Veto Player No More?

*The Declining Political Influence of the Military
in Postauthoritarian Indonesia*

Marcus Mietzner

Few other political actors in Indonesia's democratic transition and consolidation have received as much critical attention—both domestically and internationally—as the armed forces. Such intense scrutiny of the military only seemed natural given its history. As the backbone of Suharto's authoritarian Orde Baru (New Order) government between 1966 and 1998, the military had much to lose if Indonesia's experiment with democratic rule proved successful. Under Suharto's patronage, the military had held key positions in the regime, penetrated all layers of society with its repressive apparatus, accumulated huge economic assets, and monopolized the security sector. These political and socioeconomic privileges were obviously threatened by Indonesia's quest for a more democratic and transparent system of governance. With the generals facing both marginalization from the country's power center and legal investigations into their past human rights violations, many observers believed that the armed forces might seriously undermine Indonesia's process of institutional reform. In fact, despite the existence of various other potential spoilers, in 1998 most Indonesians were convinced that the military would be the biggest obstacle to successful democratization.

Many Indonesian citizens' fear that the armed forces might sabotage the transition to democracy was also echoed by political scientists analyzing democratization processes around the world. In a seminal article on transitions to democracy and democratic consolidation in 1989, Scott Mainwaring maintains that there are usually two decisive actors in transitions that have the power to veto crucial political reforms: the military and the capitalist class. In dealing with the military, newly installed leaders of transitional governments often face a dilemma: they not only have to confront the armed forces but have to cooperate with them at the same time. Despite open interventions by conservative military leaders, political reformers "cannot abolish the militaries or drastically attack the military institution, even if that is what the majority . . . wants."¹ Instead, the strength of the military as a "veto player" often forces civilian leaders to grant concessions to the generals, mostly in the form of residual privileges or pledges to protect them from legal action. In the case of Indonesia, leading theorists warned soon after Suharto's fall that leaving the armed forces with too many privileges could have a disastrous impact on the transition. Richard Gunther, for example, reminded Indonesian policymakers that granting the military continued unelected representation in Parliament could endow "the military with 'reserve powers' that might be invoked to frustrate a democratic mandate."²

In the course of Indonesia's transition, comparative analysts continued to express their concern about the military's "veto powers." Most important, Larry Diamond still classified Indonesia as a "hybrid" or "ambiguous" regime several years after Suharto's resignation, pointing to the military's presence in the legislature and its role as a "major veto player."³ But even after the 2004 elections abolished the armed forces' appointed representation in Parliament, the notion of the military as Indonesia's most formidable veto actor remained popular, both in the country and abroad. In the 2008 Indonesia Country Report for the Bertelsmann Transformation Index, a major quantitative and qualitative tool for political scientists to assess the state of democratic transitions in comparative terms, Indonesia's armed forces were still described as a major threat to democracy. In the report authors' view, "The military remains the main veto actor, and the threat of a coup d'état still exists." Further, the writers claimed that the generals still "reserve the right to interfere with the elected government if they believe the unity and stability of the Indonesian nation to be threatened." Among others, the military was identified as one of the veto actors that obstructed Indonesia's decentraliza-

tion, leading the authors to doubt "whether the political reformers are able to control the vetoing actors."⁴

Describing the military as Indonesia's most influential veto player has obviously become somewhat of a fixture in the writings of political scientists on the country. But how justified is that assessment? The most prominent theorist of veto players, George Tsebelis, has defined veto players as "individual or collective actors whose agreement is necessary for a change of the status quo."⁵ Based on this definition, can the Indonesian military still be categorized as a veto player more than fifteen years after Suharto's fall? Indeed, was the military's classification as a veto player even justified in the early phases of Indonesia's democratic transition or, for that matter, during previous political regimes? This chapter assesses the role of Indonesia's military as a political veto player in several periods. First, it looks at the involvement of the armed forces in Indonesian politics between 1945 at independence and 1998, the year the democratic transition began. Second, it analyzes the extent to which the military influenced the 1998 regime change and the evolution of the post-Suharto polity. Third, the discussion focuses on what I believe were watersheds for Indonesian civil-military relations and the significance of the military as a veto actor: the 2002 constitutional amendments and the Helsinki Peace Agreement for Aceh in 2005. Finally, the chapter evaluates the armed forces' political engagement in the current polity, concluding that although the military remains influential, its importance as a veto player has been widely overstated.

Indonesia's Military Before 1998: Participant-Ruler and Hegemon

Any discussion of the political significance of Indonesia's military must begin with an analysis of its inception during the country's independence war. The main mission of the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI, Indonesian National Military), founded in October 1945, was to fight the Dutch colonial army, which was in the process of reoccupying the territory of the former Netherlands East Indies after three years of Japanese occupation. Sukarno and Hatta had declared Indonesia's independence in August 1945, setting the new Republic on a path of military confrontation with the returning Dutch. In a matter of months, the TNI had to organize a coherent mili-

tary apparatus out of hundreds of local militias, volunteer groups, auxiliaries trained under the Japanese, and former colonial soldiers.⁶ Although this task proved difficult and at times impossible, the formation of the TNI was nevertheless crucially important for the newly emerging nation's self-confidence. The military, like the government led by Sukarno and Hatta, was a symbol of Indonesia's existence, giving it a role that went well beyond being an effective striking force. For millions of Indonesians, the attacks launched by TNI fighters on the superior colonial military emphasized the nation's determination to gain its independence against all odds. Not surprisingly, the military shared and nurtured this belief in its indispensability for the nationalist struggle; indeed, this view is the core of military doctrine and historiography to this day.⁷

It is far from certain, however, whether the army was a "veto player" at that time, despite its importance as a symbol of unity and fighting spirit during the war years. There is no doubt that the military opposed many of the policies defined by the civilian government and that it often acted independently when running its military operations. For example, the armed forces continued their attacks on Dutch forces even after Sukarno had surrendered in December 1948, and the military successfully insisted on electing its own commander despite attempts by the civilian minister of defense to exercise stronger control.⁸ But in most key decisions that determined the outcome of the war and the shape of postconflict Indonesia, the military's advice was pointedly ignored. The armed forces were heavily opposed to the negotiations that the government held with the Dutch in Den Haag in 1949, despite the fact that the military situation was unsustainable for the Republic; the generals also rejected many of the agreements reached in Den Haag, ranging from the adoption of a federal system to the exclusion of Papua from the negotiations.⁹ The military was likewise not consulted when a parliamentary system was adopted for the new Indonesian state, to which the Dutch transferred sovereignty in December 1949. Overall, it would be difficult to point to a single fundamental policy decision that was the result of military pressure in the nation's early period; there were minor concessions that allowed the military to run its own affairs, but in the greater scheme of things the military was politically marginalized.¹⁰

The military only gained political strength in the mid-1950s, primarily as a result of the weakening democratic polity. Prior to that—in the early 1950s—the armed forces had still not played a significant role in political affairs: the shift from a federal to a unitary system in August 1950 and the liberal consti-

tution passed in the same year had been negotiated by and among civilian politicians, with little attention paid to the military's interests. In 1952, the frustration in the officer corps over its political irrelevance culminated in a visit of the top brass to President Sukarno, demanding that the Parliament be disbanded.¹¹ The president, however, found it easy to dismiss both this request and the generals who had voiced it. Had the military been a powerful veto player at the time, its political demands would have certainly carried more weight when forcefully presented to the government, and the shape of early postindependence Indonesia would have been decisively different. Nevertheless, the erosion of parliamentary democracy in 1956 and 1957 offered the armed forces an entry point for its political agenda. The increasing unpopularity of the political parties, rampant corruption, armed rebellions against centralist rule,¹² and Indonesians' unhappiness with the West's refusal to discuss the Papua problem allowed the military to present itself as a viable political alternative.¹³ Working closely with Sukarno, who was also displeased with the marginal role he had under the democratic system, the army pushed for the establishment of an autocratic regime in which it expected to possess the very veto powers it had so far lacked.¹⁴

But many of the institutional privileges granted to the armed forces under Sukarno's *Demokrasi Terpimpin* (Guided Democracy) between 1959 and 1965 were of a purely nominal nature. In line with TNI's new "Middle Way" doctrine, according to which the generals would receive permanent representation in government in exchange for not seeking to topple it,¹⁵ the armed forces were given seats in the cabinet, special advisory councils, and the appointed legislature. Although these new constitutional rights expanded the military's formal powers, they did not allow TNI to take decisive influence on the political process. In fact, Indonesian politics in the early 1960s drifted into a direction that most military leaders deeply opposed: protected by Sukarno, the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party) rapidly gained ground and prepared to take over the government after the ailing president's death. Despite TNI's supposed "veto powers," Indonesia's Guided Democracy assumed a revolutionary, left-leaning rhetoric, launched a chaotic military campaign against Malaysia, left the United Nations, and began to rely on the Soviet Union for development aid and defense equipment. None of these key policies had been initiated or endorsed by the military. Thus, although military theorists such as Amos Perlmutter and Eric Nordlinger would have probably termed the army a "participant-ruler" under Sukarno's autocracy, it was not an effective "veto player."¹⁶ With discon-

tent swelling in its ranks, there was a growing consensus in the military that for TNI to have "real" power, much more fundamental change was necessary.

The opportunity to achieve this radical change presented itself on September 30, 1965. Reacting to a clumsy coup attempt by a small pro-Communist faction in the military, the leadership of the armed forces under then Major-General Suharto took control of the situation and entrenched itself in power.¹⁶ Suharto gradually removed Sukarno from power between 1966 and 1968, ultimately installing himself in the presidency. In the early years of Suharto's New Order regime, the military enjoyed all the benefits typically associated with praetorian rule: 80 percent of key local government positions were given to military officers, as was the majority of cabinet seats and senior bureaucratic jobs; generals took over the leadership of state enterprises and substantially expanded their own economic activities; laws and institutions were revised to suit the armed forces' ideological and political interests; and the military became the apex of a repressive system of social control through which all citizens' activities were scrutinized. The military in the early 1970s was evidently much more than a "veto player"; it was a political and security hegemon that could make major policy decisions without taking the interests of other sociopolitical groups into account. It met dissent with intimidation or offers of patronage, effectively removing any opposition to its grip on power.

The biggest structural problem for the military under the New Order, however, was its growing dissociation from Suharto. In the founding years of the New Order, Suharto was concurrently commander of the armed forces and head of government, leading to the impression both in Indonesia and in the rest of the world that the interests of the military and its chief were congruent. Even after Suharto relinquished the commandership, he remained an active general until the late 1970s, keeping in close contact with the officer corps. But the gulf between Suharto and his leading generals began to widen soon afterward.¹⁷ This gulf was not only a generational gap; it also involved divergent personal and institutional interests. Suharto, for his part, was keen to broaden the foundations of his regime by integrating civilian constituencies (such as Islamic leaders and technology experts) into the New Order government. The military, in contrast, rightly viewed this move as a threat to its privileges. In this subtle confrontation between the armed forces and their former patron, Suharto eventually prevailed. By the early 1990s, Suharto had developed the New Order regime into a personal autocracy¹⁸ in which his control was all pervasive and the armed forces were—as in Pinochet's Chile—

"relegated to agent status along with the rest of society."¹⁹ As the number of military officers in key government jobs gradually declined, the armed forces not only lost their institutional status as a political hegemon but arguably were also too weak to play the role of a veto actor.

The previous discussion has demonstrated that the widespread perception of the Indonesian military as the country's most persistent and powerful veto player since 1945 needs to be reassessed. The armed forces did not leave a significant mark on the shape of the various political systems formed in 1945, 1949, and 1950, and despite the military's importance as a symbol of nationalist pride, independence was not won on the battlefield, but at the negotiation table. The only periods in which the armed forces exercised great influence as a political veto player or hegemon were, first, between 1956 and 1959, when the generals successfully negotiated the establishment of a new regime with Sukarno, and, second, between 1965 and about 1978, when the military was effectively running the government. After that, however, there were very few opportunities for the military to act as an independent political player. The one key decision between the 1980s and early 1998 in which the military was able to force Suharto's hand was Try Sutrisno's appointment as vice president in 1993.²⁰ Other than that, Suharto was firmly in control, and although the military continued to profit from its role as the regime's tool of intimidation and social control, it was no longer in the driving seat.²¹ It was only Suharto's political decline in 1997 and 1998 that brought the military back into the spotlight, temporarily providing the generals with the effective veto powers that the longtime autocrat had withheld from them for the previous two decades.

Vetoing Suharto: TNI During the Regime Change and the Transition

As indicated previously, many Indonesian and foreign observers expected in 1998 that the armed forces would emerge as the most influential veto player in the transition, potentially sabotaging democratic reforms. Although the military certainly made use of its revived veto powers (which it owed to both its guns and Suharto's fall), it did so in a much more complex and multi-layered manner. In evaluating the military's political behavior in 1998, some political analysts have overlooked the fact that the regime change could occur only after the armed forces, in line with Tsebeli's definition, lent their neces-

sary consent to the sought change in the status quo—that is, Suharto's removal from power. Without the military's passive but unambiguous approval it is difficult to imagine that the events between March and May 1998 would have transpired in the way they did. If the military used its veto power, then it did so against Suharto—by rejecting the embattled president's suggestions to crack down on the constantly growing student movement.²² There were significant divisions in the military, but the proponents of a negotiated settlement with the protesters finally prevailed, and Suharto was therefore left with no other choice than to resign.²³ Through its veto against a last-minute crackdown and its tacit support for the regime change, the military thus made a larger contribution to the democratic transition than political scientists tend to admit.

And whereas the military's supportive role in the regime change has often been ignored in the scholarly literature, its obstructive impact on the subsequent democratic transition has been widely exaggerated. To be sure, the military was keen on preserving as many of its institutional privileges as possible, and it used its weight as a political and security force to achieve this preservation.²⁴ But the results of its efforts were far from satisfactory for the officer corps. To begin with, Suharto handed the presidency to a man who was deeply disliked by many in the army, B. J. Habibie. The tensions between the former minister of technology and the military were legendary, with conflicts over defense procurement being only one of the points of contention.²⁵ Habibie's ascension, therefore, was not the result of intensive military lobbying but followed a consensus among the civilian elite that the constitutional succession of the vice president was preferable to a transitional government led by nonregime figures. The armed forces simply supported this scenario as the most obvious default position, but they were not the initiator of Habibie's rise to power. Hence, it is difficult to ascertain whether the regime change could have assumed a more grassroots-driven, democratic format had the armed forces played a less significant role in May 1998. Habibie's interim presidency would most likely still have emerged as the only viable solution, especially because he was prepared to accommodate key civilian groups by offering fresh elections and extensive political liberalization.²⁶ Overall, the character of the 1998 regime change was shaped more by broader sociopolitical dynamics than by military interventionism.

After Habibie launched his program of wide-ranging democratic reforms in June 1998, TNI tried unsuccessfully to veto several of its most important elements. For example, then chief of staff of sociopolitical affairs Susilo

Bambang Yudhoyono declared publicly that the military wanted only a limited number of parties to compete in the upcoming elections.²⁷ By contrast, Habibie insisted that no significant restrictions be imposed on the formation of new parties (with the exception of pro-Communist ones). The president won this dispute: more than two hundred parties were founded, forty-eight of which participated in the 1999 elections. In the same vein, senior generals warned against lifting all limitations on press freedom, releasing political prisoners, and liberalizing the labor union laws. On all three accounts, the military was unable to convince the government to go along with its position. In essence, the polity that had emerged by late 1998 could not have been less attractive to the armed forces: parties were formed on an almost daily basis; politicians competed for support by the previously depoliticized masses; different ideologies and religious identities began to express themselves; one of the freest press markets in Asia developed; and regions talked with great self-confidence about their dissatisfaction with Indonesia's unitary constitution.²⁸ In the formation of the post-Suharto polity, TNI's veto powers were much less effective than its leaders had hoped and its critics had feared.

This does not mean, however, that TNI's attempts to defend its interests were completely unsuccessful. Most important, military leaders were able to protect themselves from public demands for their prosecution, and they managed to stay in control of TNI's internal organization. Fending off attempts by civilian politicians to revamp the military's institutional structures and subordinate it firmly to the government, TNI convinced Habibie that reforming the armed forces was a job that only the generals were qualified to do. As a consequence, the military leadership was allowed to define its own reform agenda, with officers prioritizing less crucial areas and excluding those that were of vital importance to TNI.²⁹ Among the latter was the territorial command structure, which had anchored the military in local politics since the 1950s and had served as a major tool for off-budget fund-raising. Maintaining this system was essential if the army wanted to insulate itself from the reforms occurring around it, and it achieved that goal during much of the early post-Suharto period.³⁰ It is important to emphasize, however, that the military, despite the successes in defending its internal autonomy, hardly ever could influence policy decisions that affected the direction and format of the postauthoritarian state as a whole.

Even when the armed forces as an institution or rogue elements within them tried to sabotage government policies through covert operations,

they often suffered setbacks that further undermined their position. The East Timor debacle is the most prominent example. When President Habibie in early 1999 announced his decision to let the East Timorese decide in a United Nations-supervised referendum whether they wanted to remain in or leave the Indonesian Republic, the military felt too weak to oppose this move publicly.³¹ Instead, senior generals developed plans to engineer an Indonesian victory in the former Portuguese colony through intimidation and intelligence operations. In case East Timor still opted for independence, these plans envisaged that TNI-supported militias would declare open war on the pro-independence movement, leading to complete chaos and a potential breakup of the territory.³² Needless to say, this strategy ran counter to Habibie's declared aim of settling the East Timor problem peacefully and—possibly—getting nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in the process. But TNI's approach damaged its own interests as well. The mayhem after Indonesia's defeat in the popular ballot attracted an international intervention force, which not only restored stability but also identified TNI as the main culprit in causing the chaos. The United States and other Western countries imposed sanctions on TNI as a result, embarrassing the military internationally and weakening it domestically.³³

By and large, there was a significant gap between the military's ability to veto interventions into its internal affairs and its impact on the political architecture of the early democratic state. Although mostly successful in maintaining its autonomy as an institution, TNI was much less able to influence major decisions on what Indonesia's new polity should look like. There were only small victories for TNI in the latter field: it initiated the removal of an attorney-general who was determined to bring Suharto to court; it pushed through limitations on the freedom of assembly; and it negotiated continued military representation in the 1999 parliament, despite heavy resistance by civilian politicians.³⁴ But in almost all groundbreaking decisions that created post-1998 Indonesia as a competitive, open, and pluralist democracy, TNI's input was ignored. Beside the already mentioned political liberalization program, Habibie also launched an extensive decentralization project, effectively turning Indonesia from one of the most centralist into one of the most decentralized countries in the world.³⁵ The military, deeply engrained in paradigms of centralist hierarchy and thus opposed to decentralization, found no way of opposing it. By 2002, four years into the post-Suharto transition, the armed forces could not point to a single key element of the new polity that had been adopted because of their insistence. Struggling with its reputation

as Suharto's repressive palace guard, unable to stop the strong ambition of civilian forces to rule, and weakened by factional divisions dating back to the late New Order years, TNI had to get used to the idea that it was now only one among many actors in Indonesia's new democracy.

TNI Vetoes Overruled: The 2002 Constitutional Amendments and the Aceh Peace Process

The year 2002 marked a watershed in Indonesian civil-military relations in several ways. To begin with, it was a year of significant political stabilization after a severe constitutional crisis in 2001, when President Abdurrahman Wahid was controversially impeached by the country's legislature and replaced by his vice president, Megawati Sukarnoputri. During the political upheaval that led to Wahid's removal, the armed forces had been able to consolidate their position temporarily, and many generals believed that TNI would emerge from the crisis reenergized and with new political might.³⁶ Although it may have appeared that way at the time, in hindsight it is evident that Wahid's impeachment initiated a political process that would result not in an increase but in a further decline in TNI's veto powers. Shocked that the absence of clear constitutional arrangements for political competition had brought the country to the brink of collapse, the civilian elite decided that a new set of regulatory rules was needed to stabilize the polity. The way to achieve these new rules was through a fourth round of constitutional amendments; the three previous rounds in 1999, 2000, and 2001 had empowered the legislature and strengthened civil rights but had not led to a coherent and effective political system. All political parties accordingly agreed that the 2002 amendments had to finalize and complete the political transition, ending the experimental phase of Indonesian democracy and entrenching a new, workable regime.³⁷

Whereas the political elite viewed the constitutional amendments as an opportunity to expand and consolidate the democratic state, the armed forces sensed a chance to roll back reforms that they had never endorsed in the first place. The military's excessive self-confidence was apparently based on a misreading of its powers in the post-Wahid period: the generals believed that because they had assisted Parliament in Wahid's removal, the elite would have to grant TNI wide-ranging concessions. Indeed, Megawati fully surrendered the management of internal military affairs to the armed forces

leadership upon taking power and allowed TNI to play a greater role in battling domestic insurgencies and communal violence in Aceh, Papua, Maluku, and Central Sulawesi. In addition, TNI's unitarian rhetoric about the sanctity of Indonesia's territorial integrity now gained wide acceptance in the elite and society.³⁸ But these concessions—although substantial in terms of strengthening TNI's autonomy—once again had little impact on the military's ability to influence the design of Indonesia's overall political framework. Falsely believing that it could dictate the terms of the fourth round of the constitutional amendments and revive some of the nondemocratic elements of the pre-1998 politics, TNI was about to suffer one of its greatest defeats in the post-Suharto era.

During the debates on the constitutional amendments in August 2002, TNI intended to exploit disagreements among civilian groups in order to achieve the annulment of all previous revisions and reinstate the original 1945 Constitution. The 1945 Constitution was popular within the officer corps because of its brevity and manipulability: it had enabled both Sukarno and Suharto to establish their autocratic regimes despite some vague references to democracy and elections. The reenactment of the 1945 Constitution thus would have allowed the military to cancel many of the reforms implemented since 1998 without exposing the antidemocratic agenda behind this proposal. But key civilian elites were determined to defend and consolidate the post-1998 reforms. In a rare show of unity, all major parties finally agreed on a package of amendments that would lead to direct presidential elections, much more complex impeachment procedures, and the establishment of a constitutional court as a referee between conflicting state institutions. The military resisted this consensus to the last minute, until its chief negotiator conveyed to the TNI commander that "if we don't agree to this, they [the civilian elite] will just walk over us."³⁹ Faced with the prospect of public humiliation, TNI dropped its opposition and ultimately endorsed the amendments. And if the crushing defeat of TNI's proposal to restore the 1945 document was not sufficient evidence for the ineffectiveness of its veto powers, the civilian elite drove home that point by deciding to terminate the military's representation in the Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly) in 2004, five years earlier than initially planned.⁴⁰

The second watershed in the relationship between the Indonesian state and its armed forces came in August 2005, when the government signed a comprehensive peace agreement with the separatist rebel movement Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM, Free Aceh Movement). The military had been fierce-

ly opposed to negotiations with insurgents, believing that any settlement would only allow the separatists to regroup.⁴¹ In 2002 and 2003, the armed forces had therefore torpedoed a half-hearted "cessation of hostilities agreement" negotiated between the Megawati government and GAM, the failure of which triggered an all-out war in the troubled province. Although in 2003 TNI still could undermine the cease-fire easily (the civilian government and GAM were not serious about it either), in 2005 the situation was dramatically different. This time around, the government under Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was firmly committed to ending the conflict peacefully, and GAM was prepared to drop its demand for Acehnese independence in exchange for full political rights and other concessions.⁴² In order to pave the way for the agreement, Yudhoyono removed a number of conservative generals who had sabotaged earlier negotiations with GAM. In their stead, Yudhoyono appointed loyalists who ensured that the internal opposition within TNI to the peace deal was no longer voiced publicly.⁴³ Most important, they also prevented possible covert operations (such as the ones in East Timor) that could have endangered the peace process.

The significance of the Aceh Peace Accord for Indonesian civil-military relations cannot be overstated. For the first time in Indonesian history, the government had been able to make considerable concessions to a separatist rebel movement without the military sabotaging the effort. In East Timor in 1999, Papua in 2000, and Aceh in 2003, the military had actively undermined attempts by Jakarta to seek settlements with insurgents, and although it had hurt its own interests and international reputation in the process, the various peace initiatives had suffered irreparable damage as well. In all these cases, TNI had crudely tried to use its veto powers as a security force when its vetoes as a political actor had been ignored. In 2005, however, TNI did not even have the chance to embark on such a course. Yudhoyono had established tight executive oversight over the military, preempting any move by discontented generals to veto the Aceh Peace Accord politically or physically by force.⁴⁴ The irritation within TNI over this powerlessness was immense, with many commanders urging their superiors to take action.⁴⁵ But Yudhoyono's supporters in the armed forces stood firm, arguing that the military had no right to overturn policies determined by the democratically elected government. Two years after the military had lost its quest for a major democratization of Indonesia's political system, it now had to accept that its ability to influence government policies on separatist conflicts was declining rapidly as well.

In combination, the collective agreement on constitutional reforms and the successful implementation of the Aceh Peace Accord highlighted the fact that whenever civilian elites were united on a particular policy, the armed forces found it impossible to veto it.⁴⁶ The unsteadiness of earlier phases of the democratic transition had offered the military some limited opportunities to veto planned reforms of TNI's internal management, but the stabilization of the political system from 2002 onward made such interventions increasingly difficult. The last important policy decision that the TNI had been able to undermine was arguably the "cessation of hostilities agreement" with GAM in 2002–2003, and even this influence was possible only because Jakarta's civilian elite was happy to see the initiative fail. But the collapse of the 2002 agreement boomeranged on TNI: it was followed by a much more substantial peace treaty in 2005, which included concessions that had not even been remotely considered in 2002. By 2005, Indonesia had already entered the stage of democratic consolidation, with the constitutional amendments adopted in 2002 becoming fully operational in 2004. These changes strengthened civilian state institutions and further reduced the political weight of the military, which lost its representation in Parliament and was no longer needed as a mediator in intracivilian conflicts. The portrayal of the military as Indonesia's "main veto actor," which even in the pre-2004 phase of democratic transition was more of a conventional wisdom than a political reality, became increasingly questionable.

TNI in Indonesia's Consolidating Democracy: How Strong Is Civilian Control?

In 2008, Indonesia both witnessed the death of former president Suharto and commemorated the tenth anniversary of his fall. Although Suharto's slow and public demise led to some nostalgic reevaluations of his regime, there was no doubt that Indonesia had seen a decade of tremendous political change. Suharto's monotonous autocracy had been replaced by a competitive electoral democracy, and the armed forces had been reduced from a political hegemon in the 1970s and a participant-ruler in the 1980s to a much less influential player in postauthoritarian politics. The shape of Indonesia's political system was no longer determined by the military's interests in the way it had been in the late 1950s and late 1960s, and TNI was struggling to prevent civilian state authorities from intervening into its affairs. Most important,

Indonesia's new democracy appeared surprisingly stable. At ten years of age, it had already outlived the country's first attempt at a democratic polity between 1950 and 1957, and there were no signs of a credible political campaign that aimed at the replacement of the current system.⁴⁷ To be sure, there was widespread discontent with political parties, corruption, and government inefficiencies, but such complaints were not dissimilar to those widely held in other functioning democracies.⁴⁸ The military, for its part, did not seem to have the strength to challenge the democratic system, instead withdrawing into its professional niche of national defense and the very few fields of domestic security that it was still allowed to engage in. Overall, Indonesia's democracy ten years after the end of the New Order was consolidating at a slow but steady pace, and that remains true today.

But the assessment of TNI's decline as a decisive veto player in Indonesian politics has to be qualified in several ways. First of all, the erosion of TNI's powers as an institution did not automatically translate into the complete marginalization of active and retired military officers from the political landscape. In fact, former generals have become major actors in electoral politics, particularly after the constitutional deadlock of 2001. Many former commanders have used their nationwide name recognition to run for political office in the center as well as in the regions. For instance, three retired officers ran in the 2004 and 2009 presidential elections, with ex-general Yudhoyono emerging as the winner in both cases. The scholarly literature on former generals in democratic politics has repeatedly wrestled with the problem of how to classify this phenomenon analytically,⁴⁹ with most observers arguing that retired officers holding key positions cannot be equated with military interference. Although former Indonesian generals espouse very diverse viewpoints and interests,⁵⁰ there is no doubt that they share a common code of military values and doctrinal convictions. For that reason, the involvement of retired officers in post-Suharto politics is not an entirely "civilian" affair, as the generals themselves argue. Instead, it relates to the issue of how the military and its top brass have adapted to the new democratic polity; the successful political careers of some of Suharto's leading generals suggest that at least some senior generals have adjusted reasonably well.

Despite some former officers' success in elections at the national and local level, this trend seems to be less pronounced than it was at the time of Yudhoyono's first inauguration. Since then, retired TNI leaders have lost some of the country's key governorships. For example, during the direct local elections conducted between 2005 and 2011, the formerly military-held

governorships of Jakarta, East Java, North Sumatra, South Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, and East Kalimantan went to civilians, in some cases for the first time since the 1960s.⁵¹ As of 2012, only three of Indonesia's thirty-three governors—those of Maluku, Central Java, and West Papua—are retired military generals. Thus, the percentage of former military officers serving as governors, which had already dropped from around 50 percent in 1998 to 27 percent in 2005, has now declined further to 9 percent. The explanation for this development lies largely in the shrinking stock of former New Order military leaders who can use their celebrity status to compete in elections. Most candidates for senior positions owe their prominence to their elevated status under Suharto's regime—Yudhoyono, Wiranto, and Prabowo Subianto being only some examples. Under the post-New Order governments, by contrast, much fewer active military leaders have acquired the high levels of name recognition necessary to win regional elections after their retirement. In contemporary Indonesia, many citizens do not even know the name of the incumbent TNI chief; this decline in sociopolitical significance is set to negatively affect military retirees' electoral chances in the long term.

The second area in which TNI's influence remains significant is that of internal military organization. Although the armed forces have been unable to design the post-Suharto polity according to their politico-ideological priorities, they have managed to maintain a certain degree of institutional autonomy. For instance, senior generals still enjoy legal impunity, with not a single key TNI leader sent to prison under democratic rule for human rights violations committed during the New Order or the transition. The reform of the military justice system—designed to make officers more accountable—was aborted in 2009 after the armed forces and the Department of Defense managed to drag out the deliberations of the bill until the legislature's term had expired.⁵² Similarly, the military continues to raise a significant percentage of its operational income from off-budget funds. This percentage has dropped from around 70 percent at the beginning of the transition to around 25 to 30 percent today, perhaps even lower if TNI's official numbers are to be believed. Regardless of the concrete figures, however, the practice of self-funding needs to be terminated completely if Indonesia intends to establish strong democratic control over its armed forces.⁵³ Finally, the preservation of the territorial command structure has allowed the military to keep a foothold in the country's regions. TNI units remain operational in almost all of Indonesia's villages, subdistricts, districts, cities, and provinces, providing it with the logistic infrastructure to intervene in government administration

should circumstances ever allow it to do so again. At the moment, the political context is unsupportive of such a scenario, but there is no guarantee that this situation will not change in the future.

Third, there are a few provinces and districts in which the military remains disproportionately powerful. In these territories, the armed forces continue to exercise political and economic control. In general terms, the higher the level of sociopolitical, ethnic, religious, or separatist tensions in a locality, the deeper the military engagement in that locality's politicoeconomic affairs. The number of such areas has dropped sharply since the end of most of the large-scale communal conflicts in 2003 and the successfully implemented Aceh Peace Accord of 2005. In Papua, however, TNI maintains a much higher profile than in any other territory in Indonesia. This is due to widespread concerns among Jakarta's political elite, both civilian and military, that Papua might secede from Indonesia in the same way that East Timor did in 1999. As a consequence, the central government and legislature are often prepared to turn a blind eye to some of TNI's continuing transgressions in the province, believing that they are necessary to contain the separatist movement there.⁵⁴ The military arguably remains an effective veto player in some parts of Papua, marking a sharp contrast to its status in the rest of the Indonesian archipelago.

TNI's ability to hold on to some privileges and territories is evidence of the structural deficiencies in Indonesia's control over its security forces. The Department of Defense, for example, has not yet developed the capacity to fully control the armed forces, and the members of Indonesia's legislature still struggle to acquire the necessary expertise to effectively supervise security operations and the agencies involved. Indeed, it is remarkable that TNI has been unable to take more advantage of such institutional shortcomings in security-sector governance. The fact that the armed forces have been politically marginalized despite problems in the bodies charged with their control highlights the continued relevance of Samuel Finer's focus on stable political cultures as the most effective barriers to military intervention in politics.⁵⁵ In post-Suharto Indonesia, it was the stabilization of the polity, the decline of communal conflicts, the empowerment of democratic institutions, and the relative solidity of the economy that allowed civilian actors to sideline the armed forces without controlling all aspects of their affairs. In the absence of any initiatives to replace the current political system, Indonesia's civilian politicians could afford to leave the armed forces with the power largely to regulate themselves. Although this approach might have been risky in a climate

of political instability and economic crisis, it has proved workable within the framework of continued democratic consolidation.

Of course, some comparative scholars might argue that a democracy in which the military is not fully subordinated to objective civilian control can hardly be described as "consolidating."⁵⁶ However, Indonesia appears to be a compelling example of a gradually stabilizing democracy that has succeeded in entrenching its democratic institutions without aggressively pursuing Western ideas of complete civilian authority over the military. In Indonesia, the erosion of the military's powers occurred almost as a side effect of a comprehensive political reform program, which focused on the institutionalization of competitive elections, the strengthening of civilian actors, the development of effective legislative and executive bodies, as well as extensive decentralization. This process has not produced a flawless democracy; serious defects remain in the areas of rule of law, social equality, good governance, and the security sector. But there is no doubt that Indonesia's democracy has fared much better than many observers would have predicted in 1998 and has consolidated much faster than it has in its Southeast Asian counterparts Thailand and the Philippines. In the 2009 Freedom House report on political rights and civil liberties around the globe, for example, Indonesia was the only country in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations classified as "free" and an "electoral democracy"—a predicate it was first awarded in 2006 and continues to hold in 2012.⁵⁷ Such assessments indicate that Indonesia has made significant progress in its democratization process, even without having addressed all remaining problems related to the institutional control of its military.

TNI—Veto Player No More?

In this chapter, I have critically reassessed widespread claims by scholars and policymakers that TNI was and continues to be Indonesia's most formidable veto player. Analyzing the role of the armed forces in several key periods of Indonesian history, I have shown that the importance of the military in shaping the political system tends to be overstated. In the independence war, which many analysts have identified as the source of the military's political power, the army was unable to influence the decisions civilian politicians made about the future format of the Indonesian state. Appreciated more as a symbol of national unity than feared as a powerful "veto player," the armed

forces spent the first half of the 1950s at the political margins. It was only in the turmoil of the mid- and late 1950s that the military could, for the very first time, shape key political developments in a way that served its interests. Sukarno's Guided Democracy offered the military institutionalized political participation, acknowledging TNI's increased importance after its successful suppression of regional insurgencies in Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Java. But TNI's new powers were short-lived: under Sukarno's autocratic rule, Indonesia's domestic and foreign policies increasingly drifted to the left, leaving the army with little room to maneuver. Frustrated over its lack of influence, the military elite used the opportunity of a failed pro-Communist coup attempt to take power in October 1965. In the formative years of the New Order regime, the military was not only an effective veto player, but a hegemon that single-handedly determined the shape of the political system.

The military's overwhelming political dominance in the late 1960s and early 1970s is the foundation for the frequent description of TNI as the country's most powerful veto player. This depiction has become so deeply engrained in both foreign and domestic observers' analyses that even significant changes during and after the New Order regime could not alter this fixture of political science writings on Indonesia. In the 1980s and 1990s, Suharto transformed the initially military-dominated regime into a personal autocracy in which he presided over a network of patronage relationships. In this authoritarian system, the military still played a significant role as Suharto's primary instrument of repression, but it was no longer an independent political actor whose interests dictated government policies. Since 1998, many analysts have pointed to the armed forces as Indonesia's "main veto player," implying that it used—and still uses—its powers to obstruct Indonesia's democratization. This assessment misses two important aspects of the military's political behavior: first, the armed forces consented to the regime change in May 1998, clearing the way for the democratic transition. Second, their veto powers in the new polity were subsequently very limited; TNI's proposals regarding the design of the post-Suharto state were mostly ignored, and one of the most democratic regimes in Asia emerged as a result. Although the military made many attempts to influence policies and roll back democratic reforms, only very few of these initiatives succeeded.

But it would be misleading to interpret the decline of TNI's veto powers as evidence of the successful establishment of full democratic civilian control over the Indonesian armed forces. The institutional mechanisms of security sector governance remain deficient, allowing the military to continue its long-

standing tradition of managerial self-regulation. Principles of legal accountability have still not been enforced for military officers; the problem of off-budget funding has yet to be resolved (despite a recent government initiative to take over TNI-owned businesses); and there are no signs that the territorial command structure will be reformed anytime soon. In addition, TNI is still very influential in the province of Papua, where it effectively runs a parallel government to the civilian administration. However, the surprising aspect of these residual TNI privileges is not that they still exist, but how little impact they have had on Indonesia's overall process of democratic transition and consolidation. By all accounts, Indonesia has made significant progress in reforming its polity, turning it from one of the world's most persistent autocracies into a competitive electoral democracy. No serious political scientist would describe Indonesia in 2012 as a "hybrid regime" or "semidemocracy," thus marking a notable break with the pre-2004 period, when such terms were still widely used. Contemporary Indonesia is, in Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino's scheme, a low-quality democracy facing myriad challenges,⁵⁸ but TNI's potential veto powers seem—at least for the time being—no longer the most pressing of these issues.

Indonesian Government Approaches to Radical Islam Since 1998

Sidney Jones

To the extent that extremist Islamic movements reject democracy or actively try to destabilize the state, they can become "veto actors" in young democracies. How governments respond to them can strengthen or undermine the transition process. In post-Suharto Indonesia, the only time these movements had the potential to unravel the democratic experiment was in the first two years of the transition, and, even then, it was only because some within the security apparatus tried to exploit them for short-term domestic political gain.

In general, the transnational links of some of these movements had little if any bearing on the severity of the threat they posed. At no time, for example, did Jemaah Islamiyah (JI, Islamic Group) or later splinter groups that at certain points looked to al-Qaeda for ideological inspiration and funding constitute a serious destabilizing force in the sense that their bombing campaigns weakened the government. If anything, their attacks strengthened it by leading to a greater professionalization of law enforcement agencies. Nor were those attacks ever directed primarily at weakening the state, undermining the economy, or punishing apostate rulers. The broader objective of JI as a movement was indeed to establish an Islamic state, but the