully evident, did the military elite grab the opportunity to launch effective attacks on his reform policies.

contended that ‘TNI is not prepared to see its political role reduced to defence tasks, and this is understandable, considering the privileges they have enjoyed so far.’ See Bondan Gunawan, ‘Reformasi TNI dalam Kabinet Gus Dur’, Paper Presented at the Halqah Nasional ‘Hubungan Ulama-Tentara untuk Indonesia Baru’, Malang 17 April 2000.

83 Case 2002: 73.

84 Interview with Djoko Susilo, Member of Parliament representing PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional, National Mandate Party), the party led by Amien Rais, Jakarta 10 August 2000.
From Reformer to Dictator? Abdurrahman, Parliament and TNI

The realisation that his survival in the MPR depended on concessions to officers opposed to further military reform did little to convince Abdurrahman that he had to strengthen his civilian support base. On the contrary, after the session was over, he apparently felt that his independence from the legislature and the political elite was greater than ever. He reshuffled his cabinet once again without consulting Megawati, rushing in more personal loyalists and cutting the remaining ties to the political establishment. Among the dismissed cabinet members was Defence Minister Juwono Sudarsono, who despite a mild stroke had effectively worked on enhancing civilian expertise and authority within his department. His poor health was cited as the official reason for his replacement, but the minister suspected a more politically motivated background:

“I think I fell out of grace because I insisted on a strictly institutional relationship with the President. I felt obliged to report issues related to my department and receive policy instructions if necessary. This relationship, however, became more and more blurred, with Gus Dur calling in ministers at any hour of the day to discuss political affairs, mostly related to his struggle with his opponents. I made it very clear that I did not view it as proper for the Minister of Defence to participate in after office-hours discussions on matters not concerning his immediate authority.”

Abdurrahman appointed Mahfud MD to replace Juwono. A professor of constitutional law, Mahfud had attracted Abdurrahman’s attention by publicly defending the President’s claim to political supremacy over Parliament. Mahfud himself did not believe that he possessed the necessary qualifications for the job, and accepted the nomination only when Abdurrahman declined to review it. Mahfud’s appointment signalled a shift in Abdurrahman’s policy towards the military – from aiming to radically reform it at the beginning of his term to engineering its support in the escalating conflict between him and the political elite.

Abdurrahman’s misperception that the MPR session and the cabinet reshuffle had consolidated his grip on power encouraged him to seek the reappointment of rapid reformers to senior positions in the military. Dissatisfied with the lack of support in the officer corps, Abdurrahman planned in October to dismiss the Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Tyasno Sudarto, and to replace him with Wirahadikusumah. In many ways, Tyasno’s decline personified the rapidly disintegrating relationship between the President and the armed forces. Despite belonging to the faction of reluctant reformers, Tyasno had endorsed Wirahadikusumah’s reform agenda as an inevitable

85 Interview with Juwono Sudarsono, Jakarta 7 February 2002.
86 Mahfud had received hints from the palace that he could expect the education portfolio, but was surprised to hear that he was appointed Minister of Defence. ‘Urutan Pangkat di Militer Pun Saya Tak Tahu’, Tajuk 31 August 2000.
process that enjoyed strong support from the President and large sections of the political elite. After August 2000, however, Tyasno tried to dissociate himself from the rapid reformers and approach their opponents. His tactical shift not only attracted accusations of opportunism from fellow officers, but it also highlighted the reality that presidential protection was gradually losing its importance for consolidating or promoting military careers. Instead, it became crucial to gain the support of the majority of senior army officers, most of whom were members of the faction of reluctant reformers. Consequently, Tyasno mobilised a large number of his colleagues to convene in Bandung in early October to oppose his planned replacement. The meeting decided to reject Wirahadikusumah’s potential promotion and appeal to Megawati for support. Her disenchantment with the August cabinet reshuffle was sufficiently deep for her to confront the President on an issue that he had officially delegated to her, and she succeeded in preventing Wirahadikusumah’s appointment. Tyasno, however, was unable to secure his own political survival. In his place, the armed forces leadership pushed for the nomination of Endriartono Sutarto as Army Chief of Staff. Ultimately, Abdurrahman’s plan of reinstalling rapid reformers in the military top brass had resulted in the army coming under the control of a staunch opponent of Wirahadikusumah and his policies.

Isolated from the political elite and powerless to rein in the armed forces, Abdurrahman resorted to increasingly irrational threats against his opponents. When Parliament issued a memorandum in February 2001 to initiate a process aimed at his impeachment, the President threatened to ‘freeze’ the legislature, declare a state of emergency and use the security forces to execute his orders. Endriartono, however, indicated that the military would not carry out such instructions. Unintentionally, Abdurrahman had provided the armed forces with the unique opportunity of portraying themselves as having completed the self-transformation from Soeharto’s repressive tool to a democratically aware and responsible defence force. TNI leaders maintained that their opposition to the emergency decrees proved their ‘consistency in implementing TNI’s New Paradigm (…), its neutrality and non-involvement in practical and

87 Confidential interview with a three-star general, Jakarta 10 September 2000. This general reported that Tyasno was nicknamed the ‘rubber general’ in TNI Headquarters, alluding to his perceived political flexibility. There was particular resentment within the officer corps over a brochure distributed by Tyasno among the political elite. Instead of presenting TNI’s reform agenda, it included Tyasno’s personal views, biography and family stories. Tyasno Sudarto, ‘Teka Moral Jenderal Tyasno Sudarto - Kembali Diterima’, Yogyakarta 2000.
partisan politics and its refusal to be used as an instrument of power.90 Military opposition towards Abdurrahman, previously widely described as defiance vis-à-vis civilian supremacy, now gained recognition as an act protecting democratically legitimised institutions of the state. Abdurrahman’s associates were puzzled by the sudden change in public perceptions of the President:

“Yesterday they celebrated him as a radical military reformer. Now they say he’s worse than Soeharto, demanding that the military dissolve Parliament and so on. (...) The military opposes Gus Dur because they don’t want civilian rule. But now it’s them who call Gus Dur authoritarian, a dictator, etc. It’s amazing.”91

Once again, high levels of political conflict among the civilian elite had allowed the armed forces to depict themselves as an apolitical institution above partisan interests, a mediator between divided parties and a defender of national (and now even democratic) interests.92 In addition, TNI saw its traditional notions of civilian incompetence and adventurism confirmed, providing it with welcome arguments to establish normative limits to civilian control over the military. Only one year after Abdurrahman had embarked on the most courageous military reform program since the 1950s, both the President and his opponents were lobbying the armed forces to side with them in their struggle for political hegemony. This fact was at odds with the proposition developed by Rabasa and Haseman that it was the military that suffered most from conflicts within the civilian elite.93 For TNI, it appeared, intra-civilian fragmentation offered the potential for gaining wide-ranging political concessions from both sides. In the words of one Australian observer, the military warmed up to the idea ‘that the longer the turmoil continues, the more Indonesians may come to see it as the last hope for stability.’94

91 Interview with Muhaimin Iskandar, Jakarta 6 June 2001.
92 The political crisis of 2001 caused a significant increase in the popularity of the armed forces, as reflected in opinion polls of that period. Between September 2000 and October 2001, the percentage of respondents who had a favourable opinion of TNI rose from 28 to 58 percent, while those who had an unfavourable view declined from 61 to 31 percent. Salomo Simanungkalit, Indonesia dalam Krisis, 1997-2002, Penerbit Buku Kompas, Jakarta 2002: 291.
The Crisis Escalates: The Threat of Emergency Rule and Abdurrahman’s Fall

Abdurrahman’s attempt to use the security forces in his fight with the opposition not only damaged his reputation as a democratic reformer, but also catalysed the impeachment proceedings against him. In May 2001, the DPR issued a second memorandum against the President, fulfilling the formal conditions for a special session of the MPR to decide on Abdurrahman’s impeachment should the latter not respond satisfactorily to Parliament. Subsequently, the President stepped up his preparations for the declaration of a state of emergency and the dissolution of the legislature. Faced with an unsympathetic military mainstream, however, Abdurrahman turned to the Police for support. In June, he tried to install Chaeruddin Ismail as Chief of Police, replacing Gen. Bimantoro, who was known to be close to Megawati. According to an MPR decree passed in 2000, the President had to seek the approval of Parliament before appointing or dismissing a Commander-in-Chief or Chief of Police; Abdurrahman therefore opted to ‘suspend’ Bimantoro and appoint Chaeruddin as Deputy Chief with full executive powers. Bimantoro refused to leave office, however, and the constitutional conflict between the presidential office and Parliament over the issue further aggravated political tensions. When Abdurrahman threatened to bring thousands of fanatical supporters from his stronghold in East Java into Jakarta to defend him, the President lost his last ally: Megawati. On 18 July, she met with leading figures of the opposition and declared that a special session of the MPR was ‘unavoidable’. According to one of her closest advisers, the move to desert Abdurrahman had been one of the most difficult decisions in her political life:

"Ibu Mega was prepared to swallow a lot. She swallowed the defeat and treachery of 1999; she endured the empty promises and violated agreements about her role in government; she even remained silent on the public humiliations and jokes Gus Dur made about her; but when he took the country on a dangerous path of constitutional conflict, threats of mass violence and abolition of democratic institutions, a line had been crossed." 95

Cornered by his Vice-president, Abdurrahman named Chaeruddin as Chief of Police and asked his staff to draft a decree for the declaration of a state of emergency. Chaeruddin’s appointment was an open violation of existing constitutional requirements, and provided the DPR with the legal trigger to convene a special session of the MPR. The Assembly was opened on 21 July and

95 Interview with Cornelis Lay, Honolulu 3 October 2001.
began hearing the impeachment charges. There was little doubt that the MPR would ultimately dismiss the President and install his deputy to serve out the remainder of his term.

The President’s last chance for political survival rested with individual officers in the security forces potentially willing to carry out his orders.\(^{96}\) Chaeruddin was one such officer, but he was effectively sidelined by Bimantoro and was never endorsed by the vast majority of the police top brass. On the military side, Abdurrahman offered the post of Commander-in-Chief to Lt.Gen. Johnny Lumintang.\(^{97}\) Lumintang’s frequent visits to the palace caused speculation within the ranks that he was considering the offer, but he ultimately refused. The other officer who was mistakenly seen as siding with Abdurrahman was Lt.Gen. Ryamizard Ryacudu, the Commander of Kostrad. On 22 July, his troops paraded in front of the palace, leading the President to believe that he had won an important military ally. Consequently, Abdurrahman associates made the rounds to other senior military officers, aiming to convince them that the political constellation was shifting in their favor. They even visited one of Abdurrahman’s most trenchant military critics, Djadjja Suparman:

“Muhammin Iskandar came and asked for forgiveness for past misunderstandings. I said ‘No, problem, I know what you’re up to.’ Then he said Ryamizard was on their side, and that the military should support Gus Dur against Parliament. I immediately called Ryamizard and told him what Muhammin had said. Ryamizard just laughed, and insisted the opposite was true: he was there to warn Gus Dur not to go too far.”\(^{98}\)

Ryamizard’s clarification exposed the President’s isolation from the security forces that were formally under his command. By violating the constitution himself, Abdurrahman offered both the police and the armed forces strong arguments to defy his instructions and ignore his institutional authority. As Liddle put it, ‘the generals rejected Gus Dur’s last-ditch attempt to save himself by staging a Sukarno-style coup against the MPR.’\(^{99}\) On 23 July, the military and police faction in the MPR voted with most of the other parties to oust Abdurrahman from office and appoint Megawati as his successor.

\(^{96}\) Abdurrahman’s own security ministers advised him against declaring a state of emergency. In early June, the President had dismissed Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as Coordinating Minister for Political, Social and Security Affairs for failing to support his emergency plans. Abdurrahman appointed Agum Gumelar to replace Susilo, but the new minister offered the same advice. For this, Abdurrahman called him a ‘transvestite’ and ‘coward’. Retno Kustiati and Fenty Effendi, *Agum Gumelar – Jenderal Bersenjata Nurani*, Pustaka Sinar Harapan, Jakarta 2004: 208.

\(^{97}\) Abdurrahman apparently intended to use the ‘Chaeruddin model’ to elevate Lumintang to the position of Commander-in-Chief. Lumintang was to be appointed Deputy Commander-in-Chief first, a post that Abdurrahman had abolished before. Subsequently, the suspension of Parliament would have opened the way for Lumintang to take up the top post without consent by the legislature.

\(^{98}\) Interview with Djadjja Suparman, Bandung 15 January 2002.

The fall of Abdurrahman brought one of the most chaotic periods of Indonesia’s post-authoritarian transition to an end. Launched with promises of sweeping political change, Abdurrahman’s presidency collapsed under massive conflicts within the elite and left highly mixed legacies for democratic consolidation in general and civil-military relations in particular. On the one hand, it witnessed some of the most innovative policy initiatives ever presented by an Indonesian executive, including offers of fresh negotiations with the separatist movements in Aceh and Papua and wide-ranging reform of the armed forces. On the other hand, the President instituted authoritarian patterns of political interaction and promoted economic favoritism that channeled resources to his closest associates and constituencies. This ambivalence remained even in the highly charged atmosphere of his final months in office: while he tried to use the armed forces against his opponents, and offered political concessions to them in the process, small steps toward the institutional reform of the military continued. There were two main initiatives in this regard. First, the passing of two MPR decrees in 2000 that defined the task of the military as being exclusively focused on defence, while internal security was to be handled by the Police. The same decrees also finalised the departure dates of TNI from Parliament for 2004 and from the MPR for 2009 ‘at the latest’. Second, Abdurrahman encouraged intensive civil society participation in the drafting of a new State Defence Bill, designed to replace the web of New Order laws that had legitimised the military’s political role. Such levels of civil society engagement in deliberating defence legislation are typically found in post-authoritarian states that have already begun the second generation of civil-military reforms. That it was achieved in Abdurrahman’s Indonesia provided, in the words of his Defence Minister Mahfud MD, ‘a glimpse of what could have been if Gus Dur had not created such a mess.’

IV. CONFLICT, NATIONALISM AND THE WAR AGAINST TERROR: TNI UNDER THE MEGAWATI PRESIDENCY, 2001-2004

The failed Abdurrahman presidency exposed two major realities of civil-military relations in Indonesia’s post-authoritarian transition: first, the political influence of the armed forces rose and fell proportionately to the level of conflict within the civilian elite. Backed by a large coalition of political parties, Abdurrahman was able to launch an ambitious military reform program at the

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100 The 1999 session of the MPR had already decided to exclude TNI from the DPR and local legislatures, but had granted the military continued representation in the MPR in exchange for dropping its opposition to leaving Parliament.
102 Interview with Mahfud MD, Yogyakarta 15 September 2001.
beginning of his term. As the alliance fell apart, so did the prospect of substantially reforming the armed forces. Rizal Sukma and Edi Prasetyono concluded that it was this ‘protracted tension and competition among civilian political forces and elites’ that compromised the ‘bargaining position of the civilians’ vis-à-vis TNI. A LIPI study on Abdurrahman’s rule concurred that ‘although there was a formal commitment to ending military engagement in politics, the requirements of real politics forced civilian politicians to be pragmatic and seek support from TNI (…) to confront their political opponents.’ Second, the central role of the military in the struggle over Abdurrahman’s presidency revealed the limitations of the first generation of military reforms. The top brass was able to exert significant political influence despite the ongoing institutional depoliticisation of the armed forces, indicating that their powers rested more on their traditional security function than on the number of cabinet or parliamentary seats that they held. For the military elite, this circumstance provided evidence that its interests were perfectly compatible with the structures and dynamics of the democratic polity. No government could afford to alienate the armed forces, and oppositional groups regularly approached military leaders to pull them over to their side. Whatever the outcome of political conflicts was, the armed forces were certain to profit from them.

Complex Legacy or ‘Mascot’? Megawati’s Concessions to TNI

Many observers of Indonesian military politics have discounted the legacy of the Abdurrahman period when explaining the nature of civil-military relations under the presidency of Megawati Soekarnoputri. Instead, they have referred to Megawati’s ideological disposition as the main factor behind the political consolidation of the armed forces after 2001. In their view, Megawati’s political conservatism, her preoccupation with the territorial integrity of the state and her indifference to intellectual discussions on human rights and individual freedoms made her a natural ally for conservative military officers. Sidney Jones even referred to Megawati as a ‘sort of a mascot’ of the armed forces. Thus Megawati’s ascension to power in July 2001 was seen as a watershed in civil-military relations, marking the return of the armed forces into the political arena and the end of military reforms. Despite Megawati’s ideological and political affinity to the officer corps, however, her worldview alone is insufficient to explain the stagnation, and partial

regression, in military reform efforts. This section will argue that it was mainly a combination of structural factors, both domestic and international, that changed the civil-military equation under Megawati’s rule in favour of the armed forces. The origins of some of these factors lay in the political patterns of the pre-Megawati polity, while others reflected broader societal and even global change.

The first important factor behind the shifting civil-military relationship in the post-Abdurrahman period were the concessions that Megawati granted to TNI in order to anticipate possible challenges to her rule. In extending more privileges to the armed forces, she continued and accelerated a trend started under the previous government. Abdurrahman had begun to give concessions to the military elite since mid-2000, terminating the reform of the territorial command structure, removing controversial officers, reversing his liberal positions on separatism and ordering security crack downs in Aceh and Papua. Megawati, anxious to secure military support in case the political elite deserted her, expanded these concessions to include greater institutional autonomy and increased influence on security affairs. In a wide-ranging reshuffling of the top brass in 2002, the post of Commander-in-Chief was returned to the army and taken over by Endriartono. Megawati also supported the promotion of Ryamizard Ryacudu to the position of Army Chief of Staff. Ryamizard was known for his conservative ideological views and his opposition to further military reform, making him politically controversial but popular with the army mainstream. As Minister of Defence, Megawati appointed Matori Abdul Djalil, who had just lost the chairmanship of PKB over his involvement in Abdurrahman’s impeachment and was therefore without any significant political support base. Deprived of his patronage network and lacking knowledge of the conceptual and technical aspects of military affairs, Matori sought to compensate for his deficiencies by driving a course of accommodation towards the military elite. In August 2003, after two ineffective years as minister, Matori suffered a stroke, and Megawati did not fill the position before the expiry of her term in October 2004. Megawati’s disengagement from details of military management, combined with the vacancy in the Ministry of Defence, left the military largely in control of its internal affairs throughout Megawati’s rule.

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106 Jacques Bertrand argued that in Aceh, Abdurrahman ‘adopted the more repressive approach favored by the armed forces’ after his reconciliatory strategy had failed to produce results. His shift was, however, less a consequence of the situation in Aceh than of his rapidly declining political fortunes in Jakarta. Jacques Bertrand, Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004: 181.

Return of the Security Approach: Ideological Shifts in the Elite

Megawati’s concessions to the armed forces coincided with significant shifts in the ideological and political disposition of large segments of the civilian elite from the second half of 2001 onwards. Impatient with communal conflicts in Maluku and Central Sulawesi and the expanding influence of separatist movements in Aceh and Papua, the Jakarta-based elite in both the executive and the legislature adopted an increasingly nationalist and security-focused rhetoric that had significant similarities to that promoted by the New Order.108 Key politicians viewed the ‘soft’ approach of the Habibie and Abdurrahman governments toward separatist groups as a massive blunder, and were eager to address the problems militarily. They also believed that the ongoing carnage in Ambon and Poso could only be ended by swift and harsh interventions by the security forces. This renewed prioritisation of territorial integrity and repressive methods of conflict resolution favored the armed forces in several ways. It restored the military’s claim to a domestic security role and returned the armed forces to the centre of policy making in areas affected by separatist movements.109 Even foreign observers agreed with the rationale that ‘nationwide domestic disorder raise(s) the question of whether there is an appropriate domestic security role for TNI.’110 The change in civilian elite attitudes also confirmed and legitimised TNI’s new emphasis on the concept of ‘NKRI’ (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia, Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia) as its main ideological guideline, overshadowing Pancasila. Most importantly, however, it motivated political decision-makers to slow down or even halt ongoing processes of military reform, fearing that any further experiments would reduce the ability of the armed forces to crack down effectively on separatist rebels. As one member of Commission I on Defence and Security in Parliament explained:

“Now is not the time to experiment with military reform. Now is the time to support our military in their fight against separatists, in their fight to safeguard the territorial integrity of Indonesia. (...) I’m sure there will be a time to resume reform in the future.”111

111 Interview with Happy Bone Zulkarnaen, Jakarta 30 March 2002.
In fact, the majority of the civilian elite appeared even more inclined to resort to traditional military paradigms of violent conflict resolution than Megawati. Throughout 2002 and early 2003, Megawati allowed her Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, to seek a peaceful settlement of the Aceh problem through negotiations mediated by the Geneva-based Henry Dunant Centre.\textsuperscript{112} The efforts resulted in a cessation of hostilities agreement in December 2002, but most civilian politicians and the armed forces remained reluctant to endorse it. The military was widely suspected of sabotaging the peace deal by engineering attacks on monitors of the cease-fire, and in May 2003 the agreement collapsed. Unanimously supported by Parliament and the vast majority of the public, Megawati declared martial law and launched one of the largest military campaigns in Indonesian history.

The military operation in Aceh provided important insights into the state of civil-military relations in Indonesia five years after Soeharto’s fall. The civilian government left the definition of the strategic goals of the campaign and their implementation largely to the armed forces, and with no effective Minister of Defence since August 2003, executive oversight of the operations was scant. Parliament limited its control function to infrequent meetings with the top brass, expressing gratitude for the military’s service in the war zone. Returning from a visit to Aceh, one of the deputy speakers of Parliament, Soetardjo Soerjoguritno, was convinced that the military was doing well because ‘there are many more red and white flags now in Aceh than before the campaign.’\textsuperscript{113} Consequently, Parliament granted most of the financial requests made by the armed forces without demanding detailed explanations for particular budget items.\textsuperscript{114} Senior officials in the Supreme Auditing Board threw up their hands in despair:

“What can we do? We told Parliament that TNI’s reports are incomplete and questionable, but they are not following up on that. In fact, they have violated our recommendation not to grant new funds before the previous ones were accounted for.”\textsuperscript{115}

While executive and legislative control of the military operations was weak, societal oversight was limited to a few critical civil society organisations. Media coverage was largely restricted to quoting official military sources. It was thus impossible for civilian control authorities and the public to verify military data related to the campaign, including the number and classification of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{113} “Darurat Militer Tak Menyimpang”, \textit{Sriwijaya Post} 31 July 2003.
  \item \textsuperscript{114} ‘US$291 Million in Military Emergency Funds Missing’, \textit{Acehita} September 2004.
  \item \textsuperscript{115} Interview with senior official, Supreme Auditing Board, Jakarta 7 February 2004.
\end{itemize}
victims. At the local level, the military established an emergency administration that quickly accused the civilian bureaucracy of corruption and ineptitude. In addition, vacant civilian posts in local government were filled with army officers imported from TNI’s vast territorial network, allowing the armed forces to illustrate the continued importance of their command system. In short, the campaign in Aceh exposed the failure of the institutional control framework set up during the first generation of military reforms, and revealed how distant Indonesia was from entering the second generation of change typically aimed at creating workable systems of democratic control.

Opportunity or Danger? TNI and the War on Terror

The concessions to the armed forces after the constitutional crisis of 2001 and the renaissance of militaristic paradigms of conflict resolution provided two important factors for the political consolidation of the armed forces under the Megawati presidency. The changed international and domestic security environment after September 11th supplied a third crucial element. Since the 1990s, Indonesia’s armed forces had been isolated by the United States and most of its Western allies for failure to address serious human rights violations committed by TNI officers, particularly in East Timor. Congress had prohibited the US government from establishing full military-to-military ties with Indonesia, requiring TNI to meet certain reform benchmarks beforehand. The prospect of international rehabilitation and renewed access to modern military equipment had since then formed a secondary, but significant, incentive for the armed forces to pursue internal reforms. Prior to September 11th, senior officers had asked the US embassy in Jakarta to assist in their efforts to lift existing restrictions by issuing a statement that would acknowledge the success of military reform steps implemented so far. Their request had been turned down, but the attacks on New York and Washington changed the strategic priorities of the United States completely. Its focus was now on the creation of a global network of effective counter-terrorism forces to gather intelligence and carry out arrests, replacing what Catharin Dalpino called the ‘free-floating post-Cold War idealism’ behind ‘American support for

116 It has been an apparent standard practice within the military to declare almost all victims killed by its troops as supporters of the rebellious Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM). Human rights groups have raised a number of cases, however, in which the victims seemed to have been non-combatants. The discrepancy between the number of GAM members claimed to have been killed by TNI and the number of weapons seized from them suggests that at least some unarmed civilians were among the dead. By November 2003, TNI claimed to have killed 1,106 members of GAM, but had recovered only 488 of their firearms. ‘1106 Anggota GAM Tewas Selama Darurat Militer’, 19 November 2003; ‘Civilians in the Middle’, Acehkita September 2004.

Indonesia’s democratization process. Anthony Smith argued that it was this new interest in establishing counter-terrorism cooperation with Indonesia’s military that provided ‘the main impetus to find a way to partially restore military-to-military ties.’ Thus after September 11th, US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell rushed to certify that TNI had achieved satisfactory levels of success in its reform process, expecting that Congress would subsequently lift its restrictions. International pressure to reform, a crucial element of civil-military transitions according to Cottey, Edmunds and Forster, was fading.

The Indonesian armed forces quickly grasped that the political fallout of the global war on terror carried, in Donald Emmerson’s words, ‘more opportunity than danger’. Senior officers instinctively understood that the United States and its allies needed strategic partners in their fight against terrorist networks, and that this new geopolitical constellation was likely to end TNI’s international isolation:

“I admit that after East Timor we faced difficulties with our international reputation, and especially the US was reluctant to engage with us. (...) The common interest of confronting the threat of terror creates completely new opportunities of cooperation, and makes the US understand that TNI can be an important partner in their efforts.”

The increased focus on counter-terrorism not only reduced the international incentive for further reforming TNI, but soon turned into an important and independent element of domestic politics. The Bali bombings in October 2002, which killed more than 200 people and delivered negative headlines for Indonesia around the world, lifted the war against terror from an issue of largely diplomatic significance to an urgent political priority for Megawati’s government. The Indonesian authorities reacted with a major crackdown on terrorist networks in the country, passed new anti-terrorism laws and supported harsh and at times extra-judicial measures against suspects. Again, the armed forces soon took advantage of the new situation. Army Chief of Staff

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123 Police offers were widely criticised for carrying out arrests without proper documents and without notifying family members of the suspects’ whereabouts. See ‘DPR Minta Penjelasan Kapolri Soal Isu Penangkapan Aktivis Islam’, *Kompas* 16 September 2003.
Ryamizard Ryacudu suggested that in response to the terrorist crisis, the government should ‘revive’ and expand the intelligence gathering capabilities of the territorial commands. His proposal was well received. Following the bombing of the Australian embassy in Jakarta in September 2004, Megawati decided to include the military in counter-terrorism units previously made up exclusively of police officers.

Consolidation and Benefits: Military Reform No, Electoral Competition Yes

The increased strategic value of the armed forces, boosted by their mediation in intra-civilian conflict, their dominance in fighting separatist movements and their new role in the war against terror, translated into direct political benefits for the officer corps. Internally, the armed forces were now in a position to dispense with much of the reform rhetoric it had adopted since 1998. Accordingly, opponents of accelerated reform, representing the army mainstream, moved to marginalise the group of gradual reformers under Agus Widjojo from the centre of decision-making. Throughout 2001, the Chief of Staff of Territorial Affairs had developed his ideas on reforming the territorial command structure into a detailed policy paper. Circulating widely in September 2001, the paper led to open protest by officers who wanted to maintain the territorial system. In November 2001, Widjojo’s office was disbanded, and he was shifted to the less significant post of Deputy Chair of the MPR. His removal marked the end of the internal military discourse on revamping the territorial command structure and left the armed forces without influential proponents of reform. Externally, the consolidation of the armed forces was mirrored in their increased popularity both within the civilian elite and among the wider public. Polls showed that many Indonesians now favored a president with a military background, reversing the trend of the early post-authoritarian period that had pointed to deep suspicions of officers in top political posts. In practice, the improved image of the armed forces led to gains for the military

127 By June 2004, 45 percent of the electorate thought that an active or former general was best qualified for the presidency, as opposed to 14 percent who favoured a religious leader and 9 percent who wanted a human rights activist as president. Only 8 percent of respondents believed a professional politician should become president. International Foundation for Electoral Systems, ‘Results from Wave XIII Tracking Surveys’, 23 June 2004.
in the two most disputed political arenas of the Megawati polity: the struggle for executive positions in the regions and the preparations for the 2004 elections.

The election of new governors throughout Indonesia in 2002 and 2003 exposed the success of the armed forces in preserving their political powers despite a series of institutional reforms aimed at their depoliticisation. In 1999, new bills on regional parliaments had been passed, allowing the legislatures to elect governors and bupatis without interference by the central government. This was widely expected to discontinue the traditional grip of the armed forces on key governorships in Java and other crucial provinces. Michael Malley noted that ‘the full impact of decentralisation is likely to be realised over the course of 2003 as the terms of governors appointed during the waning days of the Soeharto regime finally expire.’ The conflict between political parties over these crucial positions was so intense, however, that many of them decided to back the incumbent or other retired military officers to replace them. Jakarta governor Let.Gen. (ret) Sutiyoso, nominated by PDI-P, was re-elected in 2002. Let.Gen. (ret) Mardiyanto, governor of Central Java, won a second term in 2003, defeating another retired military officer backed by PAN. Let.Gen. (ret) Imam Utomo of East Java also secured his re-election in 2003, beating a former general supported by PKB patron Abdurrahman Wahid. In West Java, a retired officer lost against a Golkar bureaucrat who happened to be a central figure in FKPPI (Forum Komunikasi Putra-Putri Purnawirawan Indonesia, Communication Forum of Sons and Daughters of Indonesian Veterans). In Maluku, a former regional Commander was elected as the new governor of the conflict-ridden province. The brother of Gen. Ryamizard Ryacudu became vice-governor in the highly contested gubernatorial elections of Lampung, and retired generals defended their governorships in East Kalimantan and North Sumatra. Explaining this phenomenon, Crouch argued that political elites calculated that ‘it is better to re-endorse a military officer (…) than to risk the election of governors from rival parties.’

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131 Harold Crouch, ‘Professionalism in Southeast Asian Militaries: Indonesia’, Unpublished Paper. Megawati had additional reasons to support the re-election of incumbent governors. After 1999, PDI-P had suffered a series of embarrassing defeats in gubernatorial and bupati elections, with its official candidates typically beaten by local power brokers supported by other parties and renegade factions within PDI-P. After 2002, Megawati appeared to have given up on nominating PDI-P officials for important posts in local government, and instead backed powerful incumbents for a second term. This reduced the risk of more defeats, and appeared to secure the support of victorious candidates for Megawati’s re-election bid in 2004. This particular element of Megawati’s motivation is insufficient to explain, however, why other key parties nominated military figures as candidates as well. Support for retired military officers came from the whole range of the political spectrum, pointing to the more general electoral pattern outlined above.
The prominence and successes of retired officers in regional elections prepared the scene for the substantial engagement of former military leaders in the national polls of 2004. The presidential nominations of several New Order military figures demonstrated once again how the armed forces as an institution as well as their individual protagonists were able to offset the impact of structural reform by adjusting rapidly to the new democratic conditions. In August 2002, the MPR had passed the last of a series of constitutional amendments, paving the way for direct presidential elections and removing the military from the Assembly. TNI Headquarters initially opposed the abolition of the electoral powers of the MPR, which in the past had allowed the armed forces to participate in backroom deals that decided the composition of the national leadership. It quickly became clear, however, that the new electoral mechanism did not necessarily disadvantage the armed forces and their personnel as senior retired officers began to position themselves to run for the presidency. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono supported the foundation of the Democratic Party in September 2002, widely seen as the unofficial launch of his presidential campaign. Wiranto and Prabowo competed for the nomination of the Golkar party, while Amien Rais approached several officers to become his vice-presidential candidate, among them Endriarto.132 Hamzah Haz, chairman of PPP, recruited Agum Gumelar as his running mate. While retired military officers largely pursued their individual ambitions and thus did not directly represent the institutional interests of the armed forces, they were unlikely to substantially hurt the organisation that had propelled them into national prominence. As one Indonesian commentator put it, 'it has always been debated whether a retired military or police officer is considered a civilian or military man.' But, he concluded, 'it is difficult to believe that a retired military or police officer has no emotional links or organizational loyalty to their previous institutions.'133 In addition, the courting of active military leaders by civilian politicians suggested that any elected president, whether former military or civilian, would seek the support of the armed forces and protect their fundamental interests in return.

The campaign for the 2004 presidential elections highlighted the decline of the societal resentment of military engagement in politics that had been a prominent feature of the early phase of the post-authoritarian transition. Student groups and critical civil society organisations demonstrated against retired military officers participating in the elections, but unlike in 1998, their protest did not reflect general trends and sentiments in the larger population. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who in 2001 had concluded that 'Indonesians are not ready yet for a

former general to become their leader', emerged as the front-runner in the presidential race.\textsuperscript{134} He eliminated Wiranto, Amien Rais and Hamzah in the first round of elections in July 2004 and set up a showdown with Megawati in September. Megawati, trailing her opponent by an average of 30 percentage points in opinion polls, tried to tap into a largely eroded anti-military sentiment by allowing her campaign team to refer to Susilo as ‘General Yudhoyono’.\textsuperscript{135} Presented by her supporters as the candidate of civilian supremacy fighting against a possible resurgence in military power, Megawati appeared at odds not only with her previous image as a political ‘mascot’ of the armed forces, but also with the indifference of the electorate toward the civilian-military dichotomy. Megawati had simply lost much of the trust that voters had put in her in 1999, having established a reputation for being aloof, inactive, intellectually and technically incapable and out of touch with the concerns of a socially and economically troubled populace. The issue of civilian control of the armed forces was of negligible importance for most voters who sought a change in government to improve the political and economic conditions of their daily lives. Consequently, Susilo trounced Megawati in the second round of the elections with a margin of 61 to 39 percent, completing the successful adaptation of military leaders to the post-Soeharto polity. The trauma of the New Order, while still generating sufficient societal support for the democratic system, began to fade amidst more immediate priorities of political stability and economic recovery.

V. SUSILO BAMBANG YUDHOYONO AND MILITARY POLITICS IN POST-SOEHARTO INDONESIA: A CASE STUDY

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s military and political career under three post-Soeharto governments and his ultimate rise to the presidency are reflections of structural developments in Indonesian military politics since Soeharto’s fall. They mirror the gradual and sophisticated adaptation of the armed forces to the new political framework, ranging from the disorientation of the early phase of the post-authoritarian transition to the successful use of democratic competition for the benefit of the military and its individual officers. A short analysis of Susilo’s career after 1998 can therefore help to illustrate the major arguments outlined in this chapter so far.

In the late New Order, Susilo had managed to build a reformist image in the officer corps and the political elite without drawing Soeharto’s anger. Earlier than Wiranto, Susilo had feared serious consequences for the armed forces if Soeharto continued to deny political reforms or


\textsuperscript{135} Hasyim: “Saya Tahu Mega itu Lemah”, \textit{Gatra} 30 July 2004.
sought to stay in office indefinitely. He played a significant role in convincing the military leadership under Wiranto that it had to let go of Soeharto if it wanted to play a role in post-New Order politics, and he negotiated with civilian leaders over the terms for the President’s resignation. Susilo’s progressive attitude in the final months of the New Order could not hide the fact, however, that he too was ill prepared for the almost complete liberalisation of the political system introduced by the Habibie government. Despite his rejection of the excesses of authoritarianism, he shared many of the traditional military sentiments against democratic practices and rules. In the early Habibie period, he recommended limitations on the number of political parties and proposed regulations restricting their religio-ideological orientations. His suggestions were ignored by the government, however, leading to considerable confusion in the officer corps and increased pressure on the armed forces to assimilate more quickly to the conditions of the democratic polity. Susilo, who competed with other senior officers for a promotion to the position of Army Chief of Staff, built relationships with key figures in the government as well as leaders of larger parties participating in the 1999 elections. For example, he cultivated special ties with Adi Sasono, who as Minister of Cooperatives and Small Enterprises ran a multi-million dollar credit scheme widely viewed as an effort to either support Habibie’s re-election or his own rise to power. Adi Sasono, however, fell out with Habibie shortly before the parliamentary elections and was lost to Susilo as a potential civilian ally in the government.

The circumstances of Susilo’s appointment to the first Abdurrahman cabinet in October 1999 exposed the uncertainties and inconsistencies of TNI’s transitional process. Susilo initially rejected the post of Minister of Energy and Mining and expressed his preference to remain in active military service. Only after Abdurrahman insisted did he accept his nomination. With societal resentment of military officers in politics still high, the prospects of a retired general in civilian-dominated democratic politics were rather unpredictable. In contrast, the continuation of his military service would have almost certainly led him to the top post in the army and subsequently the armed forces. Susilo has often spoken in bitterness about his aborted military career, and his actions after the appointment provide evidence for his inner confusion. Although he himself had drafted the regulation that military officers had to retire when taking up civilian posts, Susilo now postponed his own retirement for almost a year. Instinctively sensing the instability of the Abdurrahman government, Susilo apparently tried to keep the door open for a possible return to active service. He also resisted Abdurrahman’s courtship to become a leading figure in his party, PKB. It was only in August 2000 that Susilo began to warm to the idea of a

136 Confidential interview with a three-star general, Bandung 19 May 1999.
137 Interview with Cholil Bisri, Member of Parliament for PKB, Surabaya 25 July 2000.
political career without finishing the military path he felt destined for. The political climate was changing, societal objections towards military figures in civilian posts was waning, and Abdurrahman offered him a ministry in which he gained nominal supervision of Indonesia's security forces. Susilo’s appointment as Coordinating Minister for Political, Social and Security Affairs marked his ultimate entry into civilian elite politics, including the risks and complications associated with it.

In his new post, Susilo was drawn into the intense elite negotiations surrounding the conflict between Abdurrahman and the legislature. Like the armed forces as an institution, Susilo went through an extremely unstable period of political infighting but finally managed to emerge as one of its beneficiaries. The chaos of the Abdurrahman presidency eroded the public image of civilian politics and led to a surge in the popularity of the armed forces and retired officers in political positions. Abdurrahman’s dismissal of Susilo in June 2001 only helped to cement the impression of failed civilian leadership and allowed the former general to portray himself as a victim of degenerate elite politics. Thus the fierce conflict between key civilian figures not only boosted the poll ratings for Susilo and engagement of military leaders in politics, but it also delivered a welcome theme for his further political career. The critique of elite-oriented and unaccountable party leaders developed into Susilo’s leitmotif as he planned his political future. It also helped him to explain and digest his failed candidacy for the vacant position of vice-president after Megawati’s ascent to power in July 2001:

“SBY accepted his defeat without complaint. He even learnt a lesson from Senayan (the legislature, M.M.). The political process in the MPR sometimes does not mirror the reality outside of the MPR building. SBY who was favoured by a number of polls could not win the competition in the building of the people’s representatives. That was a lesson he did not have to regret. It was precisely this defeat that bolstered his understanding of the games in the Assembly. (…) Party leaders still determined the voice of the party. That was legitimate, but not an ideal democracy.”

The experiences collected during the Abdurrahman period encouraged Susilo to take the final step in his adaptation to post-authoritarian politics. Formerly a supporter of indirect and regulated mechanisms of democratic competition, he now believed that only a strong public mandate could break the deadlock within the political elite. Susilo, and later on the armed forces as a whole, therefore gave up their opposition to direct presidential elections. After the MPR determined in

138 Susilo sponsored the publication of a book that explained the reasons for his dismissal, indicating that he saw his departure from the faltering Abdurrahman government not as the end of his political career but rather as the beginning of a new mission. Mustafa Kurdi and A. Yani Wahid, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono Dalam 5 Hari Mandai Maklumat, Aksara Kumia, Jakarta 2003.
August 2002 that the next president would be elected directly by the people, Susilo and other retired officers began to prepare their candidacies.

Despite the new focus on direct polls, elite politics remained an important instrument for Susilo to build support networks for the upcoming campaign and tap into the resources attached to public office. Thus he accepted his reappointment to cabinet by Megawati, allowing him to maintain his presence in the media and elite negotiations. In fact, his cabinet seat was of such importance to Susilo’s campaign preparations that for a long time he refused to confirm his candidacy publicly. He even denied that he was behind the formation of the Democratic Party in September 2002 although his wife was installed as deputy chairperson. The continued use of government facilities on the one hand and the quiet build-up of his electoral campaign on the other put Susilo into open confrontation with Megawati who stood for re-election herself. She began to isolate Susilo from government business, delivering him the opportunity to stage a publicity-rich resignation from cabinet in February 2004. The public perception that Susilo had once again fallen victim to brutal elite politicking contributed to the unexpected success of the Democratic Party at the parliamentary polls in April. The party’s 7 percent of the votes took it above the threshold required to make a presidential nomination, increasing Susilo’s self-confidence and giving him greater leverage over the selection of his advisory team: he included a large number of retired military officers whom he trusted completely and who had developed an understanding of his political thinking in years of joint service. After his victory, Susilo appointed several of them to key government posts. Together, they had lived through the ups and downs of the military’s transition from a pillar of authoritarian rule to a mediator and participant in democratic politics. After six-and-a-half difficult years, one from their ranks had gained the presidency, swept to power by the very democratic reforms introduced to end military dominance over the political system.

VI. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS: THE STAGNATION OF FIRST GENERATION REFORMS IN INDONESIA’S CIVIL-MILITARY TRANSITION

The two-generation model of civil-military reforms developed by Cottey, Edmunds and Forster provides an analytical platform for assessing the progress particular states have made in establishing democratic control over post-authoritarian militaries. Based on a number of

140 Susilo’s advisers admitted that ‘the dramatisation of the events’ surrounding his resignation ‘was the work of our team’. Rachmat Witoelar, his leading campaign manager, described the decision to leave cabinet as ‘Susilo’s Sarajevo’. ‘Arsitek Politik Kampanye SBY, Tempo 19 September 2004.'
qualitative indicators, Cottee et.al evaluated the steps a group of countries has taken to achieve structural military reform. This evaluation, in turn, allowed for the location of these states on the scale of civil-military transitions. The highest level of progress was reached by those states that had completed the first-generation reforms but experienced problems in implementing the second. At the bottom of the scale, several states had not even started serious efforts to address first-generation issues.

Applying the model to Indonesia, reform appears to have stagnated half way through the first-generation reforms, with successes in institutional change largely neutralised by the preservation of underlying social and political structures. If separated from the socio-political context of their implementation, many of the institutional and procedural changes looked impressive. The electoral reforms carried out under the Habibie government meant that the executive and legislative institutions overseeing the armed forces were democratically legitimised. Parliament was formally empowered to exercise control functions vis-a-vis the military, ranging from budget allocation to defence planning. The Department of Defence was led by a civilian for the first time since the 1950s, and the new State Defence Act handed it wide-ranging authority over the strategic and logistical aspects of military management. Assembly Decrees defined the role of the armed forces as being focused on defence, while the Police was separated from the military and charged with maintaining internal security. Human rights courts were established in 2000 to put security officers on trial for gross violations. There were even some ‘leaps’ into second-generation reforms: the participation of civil society groups in drafting the State Defence Bill in 2001 hinted at the development of what Cottee et.al called a ‘civilian defence community’, an indicator of a state already at a very late stage of successful transition.

The obvious successes of the first-generation reforms were offset by Indonesia’s failure to remove what was widely identified as the main obstacle to effective and sustainable military reform: the army’s territorial command structure. The persistence of this command system allowed the practice of military self-financing to remain operational, with serious implications for the political and legal accountability of the armed forces vis-a-vis the newly established civilian control bodies. Consequently, the oversight exercised by both Parliament and the Department of Defence was of a highly theoretical nature. For example, paragraph 25 of the State Defence Act, which stipulated that the armed forces had to be funded exclusively by the central state budget, was never – and indeed could not be - enforced. The armed forces continued to raise large parts of their effective expenditure through its territorial network, enabling it to remain financially largely independent from the state. The failure to tackle the single most important item on the first-generation reform agenda was aggravated by other problems typical of civil-military
transitions. Civilian defence officials lacked the expertise and political clout to professionally review strategic, technical and operational questions of military management and present alternative ideas. In addition, the continued political relevance of the military discouraged civilian politicians from seeking to exercise their control function properly. Instead, they sought the support of the armed forces to settle conflicts within the civilian elite. At the same time, human rights courts acquitted almost all officers indicted for violations in East Timor and the 1984 massacre of Tanjung Priok, extending what Robert Cribb called the 'triumphalist culture of impunity.'\(^{141}\) The institutions produced by the first generation of reforms, while equipped with formal authority and legal instruments, proved toothless when confronted with the entrenched network of political relationships cultivated by the armed forces.

In order to explain the different stages of progress that states have reached in their civil-military transitions, Cottey et.al. introduced five explanatory propositions. If applied to the case of Indonesia, they help to illustrate the mixed results of its military reform process. First, the loyalty of the post-authoritarian top brass toward the old regime was considerably higher than in other countries where military-backed regimes fell. The composition of the armed forces in the first 18 months of the democratic polity reflected appointments and promotions Soeharto had made in his last years of office, causing a strong inclination for senior officers to protect the residual interests of the fallen regime. Second, Indonesia’s post-Soeharto elite has largely accepted democracy as the most viable political system, providing the country with a better chance of achieving progress in civil-military relations than other states in which the foundations of government remain widely disputed. However, the level of conflict within the elite over the rules and norms of democratic interaction has been so high that the general agreement on the basics of state organisation did not succeed in accelerating the reform of the armed forces. Third, the post-September 11th security environment reduced the international pressure on TNI to reform by rehabilitating the armed forces as an important ally in the war against terror. Fourth, the failure to include the territorial command structure in the program of institutional reform increased, in Cottey, et.al.’s words, the ‘vulnerability of civil-military relations to the vagaries of domestic political change’.\(^{142}\) Fifth and finally, the specific ‘military culture’ in Indonesia, nurtured by decades of self-financing, operational autonomy and legal impunity, proved unsupportive of fundamental changes to the foundations of the armed forces.

\(^{141}\) Cribb 2002: 239.
The mixed results of its efforts to establish democratic control over the armed forces grants Indonesia a medium ranking in the field of states at comparable stages of their post-authoritarian transitions. Indonesia has fared better than a large number of Eastern European and Central Asian countries researched by Cottey, Edmunds and Forster. Some of them have not even begun with their first generation of civil-military reforms, like Turkmenistan and Belarus. Indonesia has also achieved more stable results than states that addressed both first and second-generation reforms, but saw their reform processes collapse due to the weakness of the state. Such countries include Armenia, Georgia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Tajikistan. Among the countries studied by Cottey et al., Russia and the Ukraine are the most similar to Indonesia as far as their current state of civil-military relations is concerned. In those states, problems with the first generation of reforms persist, and the armed forces remain a highly politicised and privileged institution despite formal changes to their organisational framework. Indonesia lags behind states, however, that have seen successful first and second-generation reforms while continuing to experience sporadic problems in the process. Cottey et al. identified eleven countries belonging to this group, including Bulgaria, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Despite its illustrative strength, however, the scheme developed by Cottey et al. remains fragmentary. It has been argued throughout this study that the model needs to add the character of regime change and the level of conflict in the civilian political sphere as major factors determining the fate of civil-military reforms in post-authoritarian states. Thus the final chapter of this study will discuss the struggle between major civilian forces for hegemony over the post-Soeharto polity, and as in previous parts of the thesis, the analysis will focus on fissures within the Muslim community as one of the most significant sources of intra-civilian conflict.
CHAPTER SIX

NEW ERA, OLD DIVISIONS: MUSLIM GROUPS AND THE FIGHT FOR POLITICAL HEGEMONY

The discussion so far has pointed to divisions within the civilian elite as a major factor in limiting the pace and quality of military reform in Indonesia’s post-authoritarian transition. The fragmentation among non-regime forces in the final days of Soeharto’s government allowed residual elements of the New Order to assume the leadership of the first post-authoritarian government and define its reform agenda. As a result, the armed forces were granted authority to formulate and implement their own measures of institutional change. Once a democratically legitimised executive was installed in late 1999, the intensity of conflict between its various components paralysed government for almost two years and facilitated the emergence of the armed forces as a mediator and participant in the political competition. This chapter will discuss in more detail the causes of intra-civilian conflict in the post-Soeharto polity as well as its consequences for the development of civil-military relations. As in previous chapters, the divisions within the Muslim community will serve as a case study to illustrate the character of intra-civilian conflict as a whole. In this respect, the chapter will focus on three main periods during which conflicts between and within key Islamic groups had a major impact on the evolution of post-authoritarian politics: first, the proliferation of Islamic parties in 1998 and its role in shaping the political landscape under the Habibie interregnum; second, the disputes between main Muslim constituencies over the failed Abdurrahman presidency; and third, the alliances between Islamic figures and retired military officers in the 2004 presidential elections. The chapter will argue that traditional differences between Muslim factions extended from the authoritarian regime into the post-authoritarian era and contributed to the weakness of the civilian political sphere. In an additional section, the impact of post-Soeharto extremist Islam on the position of the armed forces vis-à-vis the civilian government will be contrasted with the influence of radical Islamist groups on the role of the military in pre-1998 regimes.

I. NEW START, OLD DIVISIONS: THE FORMATION OF ISLAMIC PARTIES IN THE POST-SOEHARTO ERA

The abrupt liberalisation of the political system, announced only days after Soeharto’s fall, came as a surprise to the majority of Indonesia’s societal leaders. The socio-political elite of the
emerging post-authoritarian polity had not witnessed free competition between parties since the late 1950s, making most of its members novices in democratic interaction. For decades, they had organised their political activities within the limits set by tight regulations of authoritarian control, joining parties approved by the government or using their informal prestige to participate in elite negotiations. The longevity of the New Order had discouraged them from contemplating the formation of political parties that would suit their interests and ideological disposition in a democratic Indonesia. Even the growing demands for accelerated democratisation and more individual rights in the late Soeharto era, while envisioning a less regulated society, did not define complete freedom to found political parties as a realistic goal. Thus when Habibie lifted virtually all restrictions on establishing parties and promised to hold open and fair elections, many key figures were unprepared for the sudden task of creating new vehicles for their political careers.

The confusion was particularly evident in the Muslim community. Islamic leaders had to face three major decisions. To begin with, they had to make up their minds whether entering party politics was a viable option for them and their respective organisations. In all major Muslim groups, there was strong support for continuing the prioritisation of social and religious activities adopted in the 1970s and 1980s. The departure of key Muslim organisations from formal politics during the New Order had left a deep impression on many religio-societal leaders, and some of them doubted that returning to it would bring benefits for their cause. The second issue Muslim figures faced was to determine the role Islamic ideology would play in formulating their post-Soeharto platforms. The New Order had outlawed the use of Islam as the ideological basis for political or societal organisations, promoting the religiously neutral Pancasila instead. The state ideology, while commonly viewed as a relic of authoritarian indoctrination, was so deeply entrenched in the political discourse that even Islamic activists found it difficult to abandon. In addition, there was a residual fear that the new democratic polity might not last long, and that a possible military take-over could result in the purge of those Islamic leaders who replaced Pancasila as their ideological guideline. Thus the debate that ensued within the Muslim community saw one faction arguing for an unrestricted use of Islam as a basis for engagement in democratic politics, while the other camp favored the partial retention of Pancasila. Finally, Muslim leaders also had to decide to what extent they were prepared to seek cooperation with rival camps within the umat on the one hand, and other political forces on the other. The demands for an all-Islamic party were strong, but many leaders were inclined to found parties that represented the interests of their particular constituency only. Again others thought about joining forces with nationalist groups to establish cross-religious parties that would break long-standing constituency boundaries.
The decisions that Muslim leaders made for themselves and their various constituencies had a profound impact on the evolving post-authoritarian polity. The strategies that were pursued differed immensely, but a general pattern of post-Soeharto Islamic politics quickly emerged. All major Islamic groups decided that they had to engage in party politics, whether in a direct or indirect manner. Some of them chose to use Islam as their ideological foundation, others increased the emphasis on their Islamic identity but retained Pancasila as an over-arching principle. Most importantly, however, almost all key Muslim leaders opted to establish separate parties that appealed to their core constituencies rather than to an electorate spanning religious and ideological boundaries. Even those who declared their parties as ideologically open continued to rely on their respective communities as primary sources of power. Consequently, a large number of Islamic parties was established that served the interests of specific Muslim groups as well as the individual career plans of their leaders. The ideological and political fragmentation within the Muslim community, which had stretched from the colonial period to the final days of the New Order, was about to extend into the new political system. These intra-Islamic rivalries added to other traditional cleavages that divided the civilian sphere along the entire political spectrum, weakening civilian leadership and creating substantial obstacles to the establishment of democratic control over the military.

Islam, Pluralism and Constituency Interests: Muslim Parties after 1998

The debate about the character and mechanism of political engagement in the post-authoritarian transition caused serious conflicts within the various Muslim groups. In Nahdlatul Ulama, internal disputes led to the formation of several parties that all claimed to represent the interests of the NU community. Initially, NU chairman Abdurrahman Wahid had rejected calls for the creation of an NU-based party, declaring his intention to defend the formal non-partisanship to which his organisation had adhered since 1984. The pressure from prominent kiai in Central and East Java for a political party exclusively focused on NU’s institutional interests was so strong, however, that Abdurrahman had to change his stance. By late June 1998, the process of defining the platform and structures of an NU-based party was under way. This decision ruled out two other possible formats of NU’s participation in post-Soeharto politics: rejoining PPP, of which NU had been a component until 1984, and the transformation of NU itself into a political party. In

1 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Jakarta 26 May 1998.
terms of its religio-political orientation, Abdurrahman insisted that the new party refrain from portraying itself as explicitly Islamic but endorse Pancasila and nationalist-secular principles instead. This choice was expressed in the name chosen for the party, Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB, National Awakening Party), which also indicated Abdurrahman’s preferences as far as cooperation with other political forces was concerned. Building on his relationships with secular-nationalist groups and figures, he refused to integrate the NU constituency into the Islamic segment of Indonesian politics. Nevertheless, he was determined to enter upcoming elite negotiations backed up by an autonomous political power base rooted in his core constituency.

The secular-nationalist definition of PKB triggered fierce opposition from those elements within the traditionalist community that demanded a clearer Islamic image for the NU-based party. Senior kiai objected to Abdurrahman’s choice of Matori Abdul Djalil as party chairman, referring to his lack of religious credentials and frequent interaction with non-Muslim politicians. The NU chairman was able to deflect such criticism, however, by granting numerous concessions to the kiai. The organisational structures of PKB were designed to mirror those of NU, with a religious advisory board exercising supreme authority over the political leadership of the party. In addition, prominent NU kiai obtained key positions in the central board, ensuring them of sufficient influence to protect the religious identity of PKB. Ma’ruf Amin, the chair of PKB’s advisory board, was satisfied that despite Abdurrahman’s formal endorsement of nationalist-secular values, the party remained primarily a vehicle to represent the social, religious and political interests of NU:

“Let Gus Dur talk about nationalism. He is the paramount politician, he has to think strategically. But the reality is here on the ground. Look at the party. The leaders are NU; the structures are NU, the procedures are NU, even the jokes are NU. There is no doubt that this is an NU party.”

4 Abdurrahman explained that ‘Kebangkitan Bangsa’ was derived from ‘Nahdlatul Ulama’ (lit. ‘Revival of the Religious Scholars’). The important difference in this respect, however, was the replacement of ulama by bangsa (nation).
5 Interview with Rozy Munir, Deputy Chairman of the NU Central Board, Jakarta 22 July 1998; Musthafa Zuhad Mughni, Deputy Chairman of the NU Central Board, Jakarta 23 July 1998; Muchith Muzadi, senior kiai and one of the five members of the PKB founding committee, Jakarta 22 July 1998; see also Asmawi, PKB: Jendela Politik Gus Dur, Titian Ilahi Press Yogyakarta 1999: 71.
7 Interview with Ma’ruf Amin, Jakarta 23 July 1998. In a series of letters sent by the NU Central Board to its branches, the organisation left no doubt that PKB was its political arm. In a letter dated 22 June, the Central Board reminded its officials that the new party was designed to ‘pool the political aspirations of Nahdlatul Ulama members.’ On 24 July, NU called on its followers to ‘support and take care of Partai
Not all *kiai* and NU-affiliated activists could accept this dualism that combined a secular political outlook with Islamic norms and values. Some supporters of more scripturalist interpretations of Islam, who had opposed Abdurrahman’s leadership throughout the 1980s and 1990s, decided to form NU-based parties with Islam as their sole ideological foundation. Estranged relatives of Abdurrahman founded PKU (Partai Kebangkitan Umat, Party of the Awakening Umat), while the influential NU cleric Syukron Makmun formed the PNU (Partai Nahdlatul Umat, Revival of the Umat Party). In addition to these new creations, many NU politicians and officials decided to remain in the parties they belonged to under the New Order, particularly PPP and Golkar. Given this fractured character of NU’s post-Soeharto engagement in politics, Suzaina Kadir concluded that ‘the inherent inability of the NU to act as an independent political force continues to weaken its overall bargaining position at the national level.’

Muhammadiyah, NU’s largest modernist counterpart, went through an equally intense discussion over the format of its engagement in the new democratic polity. Its leader, Amien Rais, was determined to enter formal politics, but he was aware that turning Muhammadiyah into a political party was not an option. The organisation had withdrawn from party politics in the late 1950s, and the majority of its functionaries believed that reentering it carried significant risks for Muhammadiyah’s network of educational and social institutions. Amien therefore decided to quit as Muhammadiyah’s leader and establish a political career outside of the organisation. His search for a party that fitted his strategic and ideological needs was tortuous, however, and caused tensions with potential political partners. Initially, Amien negotiated with ultra-modernist activists about a possible revival of Masyumi, but after no agreement was reached, he committed

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*Abu Hasan, Abdurrahman’s challenger at the 1994 congress, added another NU-based party by establishing SUNI (Solidaritas Uni Nasional Indonesia, Solidarity of the National Indonesian Union).* Abu’s motivations appeared to be more personal than ideological, with SUNI endorsing Pancasila as well. Abdurrahman referred to PKU, PNU and SUNI summarily as the ‘chicken shit’ of NU, while PKB was its egg. ‘Koalisi Tahi Ayam Merebut Suara NU’, *Aula* 21:5, 1999; and Marcus Mietzner, ‘Nationalism and Islamic Politics: Political Islam in the Post-Soeharto Era’, in: Arief Budiman, Barbara Hatley and Damien Kingsbury (editors), *Reformasi: Crisis and Change in Indonesia*, Monash Asia Institute, Clayton 1999: 173-200.


*Before his resignation, Amien had considered staying on as Muhammadiyah chairman and had asked his long-time associate Syafii Maarif to establish a Muhammadiyah-affiliated party. Ultimately, however, it was Amien who formed the party, and Syafii’i who took over as Muhammadiyah leader. Suriptyo R. and Asmawi, *PAN: Titian Amien Rais Menuju Istana*, Titian Ilahi Press, Yogyakarta 1999: 116.*
himself to taking over PPP from its discredited New Order leadership. Some of his associates from the anti-Soeharto forum MAR, which included secular-minded Muslims and Christians, convinced him, however, that chairing an exclusively Islamic party reduced his chances of building a broad support base for his expected presidential bid. Accordingly, Amien pulled out of the arrangement with PPP, and in August 1998 formed the pluralist Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN, National Mandate Party). While presenting itself as open to all religious and ideological groups, PAN’s leadership was recruited largely from Muhammadiyah. This was particularly true of the regional boards. The dominance of Muhammadiyah leaders not only created conflicts between the majority of modernist party functionaries and the tiny minority of pluralists, but also affected PAN’s external image. As one Indonesian observer commented, PAN was caught in a dilemma: for non-Muslim constituencies, the strong Islamic character of the party’s regional boards was a drawback; Muhammadiyah’s modernist core community, on the other hand, was concerned about the influence of pluralist elements on the policies of the party.  

The establishment of a pluralist party by Indonesia’s most popular modernist figure caused disappointment and counter-reactions from Muslim groups who had expected him to unite and lead the Islamic community through the democratic transition. Ultra-modernist activists from Dewan Dakwah and KISDI, who had offered Amien the leadership of a Masyumi-style party, felt a deep sense of betrayal over his choice of the pluralist option. The man chosen to lead the party in Amien’s stead, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, left no doubt that the former’s decision would have severe consequences for the cooperation of Islamic groups in the post-Soeharto polity:

“We thought we had Amien’s word. We were already talking about a name for the party and who should be in it. Suddenly we read in the papers that he talked to PPP and, finally, founded his own party. That was very bad behaviour. We will certainly remember that for the future.”

Yusril’s party was named Partai Bulan Bintang (Crescent and Moon Party), a reference to Masyumi’s symbol. Party officials aimed to portray Yusril as a ‘young Natsir’, hoping to evoke

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12 An anti-Amien Rais booklet published in late 1998 summarised the bitterness of many ultra-modernists vis-à-vis the Muhammadiyah chair and his new party: ‘If we were to follow Amien Rais’ thinking (non-sectarian and non-discriminating), and the electoral system is a proportional one (…), then Muslim voters will engage in an act of gambling in voting for their leader. It may well be that their choice falls on Amien Rais who is Muslim, the Christian figure Albert Hasibuan, the Christian activist Pius Lustrilanang, or the priest Th. Sumartana. This means, if not haram (outlawed), PAN can be considered syubhat or questionable.’ The last three names referred to non-Muslim members of PAN. H. Hartono Ahmad Jaiz, Kekeliruan Logika Amien Rais, Darul Falah, Jakarta 1998: 15.
13 Interview with Yusril Ihza Mahendra, Jakarta 25 August 1998.
the main elements of Masyumi’s political profile in the early 1950s: strict adherence to Islamic values on the one hand, but intellectual modernity and professionalism on the other. In addition to Bulan Bintang, a number of other modernist parties sprang up, but most of them failed to grow. The only exception was Partai Keadilan (PK, Justice Party), which according to Elizabeth Fuller Collins ‘marked the split between the younger generation of leaders’ and older modernist figures in Bulan Bintang. The Justice Party consisted largely of Muslim activists recruited from a wide network of Islamic campuses. KAMMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia, Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union), a student organisation that had supported Amien in the protest movement against Soeharto, was its main component. KAMMI leaders had apparently hoped to join a political party led by Amien, but the latter’s decision to pursue a pluralist strategy convinced them to form PK instead. Espousing a puritan view on Islamic culture and politics, PK presented itself as a bridge between traditionalist and modernist versions of the faith.

Coalitions, Conflicts and the Quest for Unity: The 1999 Elections

The political fragmentation of the Muslim community in the early stages of the post-authoritarian transition reflected deeply rooted historical sentiments on the one hand and specific characteristics of the 1998 regime change on the other. Historically, the experiences of all-Islamic organisations has been largely negative, predisposing Muslim politicians to opt for parties representing their various core constituencies only. The break-up of Masyumi in the 1950s had left bitter memories in both the traditionalist and modernist communities, and the conflicts within PPP throughout the New Order had served to confirm their prejudices. Besides the deterrent effect of previously failed all-Islamic experiments, the nature of the 1998 regime change supplied the second major reason for the proliferation of Muslim parties after Soeharto’s fall. In declining dictatorial regimes, societal opposition to government repression typically serves as a catalyst for the creation of non-regime coalitions that have the potential to erode long-standing constituency boundaries. Linz and Stepan pointed out that frequently such coalitions remove the non-democratic regime from power and form a transitional government, providing diverse societal elites with an institutional platform for political cooperation. As explained in chapter 4 of this

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17 Linz and Stepan 1996: 71
study, however, no such coalition existed in Indonesia as Muslim and other societal forces expressed highly divergent attitudes towards the falling Soeharto regime. Consequently, the regime was brought down not by effective elite opposition, but by large-scale popular protest. The experience of dictatorial rule did not, in Harold A. Trinkunas’ words, ‘establish the basis for a broad civilian’ coalition among different constituencies, with most of them forming parties as distinct interest groups and therefore producing ‘narrow opportunity structures’ for further democratisation. Even PAN, as the only major party born out of an oppositional forum, did not succeed in bringing key leaders together, but rather assembled less prominent community figures in support of the presidential aspirations of Amien Rais.

Processes of political fragmentation not only occurred in the Muslim community, however. The secular-nationalist segment of Indonesian politics was affected as well, albeit to a lesser extent. Megawati Soekarnoputri’s party, which renamed itself into PDI-P in early 1999, was able to absorb the majority of nationalist groups and currents, but numerous splinter parties with secular profiles were founded to represent particular ideological viewpoints or social classes. In addition, Golkar continued to appeal to secular and non-Muslim groups concerned over the possible rise of Islamic politics (while presenting itself as a party with strong Islamic credentials in areas with devout Muslim populations). This competition for audiences with similar socio-political backgrounds encouraged parties to prioritise confronting rivals from within their own constituency. Thus the general elections held in June 1999 were accompanied by violent conflict particularly among Muslim parties on the one hand and secular-nationalist groups on the other, but rarely between them. PDI-P supporters frequently clashed with Golkar campaigners, PPP members were involved in street battles with PAN, and PKB faced fierce opposition from NU politicians who had decided to remain in PPP. The latter rivalry cost four people their lives when the two sides clashed in Jepara in April 1999. This conflict revealed the intensity of the differences within the umat, with PPP-affiliated clerics denouncing PKB leader Abdurrahman Wahid as a ‘blind infidel’ and PKB campaigners warning that PPP intended to turn Indonesia into an Islamic state.

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20 Interview with Muhammad Rois, Deputy Chairman of the PKB Jepara branch, Jepara 29 May 1999.
21 Interviews with Abdullah Astofa, Chairman of the PPP Tegal branch, Tegal 28 May 1999; Mahmud Mazkur, Chairman of the PPP Pekalongan branch, Pekalongan 28 May 1999; Faris Sulchaq Basori,
The result of the parliamentary elections in June 1999 extended the fractures of Indonesia’s political society into its formal institutions. PDI-P emerged as the largest party with 33.7 percent, followed by Golkar with 22.4 and PKB with 12.6 percent of the votes. PPP came in fourth with 10.7 percent, PAN finished fifth with 7.1 percent, ahead of Bulan Bintang and PK with 1.9 and one 1.4 percent respectively. Altogether, 21 out of 48 parties that contested the election gained seats in Parliament. In terms of ideological affiliation, 28 secular-nationalist parties gained 62.5 percent of the vote, while 20 Muslim-based parties (including PKB and PAN) received 37.5 percent. Compared to the 1955 elections, the percentage of Islamic votes had dropped by 6 percent, and if PAN and PKB were excluded from the pool of Muslim parties, the loss was 25.7 percent.

This result sparked heated debates within the Muslim community over the causes and consequences of this ‘defeat’. Many observers pointed out that the deep and often violent divisions between Islamic parties had driven Muslim voters to more solid and ‘moderate’ options, particularly Golkar. The conflicts among Muslim parties had made it impossible for their leaders to present a coherent concept of political Islam that could have attracted voters outside of their narrowly defined constituencies. Bahtiar Effendy argued that ‘in so far they are diverse and unable to express and articulate the idea of political Islam in the light of public interests, then it will be difficult for Islamic political parties to be a dominant force on Indonesia’s political stage.’ Accordingly, several Muslim intellectuals and politicians proposed the formation of an ‘Islamic faction’ in the upcoming parliament. Azyumardi Azra asserted that such an alliance would constitute a ‘break-through to overcome the acute fragmentation in the leadership of political Islam.’ The timing for such an initiative seemed well chosen, with presidential elections approaching and the inconclusive outcome of the June polls throwing the race wide open.

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Chairman of the PKB Brebes branch, Brebes 28 May 1999; M. Mokhtar Noer Jaya, Chairman of the PKB South Sulawesi chapter, Makassar 3 May 1999; and Matori Abdul Djalil, Jakarta 10 and 22 July 1999.


II. COALITION AND COLLAPSE: INTRA-ISLAMIC CONFLICT UNDER THE ABDURRAHMAN PRESIDENCY, 1999-2001

The election of a new president scheduled for October 1999 was expected to complete the first phase of Indonesia’s post-authoritarian transition. The new head of state was to be elected by the MPR, which consisted of members of Parliament, regional representatives and functional groups. The indirect electoral mechanism, despite occasional criticism of its democratic deficiencies, facilitated what neither authoritarian pressure nor the freedom to found political parties had produced: the necessity of forming broad-based coalitions among key civilian forces to replace the incumbent government and assume executive responsibility. In this context, the negotiation process among major political parties provided opportunities for eroding the constituency borders so evident during the parliamentary elections. Initially, however, it appeared as if the coalition-building efforts would create alliances along the traditional ideological and political demarcation lines. PKB seemed prepared to support the presidential candidacy of Megawati, together with a number of smaller nationalist parties, the armed forces and Golkar elements dissatisfied with Habibie’s leadership. On the other side of the political spectrum, most modernist parties pledged to prevent Megawati’s rise to the presidency for a number of reasons, ranging from her gender to her secular political attitude. They were leaning towards Habibie, but were reluctant to endorse him openly for fear of being labeled as forces supporting the political status quo. Despite her obvious advantages, however, Megawati failed to enter formal agreements with her potential coalition partners. Believing that the parliamentary polls had delivered her an exclusive claim to the presidency, she offered no concrete inducements to the parties expected to vote her into office. Abdurrahman, returning from a meeting with Megawati during which he had hoped to secure detailed promises of cabinet appointments in exchange for PKB’s support, felt so alienated by Megawati’s non-committal attitude that he decided on the spot to ‘evaluate alternative options for his party.’

26 Bernhard Platzdasch argued that the modernist parties were less concerned with Megawati’s gender than their traditionalist counterparts, and opposed her nomination largely for political reasons. It is true that many intellectuals in modernist parties rejected the notion of political gender discrimination, but in their own party structures, some parties like Partai Keadilan practiced strict separation between the sexes as far as office facilities and norms of interaction where concerned. Bernhard Platzdasch, ‘Islamic Reaction to a Female President’, in: Chris Manning and Peter van Diermen (editors), Indonesia in Transition: Social Aspects of Reformasi and Crisis, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore 2000: 346; Bambang Parianom and Dondy Ariesdanto (editors), Megawati & Islam: Polemik Gender dalam Persaingan Politik, Antar Surya Jaya bersama LSK, Surabaya 1999; and interview with Nur Mahmudi Ismail, President of Partai Keadilan, Jakarta 26 November 1998.
27 Interview with Ratih Hardjono, Jakarta 3 October 1999.
Megawati’s failure to consolidate her support base laid the foundations for the first coalition that included rival Islamic parties in a democratic polity since the Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet in 1956/57. Despite deep mutual suspicions, in June 1999 Amien Rais proposed Abdurrahman as the presidential candidate of an alliance between traditionalist and modernist Muslim parties. Called the Central Axis, the coalition was designed to serve the shifting political interests of both sides. For PKB and Abdurrahman, on the one hand, the offer provided the unique chance of gaining the presidency for an NU leader. Earlier in the year, Abdurrahman had speculated about becoming president until PKB’s modest performance in the June polls seemed to have put an end to his hopes. PAN, PPP, Bulan Bintang and PK, on the other hand, found it increasingly difficult to maintain their support for Habibie. The President was engulfed in a number of political scandals, and even Golkar officials began to question openly whether Habibie was the best candidate. The nomination of Abdurrahman thus promised to prevent Megawati’s ascent to power and, at the same time, shield the modernist parties from charges that they intended to secure another term for Soeharto’s deputy. In spite of its obvious strategic benefits, functionaries of all parties harbored serious doubts over the coalition. Both sides had for decades traded ideological arguments and personal insults in a rivalry that Adam Schwarz called ‘deep, long-lasting and bitter.’ In a speech in front of NU officials in July 1999, Amien addressed the reluctance of traditionalist ulama to work with modernist groups:

“I know, it’s funny. Here I am, a former chairman of Muhammadiyah, offering the presidency to the boss of NU. I know that many of you don’t believe me. But please learn to trust me. I’m not joking. We need to unite for the sake of the nation.”

Ultimately, the short-term interest of denying Megawati the presidency outweighed concerns over the workability of the coalition and Abdurrahman’s competence to govern. In a remarkable display of his political skills, the effectively blind NU chairman sidelined opponents of his candidacy within PKB, convinced ultra-modernists that he would represent their cause, won the support of the armed forces and recruited the majority of Golkar members of the MPR for his campaign. On 20 October 1999, Abdurrahman beat Megawati to become Indonesia’s fourth

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29 Many PKB politicians and NU kiai were sceptical about Abdurrahman’s nomination, however. Their scepticism was related not only to the potential difficulties in cooperating with modernist parties, but also to Abdurrahman’s poor health and erratic political behaviour. Interview with Saifullah Yusuf, NU youth leader and Abdurrahman’s nephew, Jakarta 12 September 1999.
30 Schwarz 2004: 389.
31 Amien Rais during a speech at a meeting of Ansor, NU’s youth organisation, Jakarta 24 July 1999, personal notes by the author.
president. Megawati, for her part, took up the vice-presidency. Subsequently, Abdurrahman formed a ‘rainbow’ cabinet in which every significant party was represented.

**Disintegration and Tension: The End of the Central Axis**

The formation of a broad-based government coalition improved the chances of democratic consolidation and the establishment of civilian control over the armed forces. The compromise between major Islamic groups appeared to bridge some of the differences that had caused deep political fragmentation in the past. Backed by a solid majority in the legislature, the government enjoyed the necessary preconditions for institutional stability and coherence in policy making. These improved indicators were of a highly theoretical nature, however. In the arena of *realpolitik*, the expectations for accelerated democratisation collapsed as quickly as the multi-party alliance on which they were built. Abdurrahman, it turned out, had no intention of maintaining the coalition that had paved his way to power. The new President admitted openly that he had stitched together the alliance with the single purpose of facilitating his election:

“Amien, Yusril and all the others fell for my trick. Did they really believe I would take care of their interests? If they thought so, then that’s their mistake. I haven’t changed at all. My opinion on them hasn’t changed. In fact, the way they behaved during the election just showed how greedy and unreliable they are.”

For Abdurrahman, who according to Angus McIntyre was ‘convinced of his own superiority’ and ‘omniscience’, the electoral coalition had ceased to exist on the day of his inauguration. The country’s presidential system, Abdurrahman argued, guaranteed him an undisturbed five-year term, with or without the support of the legislature. Consequently, he began to systematically dispose of his former partners. Hamzah Haz, chairman of PPP, was sacked from cabinet only one month after his appointment. Wiranto was forced to resign in February 2000, and Jusuf Kalla from Golkar as well as Laksamana Sukardi from PDI-P lost their ministerial posts in April over unspecified corruption charges. Six months into his rule, Abdurrahman had effectively dismantled the alliance through which he had pursued his presidential campaign.

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32 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Jakarta 2 March 2000.
The disintegration of the government coalition created fresh tensions between key political parties and the societal constituencies they represented. This was particularly the case in the Muslim community, where tensions between traditionalist and modernist groups grew significantly. The modernist side felt that Abdurrahman had defaulted on his promises and was deliberately harming their interests. One modernist critic of the president’s leadership complained that

“although Gus Dur was elected through the Central Axis, namely the Islamic parties (...), he has not returned this favour of the Muslim community with pleasant expressions of gratitude. On the contrary, Gus Dur increasingly enjoys himself by releasing statements that corner the Muslim community.”

In addition to the removal of Islamic figures from cabinet, other issues that raised anger in the modernist community were Abdurrahman’s proposal to open trade relations with Israel, his initiative to lift an MPR ban on communism that dated back to 1966, a Christmas speech viewed as overly pro-Christian and a series of statements that indicated lack of concern for the fate of Muslims in the ongoing religious conflicts in Maluku and North Maluku. The latter topic motivated thousands of Muslim demonstrators to convene at the Monas Square in Jakarta in January 2000, where prominent Islamic leaders denounced the alleged insensitivity of the President towards the suffering of Moluccan Muslims. Addressing the crowd, Amien Rais even called for a jihad to assist Muslims in the fight with their Christian opponents, to which Abdurrahman responded that ‘I don’t care if you want jihad, or you want jahid (asceticism), the bottom line is that if you threaten the stability of the state, we’ll take action.’ The event catalysed the formation of modernist opposition against Abdurrahman’s rule and helped to turn what was essentially an elite conflict over power, resources and privileges into a dispute between key Muslim constituencies on the ground. The intra-Islamic ‘honeymoon’, which had marked Abdurrahman’s election only months earlier, was over.

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35 Conflicts between Christian and Muslims had broken out in Ambon in January 1999, quickly spreading to other parts of the Maluku archipelago, particularly Halmahera. By the end of 1999, the Christian side appeared to be have gained the upper hand in the conflict, which cost thousands of lives and was portrayed by both parties as an ‘onslaught’ on the hands of their respective adversaries.
The challenge launched by modernist Muslim leaders against Abdurrahman mobilised traditionalist clerics to defend the embattled President. Before the election, many kiai had expressed serious reservations about Abdurrahman’s ability to lead a stable government, and they had conveyed these concerns to the proponents of his candidacy. NU clerics and officials had known the combative nature and managerial shortcomings of their chairman for decades, and some of them had warned modernist politicians that ‘you have no idea what you are getting yourself into.’ They had also pointed out that an all-Islamic coalition carried high risks, with its possible collapse likely to trigger violence at the grassroots. Thus the majority of kiai viewed it as inappropriate that modernist leaders now attacked the President for a behavioral pattern about which they were already well apprised. Sahal Mahfudz, the chairman of NU’s supreme advisory board, spoke for most kiai when he reminded opponents of Abdurrahman that

“we had predicted a lot of what is happening now. In meetings with Amien and others, we had emphasised that Gus Dur’s nomination needed to be considered carefully. They said they had. (…) Now they can’t just dump Gus Dur like trash. Now it’s not only about Gus Dur, it’s about the dignity of NU, and it’s about the relations between our communities on the ground.”

For a large number of traditionalist clerics, the prospect of Abdurrahman being unseated by his modernist critics also threatened the institutional benefits they had enjoyed as a consequence of an NU leader holding the presidency. There had been a considerable increase in payments to pesantren from local bureaucracies, and companies sought to recruit kiai close to Abdurrahman as business facilitators. In short, the possibility of a chaotic end to Abdurrahman’s presidency was likely to affect NU’s social prestige, cause unrest in its strongholds and result in the loss of lucrative privileges gained under his rule.

In the period between April and December 2000, the approach of traditionalist leaders towards the presidential crisis focused on mediation efforts and appeals for calm on both sides. Many kiai felt overwhelmed by the task, however, as the number of Abdurrahman’s opponents increased steadily. In addition to modernist politicians, the President also engaged in conflicts with the security forces, Golkar leaders and his Vice-president. Thus NU leaders arranged a series of meetings with groups that were seen as crucial for Abdurrahman’s survival. In April 2000, for example, the new NU Chairman Hasyim Muzadi held a gathering with senior military officers at

40 Interview with Ahmad Anas Yahya, Member of PKB Central Board, Jakarta 10 October 1999.
41 Interview with Sahal Mahfudz, Malang 16 April 2000.
his pesantren in Malang to 'demonstrate that there are no disturbances in the relationship between NU and the armed forces, despite recent reports to the contrary.' On the other side of the equation, senior ulama tried to convince Abdurrahman that he had to improve his relationship with other societal forces if he wanted to stay in power. On most occasions, however, they found Abdurrahman stubborn:

"We tried a lot, believe me. We talk to him at pesantren, in small circles, we visit him at the palace. We tell him that he will go down if he continues like this. But mostly, he just laughs and says that everything will be alright. He thinks that the situation is under control."  

There was indeed little indication that Abdurrahman listened to the advice from within NU. Most of the concessions that the President handed to his opponents were of a temporary nature and often followed by fresh attacks on their interests. He agreed to delegate some presidential powers to Megawati in August 2000 but subsequently reshuffled his cabinet without her consent and isolated her from important policy decisions. He made frequent promises to Golkar chairman Akbar Tanjung of increased cabinet representation, but failed to deliver and, at the same time, continued to denounce Golkar as the major obstacle to further democratisation. In order to appease the armed forces, he withdrew his initiative for radical military reform and reversed his stand on Aceh and Papua, but insisted on the promotion of generals considered loyal to his rule, albeit with little success. As a result, key political groups alienated by Abdurrahman forged a coalition against him, with Parliament serving as its major institutional base.

Violence and Islamic Jurisprudence: NU Between Power and Democracy

The growing tensions between Abdurrahman and the oppositional coalition in Parliament aggravated the conflict between traditionalist and modernist groups. Among the many grievances against the President, the major factions in the legislature had picked two cases of financial misconduct as grounds for impeachment proceedings against Abdurrahman. The first case, referred to as 'Buloggate', was concerned with the transfer of funds from a welfare fund for employees of the National Logistics Agency to the President's masseur, while the second case,
'Bruneigate', related to a private donation from the Sultan of Brunei to Abdurrahman. In January 2001, Parliament issued its first memorandum, demanding an explanation from the President and initiating a long process aimed at his removal. The maneuver sparked angry reactions from traditionalist groups at the grassroots, particularly in East Java. The main target of PKB-affiliated militias like Gerakan Pembela Bangsa (GPB, Movement to Defend the Nation) were offices and educational institutions associated with Muhammadiyah. Between February and July 2001, Muhammadiyah recorded attacks on 5 universities, 12 schools, 5 clinics, 4 mosques, 9 offices and at least 18 houses of its leaders.\(^4^4\) In addition to locally limited violence, several groups sprang up that prepared to march on Jakarta to defend Abdurrahman against what they viewed as unconstitutional moves to unseat him. The President, according to O'Rourke, 'tacitly endorsed such threats' as a deterrent to discourage Parliament from continuing the impeachment proceedings.\(^4^5\) While Abdurrahman distanced himself from individual acts of destruction, he pointed to the traditionalist outrage as evidence for his claim that several provinces would seek separation from Indonesia if he lost the presidency. The prediction of senior NU kiai that Abdurrahman's election and subsequent removal from office could result in violence between traditionalist and modernist groups had turned into reality.

The extent to which NU kiai organised, encouraged or tolerated some of the violence against modernist institutions and leaders remains unclear. Muhammadiyah officials certainly believed that NU clerics were responsible for the acts of their followers, and an offer by NU Chairman Hasyim Muzadi for financial compensation appeared to confirm that assumption.\(^4^6\) There is no doubt, however, that senior kiai contributed to the emergence of an atmosphere in which violence was condoned as a legitimate instrument of political competition. In January 2001, one of Abdurrahman's closest confidants, Noer Iskandar, declared that the blood of Akbar Tanjung and Amien Rais was halal, which according to Islamic jurisprudence made it legal to kill them. In addition, a meeting in Sukabumi in April 2001, which was attended by some of NU's most respected clerics, decided that opponents of Abdurrahman could be classified as bughot, or rebels against the legitimate government.\(^4^7\) That categorisation, in turn, made their violent suppression not only justifiable, but mandatory. In order to consolidate Abdurrahman's presidential authority

\(^{4^4}\) Andree Feillard 2002: 127.
\(^{4^5}\) O'Rourke 2002: 397.
\(^{4^6}\) Hasyim acknowledged in February 2001 that in the culture of pesantren, followers of kiai were certain to obey their orders. Thus if so many santri were participating in violent protests to defend Abdurrahman, said Hasyim, the conclusion was unavoidable that the kiai 'tolerated' these actions because 'they are really angry now.' 'Hasyim Muzadi: "Para Kiai di Jawa Timur Sudah Marah'”, Kompas, 7 February 2001.
in religious terms, the *kiai* called for the title of *waliul amri dlaruri bissyyauka* (legitimate interim ruler according to Islamic law) to be bestowed on him – the same title Nahdlatul Ulama had granted Sukarno in 1954. By implication, Muslims were obliged to defend the holder of that title against attempts to remove him. Such jurisprudential verdicts did not only coincide with, but in fact provided legitimacy to, the creation of paramilitary organisations like Pasukan Berani Mati (PBM, Troops Ready to Die). PBM volunteers were trained in several NU strongholds in East Java, and proclaimed that they were prepared to die ‘a martyr’s death to defend Gus Dur.’

Modernist groups reacted to the crisis with sharp critiques of traditionalist clerics and their religio-political concepts. Islamic intellectuals with modernist backgrounds pointed particularly to the ease with which *kiai* were prepared to use their jurisprudential authority in order to justify repressive action against Abdurrahman’s opponents. They also criticised the tendency of NU figures to convey spiritual messages they claimed to have received through exclusive communications with deceased saints. These messages predicted, not surprisingly, that Abdurrahman would ultimately overcome his enemies. The modernist rejection of supernatural discourses had been a point of contention between the two main Muslim constituencies for more than a century, but the current crisis provided the dispute with immediate political relevance. Andree Feillard argued that ‘NU’s exacerbated feelings were now starting to play into the hands of (its) adversaries, always keen to criticize trends to shirk (associationism) and a lack of rationality among traditionalists.’ Consequently, modernist leaders launched fierce attacks on what they saw as attempts by traditionalist *kiai* to protect Abdurrahman with jurisprudential edicts and spiritual prophecies. Husein Umar, a prominent Dewan Dakwah figure, recalled how a *kiai* reminded Akbar Tanjung that an angel located in Abdurrahman’s chest could observe whether the DPR Chairman recited the al-Fatihah prayers 2000 times a day. Only then, the *kiai* asserted, would Akbar have the privilege of ‘encountering the soul of Gus Dur.’ Husein attacked these ‘irrational arguments’ as attempts to ‘deify the ulama’ and spread ‘slander’ in the Muslim community. Feillard called Husein’s critique ‘a terrible slap for NU’s respected kiais.’ Some modernists, however, did not limit themselves to intellectual ‘slaps’. Islamist splinter groups like

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48 Feillard 2002: 127.
49 The President himself told senior *kiai* of such dreams and inspirations in order to strengthen their resolve: ‘Gus Dur talked about regularly reoccurring dreams, in which he had talks with the *wali songo* (lit. ‘nine saints’, semi-mythical figures credited with Islamising Java) and his grandfather, Hasjim Asj’ari. They all told him that he will survive all challenges, and that his opponents would be punished.’ Interview with Cholil Bisri, Jakarta 25 May 2001.
50 Feillard 2002: 134. ‘Shirk’ describes a concept that considers the powers or attributes of people or inanimate things as being of equal or higher status than those possessed by God.
51 Feillard 2002: 134.
the Ikhwanul Muslimin (Indonesian Muslim Brotherhood) and the Front Pembela Kebenaran (FPK, Front of Defenders of the Truth) established militias in anticipation of the announced PBM march on Jakarta.

Undeterred by criticism of their leadership, the majority of NU kiai continued their defence of the President and even supported his plans for disbanding the legislature. On 22 July 2001, one day before the MPR was scheduled to impeach Abdurrahman and swear in Megawati as his successor, hundreds of kiai convened in Batu Ceper to discuss their response to the escalation of the crisis. Noer Iskandar, the host of the event, demanded in his opening speech that the clerics formulate a firm stand vis-à-vis 'the maltreatment of Gus Dur, the maltreatment of NU, and the maltreatment of the kiai.' That stand, he left no doubt, could only be to support the suspension of Parliament and the declaration of a state of emergency, which Abdurrahman had indicated would occur in the next couple of hours. Even more moderate NU officials concurred with the general view among the audience that the legislature had lost its right to exist. Hasyim Muzadi spoke at length about how 'Parliament has betrayed the people and engaged in unconstitutional moves to unseat the legitimate President.' The DPR, Hasyim maintained, could no longer claim to represent the electorate as it had violated commonly accepted democratic procedures. Encouraged by feisty speeches and messages conveyed from the palace, the NU clerics decided to ask the President to proceed with his emergency plans. Abdurrahman’s inner circle later claimed that it was this appeal by the kiai that convinced the President to issue the emergency decree in the evening of 22 July. This is highly unlikely, however. Abdurrahman had been threatening to make this move for several months, and he had told key members of his cabinet that he was determined to realise his plan despite their opposition. In addition, presidential aides appeared to play an important role in the Batu Ceper gathering. The discussions were interrupted several times because the President had made special requests via telephone, mostly asking the kiai to recite a specific prayer.

The impeachment of Abdurrahman and the inauguration of a new government on 23 July 2001 came as an anticlimax to the presidential crisis. Family members and aides escorted the deposed head of state from the palace to a vacation in the United States, preventing him from further calls on his supporters to mobilise. Leading NU clerics, who just one day before had approved of disbanding the legislature, tried to establish contacts with the new power holders. Even the PKB

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52 Speech by Noer Iskandar in Batu Ceper, 22 July 2001, personal notes by the author.
53 Speech by Hasyim Muzadi in Batu Ceper, 22 July 2001, personal notes by the author.
54 Feillard 2002: 135.
faction in Parliament, which initially decided to boycott its proceedings, resumed full operations in the institution dissolved by Abdurrahman’s decree. Most importantly, however, the violence at the grassroots stopped once it had become clear that NU kiai had no intention of opposing the new government. It appeared that most clerics were prepared to defend Abdurrahman as long as he was in office, but saw no benefit in post-factum challenges to his removal.

‘Pillars of Civil Society’?: Muslim Groups and the Challenges of Democracy

Despite this easing of tensions, the severe social and political conflicts between Muslim mainstream organisations in the first half of 2001 calls into question some of the basic assumptions regarding their role in civil society and democratic consolidation. The literature on Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah had since the early 1990s focused on their contribution to democratisation at the grassroots. Western observers in particular measured the democratic credentials of both organisations by their ability to contain the spread of groups with more Islamist agendas. Martin van Bruinessen, for instance, asserted that ‘moderation and tolerance have long been characteristic of the mainstream members of these organisations (as) both have resolutely opposed issues that could lead to the further polarisation of society (such as the Jakarta Charter).55 Bruinessen concluded that NU and Muhammadiyah are ‘vehicles of a democratic climate’ and ‘pillars of civil society’,56 concurring with Hefner’s notion of centrist Muslim organisations as proponents of ‘civil Islam’.57 Such classifications led many observers to downplay obvious cases of undemocratic behaviour in the two mainstream groups. Greg Barton, for example, explained NU’s democratic deficiencies as resulting from the fact that ‘NU ulama are a rustic and eccentric group, being drawn primarily from rural stock’.58 With significant non-democratic dispositions belittled as ‘rustic’ and ‘eccentric’, Barton maintained that NU leaders are generally ‘moderate’ and ‘tolerant’.

55 Martin van Bruinessen, ‘Post-Soeharto Muslim Engagements with Civil Society and Democratisation’, Paper Presented at the Third International Conference and Workshop ‘Indonesia in Transition’, Universitas Indonesia, 24-28 August 2003: 17. There have been few serious attempts to re-introduce the syariat clause of the Jakarta Charter after 1998. Radical Muslim groups that demonstrated for its reinstatement, typically at annual sessions of the MPR, have received little societal support. In the political arena, only PPP, PK and Bulan Bintang sympathised with the idea, with the vast majority of parties firmly opposed.
57 Hefner 2000: 218.
The engagement of NU and Muhammadiyah in the competition for political hegemony in the post-Soeharto system warrants a reassessment of their relationship with the state and civil society. During authoritarian rule, both organisations created important niches for political activities and discourses outside of formal institutions and norms imposed by the regime. NU and Muhammadiyah were part of a civil society that was largely concerned with protecting itself from intrusion by the control apparatus of the New Order. The 1998 regime change, however, fundamentally altered their relationship with the state. They decided to participate actively in the political structures of the post-authoritarian polity, supporting the creation of parties to defend the interests of their constituencies. Although NU and Muhammadiyah formally remained independent socio-religious organisations, their dominant role in PKB and PAN was undeniable. The vast majority of PKB and PAN functionaries were members of NU and Muhammadiyah respectively, and the voting patterns of the 1999 elections demonstrated that the public tended not to differentiate between the organisations and their affiliated parties. The post-1998 changes turned NU and Muhammadiyah into electoral competitors and participants in the political negotiations over power, resources and privileges. Consequently, NU became an integral part of the regime when its chairman assumed the presidency in 1999, and it concentrated all its efforts on defending the incumbent against mounting opposition from society and the political elite. In doing so, leading NU officials and clerics exposed political attitudes that did not always focus on 'inculcating civic values in their members.' In fact, the edicts outlawing opposition to Abdurrahman and calls for disbanding the legislature were neither supportive of a 'democratic climate' nor did they accord with NU's self-image as a 'pillar of civil society.'

The social unrest and political instability associated with Abdurrahman’s removal pointed to the ambivalent contribution of the two largest Muslim mainstream organisations to democratic consolidation in the post-authoritarian state. Hefner and van Bruinessen were correct in lauding both sides for consistently opposing the formal Islamisation of the state as demanded by some groups at the ultra-modernist fringes of the political spectrum. The promotion of moderate Islamic concepts of political organisation supported the evolution of a pluralist party system and

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60 Benyamin Fleming Intan maintained that only by remaining in the realm of civil society can religious groups avoid the conflicts associated with the fight for hegemonic control of social and political institutions. Once the line is crossed from engagement in civil society to political competition with rival constituencies, conflicts are almost inevitable. Benyamin Fleming Intan, "'Public Religion' and the Pancasila-based State of Indonesia: A Normative Argument within a Christian-Muslim Dialogue (1945-1998)", Doctoral dissertation, Boston College, 2004.

helped to reduce societal resistance to Western forms of democracy. This moderation did not extend to the style and procedures of direct political competition among themselves, however. The attempts by modernist politicians to unseat a head of state they had voted into office only months earlier, and the willingness of traditionalist leaders to condone repressive measures in his defence, exposed a selective commitment to the upholding of democratic norms and rules. Evidently, both currents of the Muslim community found it difficult to translate their civil society values developed under decades of authoritarian rule into a normative framework for their behavior as political actors in the post-Soeharto system.\textsuperscript{62} The prolonged political conflicts, with violence at the grassroots and paralysis of government in the centre, impacted negatively on public perceptions of civilian leadership qualities. As a result, the popularity of the armed forces and former generals active in politics increased considerably. Military officers, who had faced severe societal resentment in the early phase of the transition, now blamed civilian leaders for 'the complete mess they have created.'\textsuperscript{63} Particularly the communal violence in East Java and the mobilisation of political militias assisted the armed forces in propagating their traditional prejudice that 'if civilians are in charge, they do nothing but fight among themselves, even threaten to kill each other in God's name.'\textsuperscript{64} After two years of political chaos, an increasing number of Indonesians appeared to agree.

III. COURTING THE GENERALS: ISLAMIC LEADERS AND THE 2004 ELECTIONS

The collapse of the Abdurrahman government had important consequences for the relationship between Islamic groups and the constellation of power within them. The coalition that facilitated Abdurrahman's election in 1999 had been designed to overcome memories of failed all-Islamic experiments since the colonial period, but the bitter conflicts that followed only deepened the existing divisions and sentiments. Although the chairmen of NU and Muhammadiyah, Hasyim Muzadi and Syafii Maarif, managed to rebuild their personal ties through a series of social and cultural initiatives, the political rift between the two largest Islamic constituencies was significant. It all but excluded the possibility of further coalitions between traditionalist and modernist Muslim parties in the foreseeable future, particularly in the run-up to the 2004

\textsuperscript{62} The problem was not, as Howard Federspiel suggested, that NU and Muhammadiyah 'have become more energized in political affairs with their cadre and members actively recruited for the newly formed political parties.' Rather, NU and Muhammadiyah - despite official declarations to the opposite - were turned from civil society organisations into political interest groups. Howard Federspiel, 'Indonesia, Islam, and U.S. Policy', \textit{Brown Journal of World Affairs} 9:1, Spring 2002: 110.

\textsuperscript{63} Confidential interview with a one-star general, Bandung 21 September 2001.

\textsuperscript{64} Confidential interview with a one-star general, Bandung 21 September 2001.
elections. In addition to the widening gap between key Islamic groups, the events surrounding Abdurrahman’s removal also created new divisions within Nahdlatul Ulama. Loyalists of the deposed President accused leading NU and PKB functionaries of not doing enough to defend Abdurrahman and of reconciling too quickly with his opponents. The Chairman of the PKB branch of East Java, Choirul Anam, claimed that thousands of his supporters had been ready to flock into the capital and confront Abdurrahman’s adversaries, but that Matori Abdul Djalil and Hasyim Muzadi had prevented them from taking action. Matori had participated in the MPR session that impeached Abdurrahman, despite PKB’s official boycott, and Hasyim had made it clear that NU acknowledged the legitimacy of the new government. Consequently, Abdurrahman insisted on Matori’s replacement as PKB Chairman, and his relationship with Hasyim Muzadi was damaged irreparably. Like the split between the largest Islamic constituencies, the factionalism within NU was certain to impact on the process of coalition building for the 2004 polls.

The political elite began to prepare for the 2004 elections as soon as Megawati took office, despite the fact that her term was scheduled to last for more than three years and thus longer than that of any democratic government in Indonesian history. There were several reasons for this. To begin with, the largest political parties had agreed after Abdurrahman’s fall that they would allow Megawati to serve out the remainder of the presidential term without major challenges to her rule. According to Amien Rais, key politicians signed an agreement that guaranteed Megawati ‘that she will not be brought down halfway into her presidency, because if she were impeached too, that would be a joke for Indonesia’s democracy.’ This decision diverted the focus of political competition from active opposition against the incumbent to the issue of succession. Most importantly, Megawati also fulfilled her side of the contract with the political elite. She supported the election of PPP leader Hamzah Haz as her Vice-president, included members of most political parties in her government and largely refrained from conflicts with the legislature. During her three years in office, she did not dismiss a single minister, compared to 15 cabinet reshuffles

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66 Hasyim, for his part, blamed the PKB faction in Parliament for failing to stop the impeachment proceedings against Abdurrahman. In a brochure that compiled reports on his leadership and was distributed at an NU event in 2002 in Jakarta, it was maintained that ‘NU as a grassroots-oriented organisation was exposed to political mud flying around as a result of the less than optimal role played by the PKB elite.’ The brochure stated that the ‘capability of every single Member of Parliament from the PKB faction was still appalling.’ Lembaga Kajian dan Pengembangan Informasi Media, *Kiprah PBNU 2000-2001: Analisa dan Evaluasi Pemberitaan tentang Kepemimpinan K.H. A. Hasyim Muzadi*, eKapim, Malang 2001: x, xii.
involving more than 30 cabinet members under Abdurrahman’s rule. In terms of policy, the Megawati government stayed away from controversial initiatives for change, turning it into 'something of a holding operation' under which political actors concentrated their resources for the 2004 race. Finally, the upcoming elections were also the main subject of inter-elite negotiations over amendments to the constitution. In August 2002, the MPR decided that the president and vice-president would be elected in a direct ballot, encouraging party leaders and political figures to position themselves within the new electoral framework.

**Candidacies and Frictions: Islamic Groups and the Presidential Race**

The divisions between and within Islamic groups impaired their ability to find prospective candidates for the presidential contest. Given the conflicts under the Abdurrahman government, the nomination of a joint candidate representing both traditionalist and modernist parties like in 1999 was out of the question. Abdurrahman refused to meet Amien Rais for more than two years after his fall, and even after he agreed to an encounter in July 2003, he ruled out the possibility of political cooperation. Pledging publicly not to ‘fall into the same hole twice’, Abdurrahman insisted that ‘Amien has proven that he is not trustworthy’. On the modernist side, the support for the renewal of an all-Islamic alliance was equally weak. Many modernist politicians viewed the failure of Abdurrahman’s presidency as evidence of the political immaturity of traditionalist leaders. They contended that NU-affiliated clerics in politics ‘believe that running the state is like running a pesantren — all the authority, all the funds are in the hands of the kiai, and there is no accountability.’

In addition to these mutual sentiments, the all-Islamic option lacked credible candidates. Some youth leaders in both NU and Muhammadiyah mentioned Nurcholish Madjid as a possible candidate, but his nomination never gained political momentum. After scoring high levels of support in opinion polls, Nurcholish considered participating in the convention held by the Golkar party to select its presidential nominee. He finally withdrew from the contest in protest against Golkar’s internal convention procedures, and fell seriously ill when campaigning for the general elections began.

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69 Crouch 2003: 15
70 Abdurrahman Wahid on TV7, 20 April 2004.
71 Interview with Djoko Susilo, Jakarta 30 March 2001.
Traditionalist and modernist groups did not only face insurmountable difficulties in nominating a joint candidate, but they were also divided internally over the best nominee for their respective constituencies. Amien Rais was determined to run for the presidency again, but as an ICG report noted, it was ‘barely imaginable that the Islamic parties would join to nominate him.’72 His relationship with PPP and Bulan Bintang was tense since Amien had failed to fulfil his promise to lead these parties in 1998. PPP officials were leaning towards a renewed alliance with Megawati, and Yusril made no secret of his refusal to back Amien’s nomination. Even Partai Keadilan, which formed a joint faction in Parliament with PAN, appeared reluctant to back up its former patron. That left PAN and Muhammadiyah as the only organisational vehicles for Amien’s campaign. PAN was unlikely to receive much more than the 7 percent of the votes it gained in 1999 and thus insufficient to bring victory in the presidential ballot. PAN’s weakness and the non-committal attitude of modernist parties caused Muhammadiyah leaders to promise Amien full institutional support for his 2004 candidacy, departing from their 1999 position that electoral assistance was possible only through Muhammadiyah elements active in PAN.73 In the traditionalist community, similar divisions occurred. Despite strong reservations on the part of senior kiai, Abdurrahman insisted on competing in the popular ballot.74 He was certain that he could regain the presidency for NU and provide ultimate proof that his 2001 ouster had been the work of a tiny elite. NU leaders around Hasyim Muzadi believed, however, that their organisation would have a much better chance of participating in the next government if it nominated a vice-presidential candidate to pair up with one of the key contenders. The split caused heated debates between the two camps, with one group suggesting that the former president was physically unfit for office and the other accusing Hasyim of having received bribes from Megawati.75

New Electoral Patterns: The Gubernatorial Elections of 2002-03

The elections of new governors in the majority of Indonesia’s provinces throughout 2002 and 2003 mirrored the deep divisions within the civilian elite and catalysed the emergence of new patterns of coalition building. At the centre of these new electoral patterns were retired military officers as partners for civilian forces keen to deny their opponents access to important

bureaucratic posts. In East Java, for example, the PDI-P leadership decided in 2003 to support the re-election of incumbent governor Imam Utomo, a retired two-star general and former Commander of the province. PDI-P was locked in a paralysing power balance with PKB in the East Java legislature, with each party controlling one third of the seats. From PDI-P’s perspective, Imam’s nomination promised to hand the governorship to a neutral mediator and prevent a possible PKB victory. Abdurrahman, for his part, responded to PDI-P’s move by pushing for another retired general, Abdul Kahfi, to be named PKB’s nominee.76 Kahfi’s nomination stirred opposition from some leading kiai who favored PKB Secretary-General Saifullah Yusuf for the post.77 Abdurrahman prevailed, however, setting up a contest between two retired generals for one of Indonesia’s most crucial governorships. One member of East Java’s election committee predicted an easy victory for Imam:

“Imam has them all in his pocket. He has prepared his re-election for years, paying off the right people. And his ties to the military make him respectable in the eyes of the political elite. That’s why his opponents see nominating another military officer as the only way to beat him."78

Imam won the election by a large margin. Beside his military background, the access to state resources and other privileges associated with incumbency had given him a decisive advantage over his competitor. Imam’s victory reflected an emerging pattern of electoral behavior within the elite that evoked memories of the pre-1971 period of Soeharto’s rule when, according to Sundhaussen, ‘many provincial and district assemblies favored the appointment of colonels and generals, even (...) when political parties still had an important say in these assemblies.’ The major reason for this phenomenon was ‘the reluctance of party politicians to back a candidate from a rival party; they would rather vote for someone who is considered “neutral” in party politics.’79 Despite the stark differences between the early New Order and the post-Soeharto polity, Sundhaussen’s assessment could well be applied to describe the character of provincial politics in 2002 and 2003.

East Java was not the only case in which retired military officers profited from civilian divisions to defend or gain key bureaucratic positions. In Central Java, PKB nominated a local

76 Abdurrahman had earlier mentioned three retired generals who had the potential of representing PKB in the election for governor: Kahfi, a former deputy governor of Jakarta, and the two former Commanders of East Java, Haris Sudarno and Djoko Subroto. ‘PKB Mengajukan Tiga Jenderal’, Suara Merdeka 4 June 2003.
78 Interview with Aribowo, Deputy Chairnian of East Java’s Election Commission, Surabaya 23 June 2003.
79 Sundhaussen 1978: 52.
NU leader to run as vice-governor on the ticket of the incumbent, retired two-star general Mardiyanto. PDI-P also decided to support Mardiyanto’s re-election bid despite its triumph in the 1999 polls with 43 percent of the votes and strong pressure from the grassroots to nominate a party figure for governor. PAN, for its part, recruited the one-time Commander of Jakarta, retired Maj.Gen. Kirbiantoro, as its nominee for the gubernatorial election. The PDI-P leadership celebrated Mardiyanto’s eventual win against his former colleague as a huge success for its negotiation skills. Several local PDI-P chairmen disagreed, however, and left the party in dismay. In West Java, PKB sent retired general Tayo Tarmadi into the elections for governor, facing an experienced bureaucrat nominated by Golkar, Danny Setiawan. The Golkar candidate, who was a leading figure in FKPPI, won the ballot. In Lampung, incumbent governor Oemarsono, also a former officer, ran with Army Chief of Staff Ryamizard Ryacudu’s brother as his candidate for the vice-governorship. The pair was backed by the PDI-P Central Board, but lost against a local businessman who had obtained the support of local legislators. The governor-elect was arrested on corruption charges, however, leading to the annulment of the vote by the central government and a re-run of the election. Subsequently, Ryamizard’s brother joined forces with a new candidate for governor and, this time, emerged as part of the winning team. In addition, victories for retired military officers were recorded in North Sumatra, Jakarta, East Kalimantan and Maluku.

Islamic Communities, Military Candidates: Building Alliances for the 2004 Polls

The alliances between civilian forces and retired military officers in local elections prepared the scene for similar electoral patterns at the national level. Amien Rais was the first party leader and presidential hopeful who publicly lobbied retired military officers to become his running mate. After his failure to enlist the backing of modernist parties, the presentation of a popular retired general appeared as the next best strategy to broaden his support base. In September 2003, the  

80 Ali Mufiz was Deputy Chairman of NU’s Central Java branch and Chairman of the provincial chapter of MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, the Council of Indonesian Muslim Clerics).
83 At the district level the trend was different, however. Only very few retired military officers were nominated as candidates for the posts of bupati or mayor. This suggests that the inclination of political parties to nominate ex-military candidates was directly linked to the significance of the contested post for national politics. The more important a particular post to the interests of the central party leadership, the more likely the latter was to intervene in the nomination process and favor a candidate with a military background.
former Muhammadiyah chairman introduced the idea of a civilian-military alliance as the major platform of his campaign. He argued that the expertise of former generals was needed to secure the territorial integrity of the state against separatist threats and other security disturbances. In Amien’s view, the blend between his image as a reform-minded civilian with the nationalist credentials of a retired military leader was certain to attract substantial support from a society unsettled by six years of political transition. Consequently, he approached Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and offered him the vice-presidential nomination on his ticket.

Many within Amien’s inner circle disagreed:

“I told Pak Amien that recruiting a retired officer as his partner for the election could ruin his reformist image. Besides, it was clear that Susilo had other plans. In the meetings with Amien, Susilo just said nothing. He was obviously preparing his own candidacy.”

Susilo’s refusal to pair up with Amien was not the only setback in the latter’s campaign. The parliamentary elections in April 2004 saw a further drop in the support for PAN, which was overtaken by two other parties and now only ranked seventh in terms of popular votes. This decline in Amien’s electoral standing discouraged other potential candidates from considering his offers for political cooperation. He inquired with both Endriartono and Agum Gumelar if they were interested in the vice-presidential nomination, but received negative responses. By the time Amien had to make a definitive decision in May, there were already three other tickets with civilian-military pairs in the race. He ultimately chose former minister Siswono Yudohusodo as his partner for the elections and turned his earlier concept upside down: what had been planned as an integrated civilian-military ticket was now popularised as the only genuine civilian duo confronting the dominance of retired officers in the presidential competition.

Many of the modernist Islamic parties that refused to endorse Amien’s candidacy formed alliances with retired military officers as well. Bulan Bintang declared its support for Susilo early

86 Confidential interview with senior advisor to Amien Rais, Jakarta 3 October 2003.
87 At the April polls, Golkar finished first with 21.6 percent, followed by PDI-P with 18.5; PKB with 10.5; PPP with 8.2; and Partai Demokrat and PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, Prosperous Justice Party) with 7.5 and 7.3 percent respectively. PAN received 6.4 percent of the votes, ahead of Bulan Bintang and PBR (Partai Bintang Reformasi, Reform Star Party) with 2.6 and 2.4 percent respectively. PKS had been formed out of the old PK as the latter had failed in 1999 to reach the 2 percent threshold required to compete in the 2004 ballot. PBR, for its part, was founded by the Muslim leader Zainuddin MZ after his departure from PPP.
on in the nomination process and was one of the three parties that formed the core of his coalition. Party chairman Yusril Ihza Mahendra had built up a close working relationship with Susilo during their time together in several post-Soeharto cabinets, and they had shared many grievances against the respective incumbents. Some elements of the party elite and the Bulan Bintang grassroots opposed Susilo’s nomination, however. Ahmad Soemargono, a former KISDI figure and one of Bulan Bintang’s most prominent ultra-modernist figures, declared his resignation from the party and threw his support behind Amien Rais.90 Equally, a large number of branches in the regions opted to join Amien’s campaign and risk open conflict with the Central Board. PPP witnessed similar conflicts. Hamzah Haz had initially sought the vice-presidential slot on Megawati’s ticket, but after she had picked Hasyim Muzadi, PPP decided to nominate its Chairman for the presidency and Agum Gumelar as his running mate. The move sparked protest from some factions within PPP, which declared their support for Amien as well. Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, for its part, was split between supporters of Amien and Wiranto, who had won the nomination of the Golkar party in an internal ballot. The sympathy for Wiranto within PKS surprised many, but appeared to have originated from his personal protection of KAMMI leaders during the 1998 student protests.91 The pro-Wiranto group caused a deadlock in the internal party deliberations as to which candidate to recommend to its voters, delaying the decision to the final phase of the campaign. Although the party ultimately opted for Amien, 21 percent of PKS’s supporters still voted for Wiranto, the highest percentage for the former TNI Commander among those major parties that did not campaign for him.92

Former generals also played important roles in the search for presidential nominees within the traditionalist Muslim community. In Nahdlatul Ulama and PKB, there was both strong support for and fierce opposition against another candidacy of Abdurrahman Wahid. Even after the Election Commission indicated that Abdurrahman was likely to be excluded from the presidential ballot for health reasons, the prospect for the nomination of a candidate acceptable to all NU factions remained remote. The former president made it clear that he would not endorse any NU candidate considered disloyal to him, mentioning Hasyim Muzadi by name. Once again, the recruitment of retired military leaders appeared to many as an attractive solution, offering to

91 I am grateful to Greg Fealy for providing this information. A PKS-sponsored publication lauded Wiranto, among others, for participating in the presidential elections in a democratic way and thus ‘using constitutional means to receive the sympathy of the people.’ Aay Muhammad Furkon, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera: Ideologi dan Praksi Politik Kaum Muda Muslim Indonesia Kontemporer, Refleksi Masyarakat Baru, Bandung 2004: 255.
bridge internal differences and improve the electoral standing of the traditionalist constituency. Thus PKB officials consulted in late 2003 with Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono about the possibility of him running as the party’s presidential candidate. Muhaimin Iskandar, Deputy Chairman of PKB and Abdurrahman’s nephew, was certain that Susilo would emerge as PKB’s nominee:

“I’m sure that it will be Susilo. We are in negotiations with him, and Gus Dur, despite his official claims that he wants to enter the race himself, has given his approval.”

Partai Demokrat, however, won enough votes in the April elections to nominate Susilo for the presidency on its own, and PKB leaders felt that his interest in PKB as a possible electoral vehicle declined as a result. Hopeful that his popularity alone would deliver victory, Susilo offered no concrete inducements to PKB to win the party’s backing. The negotiations over Susilo’s possible nomination by PKB were broken off in late April, and when the Election Commission officially excluded Abdurrahman from the poll in May, the party was acutely conscious of its lack of a candidate. As expected, Abdurrahman ruled out PKB support for Hasyim Muzadi who had joined Megawati’s campaign as her vice-presidential nominee. Finally, the ex-president threw his support behind Wiranto and allowed his younger brother, Solahuddin Wahid, to run as the deputy of the former Commander-in-Chief. Despite his intention to boycott the ballot in protest against his disqualification, Abdurrahman campaigned actively for the pair. Senior kiai loyal to Abdurrahman also called on their santri to elect Wiranto, arguing that voting for Hasyim Muzadi constituted a violation of Islamic norms as he had paired up with a female presidential candidate.

Civilian Empowerment? Susilo and the Electoral Politics of 2004

The result of the first round of presidential elections in July 2004 highlighted the success of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in combining the traditional features of a military leader with the images of post-Soeharto reform. Ranking first with 33.6 percent, Susilo was viewed by voters as firm but consensus-oriented, consistent but open-minded, conservative but liberal. This blend of New Order paradigms with democratic values enabled Susilo to attract support from all major

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94 Interview with Muhaimin Iskandar, Jakarta 29 January 2004.
socio-political and religious constituencies. Wiranto, on the other hand, was largely identified with the political inflexibility of the New Order. In addition to an unfavorable reputation, the confusion within the traditionalist Muslim community and Golkar over which candidate to support also undermined the electoral chances of the former TNI chief. Abdurrahman, despite calling on his supporters to vote for Wiranto, gave interviews in which he predicted that the retired general had no chance of winning. Furthermore, many kiai received financial contributions from Wiranto as well as Megawati’s side and thus did not issue a definitive recommendation for either party. In the absence of a clear order from their kiai, a large number of NU-affiliated voters abstained or opted for Susilo. The same ambivalence applied to Golkar’s attitude. By most accounts, the party machinery was not fully mobilised to support its candidate. Akbar Tanjung had apparently little interest in a Wiranto victory, and a lot of local party leaders who had spent all their resources on the parliamentary elections were reluctant to raise further funds for an uncertain cause. Thus Wiranto came only third with 22.2 percent, behind Megawati who claimed second place with 26.6 percent and qualified for a second-round encounter with Susilo in September. Amien Rais and Hamzah Haz finished fourth and fifth respectively and were eliminated from the race.

The second round of the poll saw key Muslim groups and parties once again deeply divided. In the modernist spectrum, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera declared its support for Susilo, while PAN was clearly leaning towards the former general despite officially remaining neutral. The two parties joined forces with Bulan Bintang, which had been part of Susilo’s campaign since May 2004. PKS, PAN and Bulan Bintang were opposed to what was widely perceived as Megawati’s secularist attitude to political affairs, and certainly were not in favor of a traditionalist Muslim in the vice-presidency. They were also highly critical of Megawati’s lackluster performance since 2001, declaring that a change of the national leadership was inevitable. These ideological and political considerations were of such importance that they overcame concerns over Susilo’s military background, particularly in PKS. On the other hand, PPP and one of its splinter parties, PBR, became members of the Nationhood Coalition (Koalisi Kebangsaan), which pledged to secure Megawati’s reelection. Other members of the coalition included PDI-P, Golkar and a number of smaller secular-nationalist parties. PPP leader Hamzah Haz felt that his party had received a fair share of resources and positions under Megawati’s rule and sought to continue this

arrangement, while PBR joined the Coalition with the explicit notion of defending civilian supremacy against the danger of a resurgent military. On the traditionalist side, efforts to reconcile Abdurrahman and Hasyim Muzadi in order to unite the Nahdlatul Ulama vote behind its Chairman were unsuccessful. The former president assigned one of his daughters to accompany Susilo to important pesantren and campaign for him, effectively neutralising Hasyim Muzadi’s appeal to support him as the only NU cadre left in the presidential competition. Ultimately, the majority of modernist and traditionalist Muslims voted for Susilo. He won the election in a landslide against Megawati, who could only defend her strongholds in predominantly non-Muslim areas like Bali, Maluku and East Nusa Tenggara.

Susilo’s victory completed a series of electoral successes by retired military officers in provincial and national polls. This phenomenon occurred despite new electoral mechanisms that provided civilian-based parties with the instruments to secure important government posts for their cadres. In provincial legislatures, parties that controlled the largest number of seats but fell short of an absolute majority still tended to select their nominees for key executive posts from independent candidates, often with military backgrounds. At the national level, the first direct presidential poll in Indonesia’s history, long seen as a means of empowering civilian groups and mass organisations, had three retired officers competing in the race. There are two inter-related explanations for this. First, the deep divisions within and between civilian constituencies encouraged their leaders to seek former generals as partners in order to resolve internal conflicts and improve their electoral prospect vis-à-vis other participants in the poll. The split within the Muslim community and its various groups was not the only example in this regard, but it provided significant insights into the motivation of large civilian forces to support former generals not directly attached to them. The internal conflict in Nahdlatul Ulama was a case in point, with one faction shifting support from Wiranto to Susilo to undermine the vice-presidential nomination of the NU chairman. The second explanation relates to the improved public image of the armed forces and its retired personnel since the constitutional crisis of 2001. The surge in societal support for notions of political stability and the corresponding decline of trust in civilian leadership qualities created incentives for politicians to integrate former generals into their campaigns. As a result, by late 2004 retired officers had been installed in the presidency and crucial posts in local administrations. Democratic elections, previously viewed as an obstacle to

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101 PBR Deputy Chair Zainal Maarif asserted that ‘this doesn’t mean that we think Susilo is militaristic, maybe he is a military man who can be democratic, but it is better to leave civilian supremacy in civilian hands.’ ‘SBY: Pada Akhirnya Rakyatlah Yang Menentukan Pilihannya’, Surabayawebs 23 August 2004.
the participation of both active and retired military figures in politics, had evolved into one of its most effective vehicles.

IV. ISLAMIC RADICALISM IN POST-SOEHARTO INDONESIA: SECURITY THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY FOR THE MILITARY?

The conflicts within the Muslim mainstream were not the only development in Indonesian Islam that played into the hands of the military. Earlier chapters of this study have also highlighted the way in which a small, but violent segment of extremist Islam underpinned the claim of the armed forces to political privileges under pre-1998 governments. This section will discuss the role of militant Muslim groups in the post-New Order polity as well as their impact on the position of the military vis-à-vis civilian politicians. It will show that the issue of violent Islamist radicalism allowed officers to pursue limited political and economic interests, but that unlike in the 1950s and 1970s, it did not form a key element in the military's efforts to maintain and expand its participation in domestic affairs.

In the post-Soeharto era, violent Islamic extremism found its representation in three different types of groups: terrorist cells, ‘anti-vice’ militias and paramilitary groups that intervened in communal conflicts. The leaders of terrorist cells were largely Islamic militants who had fled Indonesia in the 1980s and returned to their homeland after the regime change of 1998. The most prominent among them was Abu Bakar Ba’asyir. He headed Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which functioned as an umbrella organisation for militant cells across the archipelago and, in fact, Southeast Asia. Beginning in 2000, Jemaah Islamiyah carried out a series of bombings in several Indonesian provinces. Initially, the attacks focused largely on Christian churches and institutions, but after September 11, the terrorists increasingly chose targets associated with the US or its Western allies. In January 2002, the Singaporean government announced that it had

103 Greg Fealy, ‘Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia: The Faltering Revival?’, in: Southeast Asian Affairs 2004, Institute of Southeast Asian Affairs, Singapore 2004: 104-121; Martin van Bruinessen, ‘Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Soeharto Indonesia’, South East Asia Research 10:2, July 2002: 117-54. In exile, these leaders had participated in guerilla wars in Afghanistan and the Philippines or received extensive training in jihadist doctrine and practices in Malaysia, Pakistan and the Middle East. Upon their return, they organised themselves in small groups and cells in various Indonesian regions, but maintained a well-organised communication network established under decades of authoritarian rule and exile. Most of the older leaders had links to the NII rebellion of the 1950s, and many of their recruits originated from families associated with Islamist insurgencies in the past.

104 In May 2000, a bomb exploded at a Protestant church in Medan, injuring at least 47 people. The incident set the tone for a string of similar attacks, culminating in the Christmas eve bombings of 2000 that hit churches in ten Indonesian cities in six provinces. Eighteen people were killed and 36 were badly injured.
arrested members of a JI cell that had planned to blow up the US embassy in the city state, and
that the intelligence gathered from the suspects pointed to Ba'asyir’s involvement. The
Indonesian government appeared unwilling to confront Ba'asyir, however, fearing a backlash
from the Muslim community that viewed foreign demands for action as part of a Western anti-
Islamic campaign. Only after the Bali bombings of October 2002 did Megawati order her
ministers to take action, resulting in the arrest of Ba'asyir and new anti-terrorism legislation.

Despite their significant domestic and international repercussions, the terrorist attacks launched
by JI were at no point a significant threat to the authority and stability of the government. Unlike
the Darul Islam rebellion in the 1950s, JI’s activities did not require the political elite to support
extensive military operations and expand the resources of the armed forces. The hunt for JI
terrorists was, for the most part, a challenge for police investigators rather than military
strategists. Nevertheless, military officers still managed to use the issue of Islamist terrorism to
their benefit. Most significantly, they furthered their international rehabilitation after years of
isolation, offering cooperation in the ‘war against terror’ to the United States. While existing
sanctions were not lifted, Western governments eased their pressure on TNI to reform itself,
prioritising the development of its counter-terrorism capacities instead.\(^{105}\) Moreover, officers
argued that the threat posed by jihadist terrorists justified a larger role for TNI in domestic
security. Ryamizard, for example, declared it ‘impossible’ for the police to handle terrorism on its
own, and suggested that the military’s territorial units be at the ‘forefront’ of the anti-terror
campaign.\(^ {106}\) His pleas were partially heeded by the government, granting TNI a larger role in a
task force set up after the bombing of the Australian embassy in September 2004. The terrorist
threat was, however, not much more than an addendum to the list of other reasons successfully
advanced by military officers to justify their continued involvement in domestic security. Political
developments after 2001 had reduced public demands for military reform to such an extent that
further justifications for slowing down the pace of change in the armed forces were redundant.

In contrast to the underground operations of JI, the ‘anti-vice’ militias posed a threat of a
largely non-terrorist nature by publicly attacking what they viewed as ‘un-Islamic activities’. The
most prominent such group was FPI (Front Pembela Islam, Front to Defend Islam), which was
formed in August 1998 and carried out raids on nightclubs, prostitution venues and gambling
facilities.\(^ {107}\) Police and military officers were widely suspected of backing FPI as they profited

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\(^{105}\) Marcus Mietzner, ‘Politics of Engagement: The Indonesian Armed Forces, Islamic Extremism, and the

\(^{106}\) ‘KSAD: Intelijen Militer Harus di Depan’, *Suara Merdeka* 20 August 2003

from increased security payments from the attacked venues. Police began to take action against FPI leaders in 2002, however. FPI chairman Habib Muhammad Rizieq Syihab was arrested in October of that year, and he suspended his organisation shortly afterwards. FPI resumed operations in February 2003, but seems to have lost much of the influence it possessed in the pre-2002 period. Finally, the third type of militant Islamist groups trained paramilitary fighters to assist the Muslim side in communal conflicts. Established in January 2000, Laskar Jihad (LJ) sent thousands of its members to Maluku and Poso to support Muslims in the religious violence raging there. The ease with which the militia made it to Maluku in April 2000 led an ICG report to conclude 'that the LJ received the backing of elements in the military and the police.' These elements benefited from LJ's operations in several ways. Most importantly, it was alleged that a group of officers dismissed by President Abdurrahman intended to destabilise his rule by nurturing violent conflict among societal groups. Their support for LJ was apparently discontinued after Abdurrahman's fall, however, pointing to the contingent character of the cooperation. Second, it was also obvious that ongoing communal clashes created additional income opportunities for officers on the ground, offering profits in sectors ranging from transportation to arms trade. The conflict economy provided incentives for officers to prolong the violence, but LJ was by no means the only instrument to achieve that goal. For example, one militia that had close ties to the military in Maluku and was known to have stirred up fresh violence by unprovoked attacks and bomb explosions was made up of Christian criminals that attacked largely Christian targets.

In general terms, developments at the extremist fringes of Indonesian Islam after 1998 provided limited opportunities for military officers to expand their political and economic space. In contrast to the role of militant Islam under pre-1998 regimes, extremist Muslim groups during the post-Soeharto era were only of secondary importance for the position of the armed forces vis-à-vis civilian governments. The threat posed by Islamist terrorists to governments after 1998 was on a much smaller scale than that launched by the Darul Islam rebellion against the political leadership of the 1950s. Equally, the manipulation of post-1998 Islamist groups by individual

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110 International Crisis Group, 'Indonesia: Violence and Radical Muslims,' Indonesia Briefing, 10 October 2001: 13. LJ leader Jafar Umar Thalib had several meetings with TNI officers to discuss the presence of his troops in Maluku, and he claimed that none of them suggested that TNI wanted LJ to withdraw. Mohammad Shoelhi, Laskar Jihad: Kambing Hitam Konflik Maluku, Puzam, Jakarta 2002: 27.
officers for short-term political and economic gains had a significantly lesser impact on the role of the military in politics than New Order intelligence operations in the 1970s on the legitimacy of the military-backed regime. Clearly, developments in the Islamic mainstream played a much larger role in influencing the outcome of the civil-military transition than the security threats from the Islamist fringes. As argued in this chapter, serious divisions between key Muslim groups contributed to the fractured state of civilian politics during the post-authoritarian transition. These conflicts encouraged major political forces to turn to the military and its leaders for assistance in confronting their opponents. The political infighting during much of the post-Soeharto period, demonstrated most vividly in the constitutional crisis of 2001, delivered crucial posts in local government to retired generals and assisted the armed forces in repairing their public image damaged during decades of repressive rule. This surge in the military’s societal reputation and political significance prepared the way, finally, for Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s rise to the presidency in 2004. The prediction of Muslim leaders in the early phase of the democratic transition that there would be ‘a new era of Indonesian politics dominated by a united, purposeful alliance of Muslim parties’ remained unfulfilled.\footnote{Fealy 2003: 151.}
CONCLUSION

"My military friends say that they would bow under civilian supremacy only when civilians are of supreme quality."1

Since the end of the authoritarian regime in 1998, Indonesia's armed forces have gone through tremendous political change. After forty years of institutionalised participation in or dominance of political affairs, the military faced the uncertainty of democratic liberalisation and open exposure of its past. The last time the military had operated under a democratic system had been in the 1950s, and it had played a major role in its downfall. The chances for a similar scenario after Soeharto's departure were small, with the military discredited by its involvement in decades of political repression and social control. Consequently, the post-authoritarian transition offered civilian actors the chance to reduce the formal privileges of the armed forces and take control of the political institutions. As tensions within the civilian political sphere heightened, however, the military found effective ways to adapt to the climate of open democratic competition. In fact, many of the reforms that were initially designed to remove the residual powers of the military created new opportunities for active and retired officers to engage in the political process. By 2004, the armed forces were no longer the backbone of authoritarian rule but an influential mediator and participant in domestic politics, despite their formal exclusion from the political institutions of the state.

This conclusion will assess the role of the armed forces in post-Soeharto politics on the basis of the analytical tools and empirical material presented in the main parts of the thesis. It will begin with an evaluation of the extent to which the Indonesian armed forces after 1998 continued to participate in the four main areas of military intervention. The discussion of the military's engagement in political institutions, the economy, the management of its internal affairs and the socio-cultural sector will confirm that the position of the armed forces in the democratic transition was, in Larry Diamond's terms, of a 'hybrid' character;2 while marginalised from formal politics, the military maintained a privileged position in political life. The reasons for this, as will be illuminated in the subsequent sections, are related to deeply entrenched historical legacies, the nature of the 1998 regime change and specific problems in the process of democratic consolidation. Integrating these explanations into the two-generation model of civil-military

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Adapting to the Post-Soeharto Polity: TNI after 1998

Militaries tend to intervene in four areas that are of pivotal interest to them: political affairs, the economy, institutional military mechanisms and the socio-cultural sector. The assessment of their involvement in these fields allows for a comparative analysis of their role in politics and society as a whole. To begin with, the Indonesian armed forces after 1998 had to accept a drastic reduction of their participation in formal political institutions. Their representation in the national and local legislatures was reduced in 1999 and ultimately terminated in 2004. In addition, active officers were no longer allowed to hold cabinet posts and other key positions in the bureaucracy. There were, however, residual pockets of formal military engagement in political institutions. The Commander-in-Chief, for example, remained an ex-officio member of cabinet, giving him access to and influence on key policy decisions made by the government. Senior officers were also entitled to hold important positions in the Coordinating Ministry for Political and Security Affairs and the Department of Defence, entrenching them in political institutions concerned with military matters and obstructing the civilianisation of positions in the defence establishment. Moreover, military figures often started successful political careers after retirement. Although former officers were no longer subject to the orders of the Commander-in-Chief and pursued a wide variety of political interests and personal ambitions, they were widely viewed as representative of the armed forces and its core norms and values. Retired generals defended key governorships against civilian opponents and rival ex-officers, became leading executives in political parties and in 2004 gained a significant number of seats in the national and regional legislatures. The victory of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in the presidential elections of 2004 opened the door for many of his retired associates to take up posts in the new government. He appointed 5 ministers with military and police backgrounds, equaling the number of retired generals in the last Soeharto cabinet.

The character of military intervention in the economy also underwent substantial change after 1998. The large military conglomerates built up during thirty years of stable growth under the New Order suffered greatly in the economic crisis of 1997 and 1998, leading to a decline in revenues. In addition, many of the key Chinese entrepreneurs who had paid significant sums to the military as an institution and to its individual leaders experienced serious financial difficulties...
and had to suspend or reduce their contributions. Furthermore, the military now faced an increased number of competitors in one of its main commercial areas, the protection business. The police, security forces of political parties, ethnic and religious militias and criminal gangs became major players in providing ‘security services’ to businesses and entertainment venues, absorbing payments previously reserved for military officers. The reduced cash flow threatened the ability of the armed forces to maintain their practice of self-financing, forcing military leaders to intensify their more ‘informal’, and often questionable, business activities. Local officers engaged with bureaucrats in illegal logging and smuggling of goods ranging from sugar to luxury cars, and soldiers stationed in conflict areas profited from selling weapons, services in the transportation sector, commercial hostage taking and trading with drugs. In more institutional terms, senior officers rented out many of the vast military-owned properties to investors who subsequently used the land to build shopping malls and supermarkets. These schemes provided considerable income opportunities for the military and the individual officers who signed the deals. Finally, the military continued to profit from security payments from large companies that did not entrust their protection to less effective forces like the police or political militias. The US-based gold mining company Freeport McMoRan, for example, paid 5.6 million dollars to TNI in Papua in 2002 alone. Several other large gas and mining projects across the archipelago offered similar forms of compensation.

In managing its internal affairs, the military enjoyed a level of autonomy last seen in the 1970s. In the later periods of the New Order, many officers had objected to Soeharto’s deep intervention in military appointments despite the ongoing civilianisation of his regime. At the end of Megawati’s term, by contrast, the armed forces had almost complete control over their personnel affairs. In addition, the military had successfully defended its territorial command structure against occasional attempts to reform it, allowing the officer corps to sustain its financial self-sufficiency. Largely independent from central budget allocations, the military was also able to escape more intensive scrutiny by the legislature. Staffed with politicians who lacked technical knowledge of military affairs but showed great interest in lobbying the armed forces for their support in political conflicts, the parliamentary commission on defence and security only rarely exercised its control function properly. As a result, the military was able to run operations like the campaign in Aceh largely without effective supervision by civilian authorities. The Department of Defence, for its part, did not establish meaningful mechanisms of civilian democratic control either. In the first 18 months of the post-authoritarian transition, the ministry was headed by Wiranto, who commanded the armed forces at the same time. Under Abdurrahman, the

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department was drawn into protracted political conflicts between the palace and the legislature, making it largely dysfunctional. During the Megawati presidency, finally, Minister of Defence Matori suffered a stroke after two lackluster years in office. The post was left vacant for 14 months, during which time the chiefs of the various services went on to procure expensive military hardware without the necessary approval of the ministry. During a hearing at Parliament, Commander-in-Chief Endriartono Sutarto joked that he was ‘happy’ not to have a Minister of Defence, and when a new chief of the department took office in October 2004, he warned him not to ‘talk about issues related to the armed forces.’

The relationship of the armed forces with society, the cultural sector and the media also experienced an essential transformation after the 1998 regime change. The military faced unprecedented scrutiny by the press, with articles uncovering many of its human rights abuses since 1965. Civil society leaders launched sharp attacks on the armed forces and their unwillingness to support faster and more wide-ranging reforms. With the traditional instruments of intimidation and state-imposed censorship increasingly ineffective, officers had to adapt their public relations strategies to the requirements of an open democratic climate. In this respect, they used several approaches. First of all, they increasingly influenced journalists with financial inducements rather than threats of sanctions. Reporters who previously feared serious consequences if called in by central or local military units were now greeted with ‘envelopes’ containing money, encouraging them to ‘improve’ the quality of their coverage on TNI. In addition, officers also employed paid writers who published articles in influential papers that promoted the viewpoint of the armed forces or individual military leaders. They also began to ‘groom’ academics who were seen as important allies in propagating a positive image of the armed forces. Identifying young researchers with the potential of influencing societal opinions, generals would offer scholarships for further education or other forms of assistance. Moreover, the officer corps increased its cooperation with society groups that could be called upon to oppose public calls for legal investigations into past abuses or policy initiatives aimed at reducing the privileges of the armed forces. Human rights activists faced a relentless stream of protesters, often organised in groups featuring Islamic symbols and names, which called the military critics ‘unpatriotic’ and ‘un-Islamic’ for demanding accountability from particular officers. In short, the post-Soeharto military was forced to replace its traditional concept of social control with more modern practices of strategic communications.

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4 'Indonesia Segera Beli Korvet dari Belanda', Kompas 1 July 2004.
The extent of military involvement in key socio-political sectors after 1998 points to the hybrid character of the changes that have occurred. In most cases, the armed forces were able to offset the reduction of privileges enjoyed under the Soeharto regime by adapting successfully to the norms and procedures of the post-authoritarian polity. The loss of their legislative representation, for example, was compensated by the participation of numerous retired generals in electoral processes, capturing important executive posts as a result. In the economic sector, the decline of institutional military businesses led to an expansion of non-formal activities and enterprises. Furthermore, the increased scrutiny of civilian control institutions did not produce effective mechanisms of democratic oversight, but in fact allowed the armed forces to exercise greater autonomy than under the previous regime. Finally, the erosion of its social control network encouraged the officer corps to adopt new strategies to influence public opinion and defend its institutional interests. The reasons for this mixed record of civil-military reforms after 1998 are rooted in a combination of factors, relating to developments in both military politics and the civilian political sphere. The following sections will highlight some of the key explanations for the problems in reforming Indonesia’s post-Soeharto military.

**Historical Legacies**

The historical legacy of Indonesian military politics has created significant obstacles to the establishment of democratic control over the armed forces after 1998. Military officers have traditionally viewed the origin of the army in the country’s war for independence as an eternal mandate for engagement in political affairs. They harbored a deep sense of entitlement and believed that it was their destiny to save the nation from alleged civilian ineptitude and threats to its territorial integrity. When the democratic system of the 1950s denied the armed forces a privileged position in the regime, military leaders actively worked toward its replacement. Subsequently, the military claim to participation in government was institutionalised and remained a key element of political life until Soeharto’s fall. The formal abolition of the Dual Function in 2000 did little to change the mindset of the officer corps, with many of its members still convinced that only the armed forces were capable of defining and defending national interests beyond the self-absorbed interests of civilian groups. In addition to the ideological heritage evolved over decades of political dominance, the institutional structures developed in the early period of TNI’s formation also left important legacies for the post-authoritarian system. First of all, the practice of military self-financing, begun in the guerilla war and maintained throughout the New Order, allowed the armed forces to operate independently from civilian control authorities. Civilian leaders of the post-Soeharto polity, emerging from a devastating
economic crisis and overwhelmed by a myriad of other financial needs, were little inclined to embark on the huge task of bringing the military fully on budget and establishing control over its operations. Moreover, the army’s territorial command system, which had entrenched the military in local politics as a virtual shadow government, provided the armed forces with a significant advantage over other political entities adapting to the new democratic framework. While political parties, regional legislatures and non-governmental organisations struggled to establish a presence in post-New Order local politics, the army could rely on its decades-old institutional base that reached down to the village level.

The fragmentation of key civilian forces formed an equally decisive legacy for the outcome of the civil-military transition after the end of Soeharto’s rule. Far from exposing the ‘unity of democratic purpose among civilian political elites’ that Diamond and Plattner viewed as an essential precondition for achieving democratic control over the military, Indonesia’s major societal groups have been engaged in long-standing rivalries. This study has pointed to disputes within the Muslim community as one of the most important sources of conflict in civilian politics. The controversy between secularly oriented Muslims and proponents of a formal role for Islam in state affairs on the one hand, and the deep antagonism between traditionalist and modernist groups on the other, have caused serious divisions in the civilian political sphere. These cleavages destabilised the democratic polity of the 1950s, and opened opportunities for the armed forces to justify and enforce their claim to a permanent political role. During two successive authoritarian systems, the splits within the Muslim community provided critical opportunities for incumbent regimes to legitimise their rule. Most significantly, traditionalist and modernist Muslims rarely had the same attitude towards authoritarian governments. NU supported Sukarno’s Guided Democracy while modernist leaders were thrown into jail; in the early New Order period, by contrast, traditionalists were marginalised while modernist politicians took over the single Islamic party authorised by the regime. By 1997, the power relations had been reversed once again: NU leaders backed Soeharto’s rule against mounting opposition from society and non-regime elites; the chairman of Muhammadiyah, on the other hand, had embarked on a widely publicised campaign to challenge Soeharto’s monopolistic grip on the presidency. The inability of these key civilian actors to define a common platform for democratic change assisted the New Order in prolonging its rule and had a profound impact on the character of regime change when an external economic shock caused the increasingly sultanistic system to collapse.
Intra-Systemic Regime Change

Beside the importance of historical legacies, the thesis has highlighted the character of the 1998 regime change as a key factor in determining the quality and pace of post-Soeharto civil-military reforms. Power was transferred from Soeharto to his deputy within the institutional framework of the existing regime, resulting in a post-authoritarian government that consisted largely of politicians groomed by the fallen New Order. Unlike in other autocratic and sultanistic regimes, where oppositional forces often take power amidst the tumultuous breakdown of the old system, Indonesia’s non-regime groups were largely excluded from the executive and legislative institutions of the immediate post-1998 polity. This intra-systemic regime change was the result of developments in the military as well as in civilian elite politics. On the military side, the outcome of factional struggles that had divided the armed forces in 1997 and 1998 played a significant role in shaping the nature of the power transfer. The victory of moderate officers over their hardline adversaries allowed the former to negotiate an orderly hand-over of authority from Soeharto to Habibie. Had the hardliners won the intra-military competition, and had martial law been declared as a result, the consequence would have almost certainly been further violence and, ultimately, the complete collapse of the regime and its institutional infrastructure. Executive powers would not have been transferred to key figures attached with the Soeharto government, but to a transitional leadership consisting of oppositional leaders, however divided they may have been. In this sense, the triumph of the moderate faction in the armed forces avoided a Tienamen-style bloodbath, but also prevented the very implosion of the old regime that typically produces a clear break with the authoritarian past and, in Trinkunas’ words, ‘broad opportunity structures’ for democratic consolidation.

The other critical factor that caused the intra-systemic regime change was the continued fragmentation within the civilian elite. Even as rapid economic decline and mounting societal unrest eroded the power of the regime, many key civilian forces refused to work together toward a democratic alternative to the faltering government. The mutual distrust among the civilian elite was so deep that some leaders preferred the continuation of Soeharto’s rule to the uncertainty associated with its replacement. Unwilling to present a coherent concept for a future without Soeharto, civilian figures surrendered the momentum for regime change to the student movement and violent popular protest. When the May riots and the stubbornness of the students had finally brought the regime to the brink of collapse, there was no coalition of key societal leaders standing ready to take its place. Instead, the power vacuum was filled by the negotiation efforts of moderate military officers, who succeeded in organising a transfer of power within the structures and procedures of the New Order. This regime change arranged by main beneficiaries of
Soeharto's patronage network not only allowed important elements of the old system to take charge of the post-authoritarian government and define its reform agenda. It also excluded the possibility of a cross-constituency transitional government that could have served as a platform for political cooperation between previously antagonistic societal groups. Without such an opportunity to overcome traditional differences, the cleavages that cut across the civilian political spectrum extended into the post-Soeharto polity and caused significant problems for the stability of its governments and the establishment of effective control over the military.

**Democratic Politics and Civilian Conflict**

Complex historical legacies and the intra-systemic regime change predisposed Indonesia to a difficult process of transition as far as the creation of democratic civil-military relations is concerned. Deeply entrenched military mindsets and institutional features, combined with the extension of important New Order power structures into the post-authoritarian polity, were certain to cause problems in the attempts to subordinate the armed forces to democratic civilian control. Balancing the dramatic effect of the sudden termination of autocratic rule, the residual powers exercised by elements attached to the old regime had the potential to obstruct, and eventually neutralise, processes of reform. Aguero's emphasis on the importance of the 'initial conditions' of the transition has played a crucial role in guiding the analysis of this study, but developments that occurred under post-Soeharto governments were equally essential for the transition outcome. Cottee, Edmunds and Forster have proposed five explanatory criteria that determine the pace and quality of civil-military transitions. Besides highlighting the influence of historical legacies, they argued that the delegitimisation of alternatives to the democratic system is an important condition for reducing the level of military intervention in politics. States in which the democratic polity is constantly challenged by proposals for other forms of governance have a smaller chance of successful transition than those where the principle of democratic government is endorsed by a vast majority of citizens. Despite widespread frustration with its deficiencies, Indonesia's post-1998 polity has only been opposed by numerically small elements at the extremist fringes. The amendments to the constitution were the result of elite negotiations involving all key parties and groups, and did not cause significant ruptures in the political process. It is this broad consensus on the principle of democratic governance that has given Indonesia's post-authoritarian transition a better chance of succeeding than the experiment with liberal democracy in the 1950s, when a wide variety of alternative concepts of governance were in circulation and undermined the stability of the parliamentary system.
Cottey, Edmunds and Forster have paid less attention, however, to the possibility of destructive conflicts between key civilian forces over political power and resources within the framework of the democratic polity. While there was a stable consensus on the political character of the state, parties and societal groups differed immensely over the norms and procedures of open democratic competition. The constitutional crisis of 2001 revealed that even civilian figures and religio-political organisations with reputable democratic credentials were prepared to condone mass violence as a legitimate instrument of intra-civilian competition, providing opportunities for the armed forces to mediate and repair their image damaged by decades of authoritarian repression. The highly selective endorsement of democratic values and the extreme intra-civilian tensions that it caused pointed to the protracted cleavages in Indonesia's political landscape. Controversies over the rules and regulations of democratic interaction not only affected the rivalry between important civilian constituencies, but also aggravated the internal fragmentation in important political parties and groups. The habit of antagonistic factions to establish rival leadership boards if they lost in internal elections or policy debates, which before 1998 had been blamed on manipulative regime practices, continued under the democratic system. As a result, civilian politics were susceptible to efforts by residual elements of the previous regime to defend their institutional interests. Significantly, retired military officers were recruited as senior party officials and candidates for executive positions at the local and national level in order to bridge internal differences within parties and increase their appeal to the electorate. The persistent divisions within the civilian political sphere, often reflecting long-standing rivalries and disputes, offset the positive impact of the high levels of support for the democratic polity and created serious hurdles on the path to reforming the armed forces.

The International Context

In their studies on civil-military reforms in the post-authoritarian societies of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Cottey, Edmunds and Forster concluded that the incentive to join important international organisations was ‘by far the single greatest external factor’ in removing opposition to structural change in the armed forces. The prospect of becoming a member of NATO or the European Union, with privileged access to development funds and soft loans, has succeeded in

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6 During the 2004 NU Congress in Boyolali, Sahal Mahfudz commented on the fragmentation within his organisation as follows: ‘I admit that the conflict that is happening now is even worse than the one in 1994 in Cipasung. Back then, the conflict occurred because of the intervention by the Soeharto regime which involved the bureaucracy and the military. But, although there is no external intervention anymore, the infighting now is even more appalling.’ See ‘KH Sahal: Pilih Mustofa Bisri Sebagai Alternatif, Kompas 30 November 2004.'
overcoming even the strongest objections from conservative generals to reforms of the military. NATO and the EU made it very clear that if candidates for membership did not adjust their mechanisms of military control to standards established by their organisations, no admission was possible. Faced with the potential loss of billions of dollars in aid and other forms of assistance, civilian governments forced their militaries to comply. Turkey, for example, which in the past had experienced levels of military participation in politics very similar to those of Indonesia, pressured its generals to accept substantial cuts to the privileges. In Indonesia, no such tools of international pressure were available. APEC and ASEAN, the two main multi-lateral associations in which Indonesia engages, are organisations that do not require their members to meet particular democratic standards. The IMF and the World Bank, on the other hand, missed the chance to use their extensive economic powers during the monetary crisis to demand more wide-ranging reforms of Indonesia’s security sector. Prioritising changes in economic policy and the restructuring of the banking system, IMF and World Bank officials did not view military reform as a matter of immediate urgency. Although they later began to raise the issue as an important instrument to reduce corruption and remove obstacles to further investment, by 2003 the IMF’s emergency loan program had been largely phased out and the window of opportunity had closed.

Other developments in international relations had an equally mixed impact on Indonesia’s civil-military relations. In general terms, the post-Cold War constellation had made it more difficult for militaries to grab power from civilian governments without risking international isolation. There was an instinctive feeling within the Indonesian officer corps that simply overthrowing the civilian post-1998 government was not an option, and the fear of international sanctions was partly responsible for that. Changes in the political priorities of the United States after 2001, however, eroded the deterrent of international consequences in the case of military coups. When Pervez Musharraf seized power in Pakistan in 1999, the US initially implemented sanctions and demanded the immediate return to the democratic system. After the terrorist attacks of September 11th, however, the US courted Musharraf as an important ally in their fight against Islamic radicalism in Asia. In late 2004, Musharraf was still concurrently Pakistan’s President and commander of the army, despite earlier promises to give up his position in the military. Indonesian officers followed such developments with great interest, and learnt that defaulting on reform benchmarks did not necessarily cause negative reactions from the United States. In 1999, the US administration had declared that bringing officers responsible for human rights abuses in East Timor to justice was a precondition for re-establishing full military-to-military ties with Indonesia. By 2004, all officers indicted for the events in East Timor had been acquitted by Indonesian courts, but officials of the Bush government asked Congress to lift existing sanctions in the light of TNI’s importance for the ‘war on terror’. While Congress did not fulfill the request,
the pressure on TNI to reform itself had been eased significantly. In addition, the Indonesian armed forces moved to reduce its dependence on military hardware from the US. Similar to the shift in the early 1960s, when the military leadership increasingly purchased equipment from the Soviet Union instead of the US, the post-Soeharto top brass began to buy ships, helicopters and jets from Russia, Europe and South Korea. At the end of the Megawati government, the armed forces felt sufficiently self-confident enough to reject international pressure for further military reform as inappropriate and not worthy of serious consideration.

**Institutional Factors and Military Culture**

The final two factors proposed by Cottey, Edmunds and Forster relate to the extent of institutional reform and the persistence of specific military cultures. In the area of institutional change, Indonesia has taken some important steps forward, but has failed to revamp the structural base of TNI's power. Most of the institutions necessary to establish democratic control over the armed forces were created and equipped with formal powers to carry out their duties. The legislature was strengthened and tasked with exercising oversight over the military, the Department of Defence was restructured and received additional authority over TNI Headquarters, the Police were separated from the armed forces and a variety of societal 'watch dogs' scrutinised the operations and personal track records of officers. These structural reforms did not result in effective control, however. In addition to a multitude of internal problems ranging from lack of expertise to insufficient resources, efforts to subordinate the military to the newly created or reformed bodies were hampered by the omission of the two most important institutional reform targets: the military's finances and the army’s territorial command structure. The military was largely allowed to maintain its financial independence from the central government and to use its territorial network to tap into economic resources in the regions. With this, the other institutional reform measures, as courageous and wide-ranging they may have been, could not fulfil the hopes initially put in them. Finally, the reform initiative was also not backed by a supportive military culture. Indonesia's armed forces had since their inception defined themselves as a domestic security force and a political supra-institution, making the idea of 'military professionalism' a foreign concept for their officers. This problem was further complicated by the spread of militaristic values to the civilian sector. After 1998, political parties expanded their security forces and developed them into paramilitary groups with ranks and codes similar to that practiced by TNI. Ethnic and religious groups also established militias. With organisational militarism emerging as a significant feature of post-Soeharto civilian politics, expectations that parties and
other groups would give high priority to the professionalisation of the armed forces became increasingly remote.

The application of the five explanatory criteria developed by Cottey, Edmunds and Forster to the case of Indonesia produces a mixed picture of the country’s progress in its efforts to establish democratic control over the armed forces. In their comparative scheme, Indonesia has stagnated in the first generation of civil-military reforms, and has failed to initiate second-generation changes. The development of a new institutional framework appeared to be heading in a promising direction after the civilian government and rapid reformers in the armed forces moved in 2000 to revamp the army’s territorial command system and, closely related to this, the military’s financing system. The plans collapsed, however, amidst protracted conflicts between civilian forces over political hegemony and economic resources, bringing the military reform process to a halt and consolidating the position of officers opposed to further change. With the most important areas of institutional change excluded from the first-generation agenda, the second generation of reforms had no realistic chance of succeeding. Consequently, the oversight exercised by civilian control institutions over the military remained scant. In addition to the explanations offered by Cottey, Edmunds and Forster, this thesis has proposed two additional elements that need extensive consideration when discussing the conditions for successful civil-military transitions. The character of regime change and the extent of conflict between key civilian forces in the democratic polity are crucial determinants of the transition outcome. The engagement of the military in negotiating the transfer of power and deep divisions within the civilian political sphere have the potential to obstruct, delay and even derail processes of civil-military reform. In Indonesia, it remains to be seen if the government of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono will be able to give new impulses to the project of reforming the armed forces and subordinate them firmly to civilian control. His support for the maintenance of the territorial command structure and his rejection of ideas to place TNI under the direct control of the Department of Defence suggest, however, that any further progress in military reform will be slow and tortuous.
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