
Notes

Indonesia : After the Student Revolt

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"Can Indonesia Remain Calm For Capitalism?" a columnist in the U.S.' leading financial daily asked three weeks after the People's Consultative Congress (*Madjelis Permusjawarataan Rakjat-MPR*), meeting in Djakarta on March 22, 1978, had re-elected President Suharto to his third five year term as Indonesia's chief executive. Answering his own question (and, incidentally, also reflecting official U.S. opinion with his answer) the columnist wrote that Indonesia, despite recent scandals and anti-government protests, had "retained its stability" (something "appreciated by ordinary people as well as by generals and big powers"), and that, as it applied "effective preventive measures," there were indications that "the Suharto regime is here to stay."¹⁾

Yet, it also continued to be evident that the Suharto government's stability remained closely linked to further "preventive measures." On May 26, 1978, for example, a spokesman for Indonesia's chief national security agency, the "Command for the Restoration of Internal Security" (*Kopkamtib*), announced a forthcoming decree banning "unauthorized meetings of more than five persons." The purpose of this new measure reportedly was to prevent the convening of political meetings disguised as religious congregations and appeared to be directed against certain Muslim critics of the regime.²⁾ Anti-Suharto sentiment remains strong in Muslim circles in Indonesia, including those allied with the chief Islamic political group, the "United Development Party" (*Partai Pembangunan Persatuan-PPP*).

Inter alia one must note that these Muslim anti-Suharto feelings are not of recent vintage but date back for more than a decade. After the abortive 1965 coup in Djakarta, Sukarno's subsequent political fall, and his replacement by General Suharto, various Muslim groups had begun jockeying for power in the reconstituted parliament and public service. Politically active Muslims, particularly those in the *Partai Muslimin Indonesia* (PMI), which subsequently merged with other Islamic political groups into the PPP, soon charged that Suharto's new government relied too much on Christian and secular "technocrats," discriminated in the appointment of Muslims to parliament and other posts, and, generally was "anti-Muslim" because it refused to accord a constitutional place to Islamic Law. Over the years partisan politics sharpened these Muslim

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1) Barry Newman in *The Wall Street Journal*, April 15, 1978.

2) Agence France Presse despatch, Djakarta, May 26, 1978 (Foreign Broadcast Information Service, hereafter FBIS, May 26, 1978).

antagonisms and eventually helped shape small extremist Muslim movements committed to the violent overthrow of Suharto's regime.

The new ban on unauthorized meetings especially reflected what was reported to be the government's "hardening" policy against bands of alleged Muslim extremists of the so-called *Komando Jihad* ("Holy War Command") who seek an Islamic state and who have been engaged in various acts of terrorism ranging from Northern Sumatra to East Java since March, 1977. Whatever its justification, however, the new ban was also interpreted as part of the Suharto regime's continuing confrontation of the PPP and its allies. On April 12, 1978, Mahbub Junaidi, the PPP's deputy secretary general, had been arrested on charges of "criminal subversion" by Kopkamtib agents, who also seized a quantity of documents in Junaidi's home. At the same time that Junaidi was apprehended, two other prominent Muslim activists were arrested. One was Professor Ismail Suny, rector (i.e. president) of Muhammadiyah University, and concurrently law professor at the University of Indonesia. Suny had twice been arrested and released in previous months because of critical comments on government corruption and on "subversive" Army generals made during lectures to his students. The other person arrested was Sutomo, better known as Bung Tomo, a prominent figure in Indonesia's independence struggle, who also has frequently voiced criticism of the Suharto regime.

Then, on May 31, 1978, an unidentified lecturer at the Bandung Institute of Technology was arrested; it was known only that he had been a board member of and had been active in the affairs of the Institute's campus mosque. Two days earlier Information Minister Ali Murtopo, on the basis of a report to the cabinet by Defense and Security Minister General Muhammad Jusuf, had declared that security conditions in Indonesia were good, but "nevertheless requiring vigilance from all quarters."³⁾

The latter phrase was widely taken to mean that Suharto's re-election in no way augured a moderating of the government's campaign against those it viewed as subversive. Already on March 31, 1978, little more than a week after Suharto had received the MPR's new mandate, Kopkamtib chief Admiral Sudomo had announced that authorities were holding 300 persons, including more than 200 students, in various parts of the country, on charges of "anti-government activities" during the previous three months.⁴⁾ All or most of the 100 or so non-students arrested, and at least 50 to 60 of the detained students, would be put on trial, Sudomo said. Sudomo was quick to add, however, that the time had now come to restore good relations between students and government. The students, "after all," according to Sudomo, "are our own children who have been led astray." And in subsequent days the Admiral was at pains to stress that the judicial action planned against the students was not a matter of "revenge" for their often vociferous public criticism of Suharto and the government in previous months but was "a matter of upholding the law."

A possible connection between Muslim political opponents of Suharto and the student dissidents continued to be intimidated by the government in the days and weeks

3) Antara despatch, Djakarta, May 29, 1978.

4) Agence France Presse despatch, Djakarta, March 31, 1978 (FBIS, April 3, 1978).

after Suharto's third term inauguration. For example, on May 8, Sudomo was reported to have "confirmed" to the press that the recently arrested Professor Suny, Sutomo, and Mahbub Djunaidi, had "links with political activities of college students."⁵⁾ And in the investigation in early April of an alleged arson and bombing plot by some 40 members of the "Islamic Youth Group" (*Gabungan Pemuda Islam-GPI*) in Djakarta similar "links" with restive West Java university students were reportedly uncovered.

As was to be feared, however, the persistent tension between the Suharto regime and the Muslim community following the President's new mandate could readily lend itself to exploitation by provocateurs in either camp. On the night of April 14, a plastic bomb exploded in the Istiqlal mosque, in the heart of Djakarta. The explosion, which fortunately only wounded one of the faithful inside the mosque, and caused some minor damage, came at almost the same time that the government announced the arrest of yet another prominent Muslim political figure, the sixty-seven-year-old Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, former defense and foreign minister, and later a leader of the one-time secessionist "Indonesian Revolutionary Government" (*Pemerintah Republik Revolusioner Indonesia-PRRI*) in West Sumatra during the late nineteen-fifties. Sjafruddin, an important leader in the now banned and dissolved Muslim party Masjumi, had been arrested because of allegedly anti-government comments made in recent religious lectures. He was released again on May 2 without any judicial action having been taken against him, thus illustrating again what Suharto critics consider to be the regime's typical pattern of harassment of its opponents, i.e. arrest (or frequent re-arrest, as in the case of Professor Suny) and detention for days and sometimes weeks, without clear specification of charges and evidence, and, then, a release, often accompanied by a warning to avoid "undesirable" conduct.

Public bombings have been rare, thus far, in independent Indonesia's history. While Djakarta police eventually blamed the GPI for the Istiqlal Mosque incident, clear evidence of this has not been established. Taken in the context of the, indeed proven, terrorist depredations of "*Komando Jihad*" adherents, and of conflict generally between Muslim leaders and the Suharto regime, however, the Istiqlal bombing marked a disquieting escalation of tensions at the very start of Suharto's new Presidential term.

There is not only no sign that the government sees wisdom in attempting to calm down its conflict with the Muslim community, but, on the contrary there are other indications that the government's "preventive measures" policy is not defusing antagonism toward it. Already on January 20, 1978, and during three days following, in the midst of the student campaign that urged Suharto not to seek a third Presidential term, the government had ordered the banning of seven major newspapers because of their extensive reporting on the mounting opposition to Suharto's intended re-election. It was perhaps the most extensive press ban since the end of January, 1974. On that occasion, similarly in the wake of student unrest over the Suharto regime's alliance with foreign big business, over alleged abuses of power by the military, and over rising prices, four major dailies and several periodicals had been banned. As customary, the January, 1978

5) Antara despatch, Djakarta, May 8, 1978.

press ban also lasted about two weeks, and, upon giving undertakings to the authorities that they would exercise self restraint in future reporting on sensitive issues, editors were allowed to resume publication. But reaction, even among top ranking military and business supporters of the Suharto regime, had been quite, if quietly, critical of the January, 1978 press ban, not least because of feared adverse impressions in important American and West European circles whence the government has been deriving some \$12 billion in long term financial stabilization credits during the past decade.

Notwithstanding this reaction, and even with Suharto securely re-elected, the regime's "preventive" press supervision campaign has continued, however. For example, although government spokesmen themselves in recent months had referred to the so-called "Free Aceh Movement," led by Hasan Tiro, a shadowy, underground, strongly Muslim, anti-Suharto organization, reportedly seeking autonomy if not independence for the North Sumatra province of Aceh (on a basis somewhat similar to the independence sought by the Muslim secessionist movement of the "Moro National Liberation Front" in the Southern Philippines), press references to this movement as such rather abruptly were declared unlawful. Late in March, 1978, *Waspada*, a leading daily in Medan, North Sumatra, was given a "final warning" by Kopkamtib not to refer to the "Free Aceh Movement" in its columns again, but instead, if reference had to be made at all to the movement to call it instead: "the lawless gang of Hasan Tiro." Perhaps revealing for the thinking of Indonesia's security officials, a Kopkamtib spokesman explained that to use the term "Free Aceh Movement" could convey a legitimacy on Tiro's group that might further its subversion. Meanwhile, Indonesia's new Information Minister, General Ali Murtopo, appointed after Suharto's re-election to a third Presidential term, declared in an April, 1978 interview that he was "not a defender of the free press," in any case not in Indonesia whose society, in Murtopo's view, "is not strong enough." Suharto's new Vice-President, Adam Malik, one of Indonesia's leading political figures, asserted to the same interviewer that the government had recently been forced to close down newspapers because "they made the wrong news."⁶ "Making" the "wrong news" specifically meant printing reports on the student movement opposed to Suharto's re-election.

When Suharto first came to power in 1966, following the turmoil of the attempted coup on September 30, the year before, and the subsequent campaign to oust President Sukarno (widely suspected of having known and tacitly condoned the coup attempt) he was generally perceived as a quiet, quintessentially Javanese *Ksatriya* (knight) of integrity. The major policy thrust of Suharto's "New Order" (*Orde Baru* or *Orba*) regime—i.e. maximizing Indonesia's economic rehabilitation and development, also with the aid of foreign credit and capital investment circles which would be persuaded that domestic Indonesian political stability would be preserved, by force if necessary — capitalized on the image of this gentle, fatherly integrity, a contrast to the flamboyant Sukarno. Supporters of *Orba*, in Indonesia and abroad, portrayed the "preventive" controls exercised by the new regime over politics, media, education and other phases of public

6) Henry Kamm in *The New York Times*, April 23, 1978.

life, as ultimately being justified, because the nation's needed economic rehabilitation effort was now in the hands of "trustworthy and quite decent technocrats trying to do a difficult job," as one Indonesian academic colleague put it to this writer about a decade ago.

In time, however, even Suharto himself did not escape the corruption and mismanagement which have tarnished *Orba's* escutcheon. In the early nineteen-seventies alleged business dealings of Mme. Suharto, particularly in connection with the development of a Disneyland-like tourist project in Djakarta, called "Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature," had caused a public outcry and vociferous student protests which eventually halted the project. Rumors about the preferred treatment being accorded the President's relatives and friends in various business dealings persisted, however, and on September 21, 1976, Suharto felt compelled to make the first of several public statements denying that he had promoted lucrative ventures for members of his family. Still, these denials only seemed to widen public suspicion, and among student opponents of the regime they spurred doubts about the desirability of Suharto continuing in office after 1978.

On January 26, 1978, Suharto again publicly denied that he had enriched himself while in office, or that he and his wife had engaged in corrupt practices. He now did admit, however, that he controlled some 13.7 billion Rupiah (about \$75 million) as head of various foundations. "These are indeed huge sums of money, but they are not mine," Suharto added. But new questions arose whether Suharto should, as President, be in fact in a position to control such large foundation monies. A few days earlier, Mme. Suharto was identified by a sworn witness in a Djakarta court proceeding, to have been involved in a multi-million dollar smuggling case in 1976, and no persuasive denial has been forthcoming.⁷⁾

In the aftermath of Suharto's election to a third Presidential term underground publications circulating in Djakarta have continued to raise new questions about Suharto's wealth and its origins (including a recent alleged deposit of \$350 million in a Singapore bank), while the President's step-brother, Probosutedjo, in an apologia for Suharto, only managed to raise new doubts as to how he, Probosutedjo, acquired his near monopolistic control over the nation's trade in cloves.⁸⁾ Today what is fact and what is fancy about Suharto's wealth is no longer the issue; the issue is, rather, the persistent cloud of rumor, suspicion and innuendo itself that surrounds the President and his family and the existence of which erodes the credibility of Suharto's continued leadership.

A disquieting polarization of attitudes about the regime is being hardened by the problem of Suharto's credibility. For example, from the utterances of the spokesmen of the armed forces faction in the MPR and in the Indonesian parliament one now gauges a mood of defensiveness, hypersensitive to any real or unintended slur on Suharto as one of the Army's "own." Such a mood of support through thick and thin found expression

7) *The Straits Times* (Singapore), January 4, 1978.

8) *Indonesian News Selections* (Sydney), May, 1978, pp. 3-4.

in the demand by General Surono, armed forces deputy staff chief and military faction spokesman in the MPR who, shortly before Suharto's re-election to a third Presidential term, called for an expansion of the President's "emergency powers." This, Surono said, was essential in order to combat "certain elements" who were attempting to disrupt the leadership of government programs. Surono's subsequent explanation appeared to justify even broader emergency powers for Suharto than the latter already possessed, on the grounds that with such added authority he could move even more quickly and decisively against his opponents. It was the PPP in particular which not only railed against Surono's proposal but against Suharto's emergency powers generally. During much of March, 1978, the confrontation between the President's army supporters and his Muslim critics over just this issue seemed to hinge increasingly on the question of Suharto's personal worth to justify additional new "emergency" authority.

In the end, a compromise of sorts was reached. Extra emergency powers were not granted the President. Rather, the same old emergency powers which Suharto had received in 1966 when he took over from Sukarno were continued in force by MPR decision. The continuance of these old powers, according to the MPR, was still necessary in order that the President would be able to preserve the nation's "unity," and in order to forestall a "recurrence of the communist coup" of 1965 and "other subversive threats."⁹⁾

To *Orba's* critics, however, the argument that "subversive" dangers continue to threaten has worn thin. The significance of the student upsurge of 1977-78 was that the credibility of Suharto personally, and that of his "subversion" conscious regime as the guarantor of the nation's economic development have sustained serious and, probably, irreparable blows, and it would be a mistake to consider the current lull in student protest as a sign that the opposition has been cowed. The dynamics of the 1977-78 student revolt have not been eliminated, and so they are likely to be felt again in the coming months of Suharto's third Presidential term.

The 1977-78 student upsurge, though previous manifestations of serious student unrest, e.g. the riots in Djakarta on January 15, 1974, on the occasion of Japanese premier Kakuei Tanaka's visit, seemingly have created an almost permanent substratum of easily erupting student revolt in Indonesia, had its more immediate and particular origins in the May 2, 1977 Indonesian general elections. In these elections, the Government's *Golkar* (from *Golongan Karya* or "Functional Groups") party, though it retained its absolute parliamentary majority, did a good deal worse than expected, losing four seats compared to the 1971 elections. The significant gainer had been the PPP which won five additional seats and significantly scored a clear victory over *Golkar* in metropolitan Djakarta, perhaps the most sophisticated political area of the country. Well substantiated allegations of intimidation and physical abuse of PPP supporters and candidates by *Golkar* activists, the disappearance and sudden reappearance of thousands of ballots in East Java (where the PPP is strong) and which were eventually ruled to be in *Golkar's* favor, and various other malversations raised serious questions about the

9) Agence France Presse despatch, Djakarta, March 22, 1978 (FBIS, March 23, 1978).

honesty of the election results. In a number of provinces, e.g. in Aceh, North Sumatra, the PPP was the absolute winner, while in others, such as in Kalimantan and the Lesser Sunda Islands, *Golkar* won by far fewer votes than had been anticipated. Clearly, the elections showed that the Suharto government's popularity, as reflected in *Golkar's* showing, was beginning to wane.

And so, inevitably, as attention now came to focus on the election of the forthcoming meeting of the MPR in March, 1978, a body constitutionally charged with electing the President and Vice President of Indonesia, the notion that Suharto should step down began acquiring the kind of a following which, before the election, it could not have gotten. By June, 1977, Indonesian university students began urging the election as President of the popular, outgoing Governor of Djakarta, Ali Sadikin. As worried military commanders meanwhile criticized students for their "culture of opposition," a top constitutional scholar, the previously mentioned Professor Ismail Suny, charged that since most of the members of the MPR are appointed by the government, the MPR's election of a President (still expected to be Suharto) could not be considered democratic.¹⁰⁾

In subsequent weeks, though Sadikin attempted to remove himself quietly from the center of controversy by refusing to run for the Presidency, students launched an increasingly more vociferous campaign against Suharto's re-election. Importantly, they won sympathy, not only from the PPP and other Muslim opposition groups, but also from a cautious press, and from a number of highranking military, among them Lieutenant General H.R. Dharsono, the Secretary General of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), and from the nation's senior and perhaps most prestigious soldier, retired General A.H. Nasution, Former Defense Minister and former Armed Forces commander. The thrust of the students' attack (and that of their allies in the PPP, the press, the military and in some of the intellectual community as well) went into the direction not just of whether Suharto should serve yet another, third Presidential term (viewed as an undesirable constitutional precedent by many) but went toward the development failures of his regime, i.e. the \$10 billion indebtedness scandal of Indonesia's huge oil conglomerate Pertamina, the allegations of huge bribes of senior Indonesian officials by major foreign corporations like Lockheed, Hughes Aircraft, and the Ford Motor Company,¹¹⁾ the malversations in the operations of the government's rice distribution program as administered by its National Logistics Board (BULOG), and the spectacular corruption in government supervised credit services (in early October, 1977 a banker and a real estate tycoon were discovered to have been able to obtain fraudulently no less than 15 billion Rupiah in loans). All this, while the mass of Indonesians has been struggling to get along on an average per capita income of \$128 in 1973, one of the lowest in the region (Malaysia's was \$330, the Philippines' \$272 that same year), and when in fact, according to Professor Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, Indonesia's leading economist, the poorest 40 percent sector of the Indonesian population now accounts for

10) *The Straits Times* (Singapore), June 29 and July 1, 1977.

11) *The New York Times*, January 25, 1977 and June 4, 1978; *The Wall Street Journal*, November 17, 1975.

only about 15 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.¹²⁾

The maldistribution in income and other benefits of the *Orba* era has seemed to Indonesian students and other critics hardly to justify the political authoritarianism and the “don’t rock the boat” national security obsessions of the Suharto regime. On January 16, 1978, the Student Council of the Institute of Technology in Bandung, West Java, issued a “White Book,” which succinctly summarized the case against Suharto, and took the regime to task for a number of policy failures ranging from the persistent social injustices in the economy and the preponderant position of Chinese and foreign capital interests in business life, to the lack of a meaningful role for parliament, the MPR, and the political parties. Earlier, in various “dialogues” with cabinet ministers on various campuses, students had harped on numerous instances of bribery, illegal levies (i.e. “protection money”) and other abuses of power by military and other public officials. The core of truth in such students’ charges was, in fact, confirmed by the government’s own anti-corruption campaign (called “Operasi Tertib” or *Opstib*, for short) launched in July, 1977 as the students’ “Sadikin for President” campaign got under way. *Opstib*, which has continued until the present as an earnest of Suharto’s intentions during his third Presidential term, has seen the arrest of scores of officials and military, mostly for charging illegal “fees” from a gullible, bureaucracy-ridden public. In one notable case, a government prosecutor was arrested in September, 1977 for illegally collecting one million Rupiah from a defendant whom the prosecutor, had charged with a criminal offense in a land transaction dispute.¹³⁾

As for the ineffectiveness of parliament, the latter’s leaders have in effect agreed with the students on that score. When on September 9, 1977, the parliament dissolved itself at the end of its term, the Speaker, Dr. Idham Chalid, admitted publicly that parliament had not exercised its right to question the government on a number of policy issues as it should have, and he added that he was aware that the Indonesian public had become “extremely critical and disappointed” with the House’s performance. Even during the meeting of the MPR which elected Suharto to his third Presidential term, a movement was growing among the deputies that the traditional principle of consensus in their decision making be abandoned and that, henceforth, decisions be reached on the basis of majority vote — a prospect likely to be tried in the coming year in the new parliament.

Officially, however, the Suharto regime has remained wholly unwilling to make any significant gesture of conciliation to the students or even to establish some formal machinery that could be applied to possible future strains. Hence, today, with campuses quiet again, for the moment, the stage is set for new confrontations. In the more than a decade long history of the Suharto regime, each period of student dissent, particularly since the early seventies, has been more vehement than its predecessor. In the

12) Sumitro Djohadikusumo, “Indonesia Toward the Year 2000,” *Ekonomi dan Keuangan Indonesia* (Jakarta), September, 1975. Also cited in Willard A. Hanna, “Through A Glass Gloomily,” *American Universities Field Staff Reports*, Southeast Asia Series, Vol. 24, No. 5, 1976, pp. 2-3.

13) *The Indonesia Times* (Jakarta), September 22, 1977.

July, 1977-March, 1978 period, the student marches and demonstrations were bigger, more frequent and widespread (e.g. campuses as distant as Medan, North Sumatra, and Makassar, Sulawesi, became involved), and often more provocative. Unsurprisingly, the government's reaction to them also was sharper and more uncompromising.

Already by the close of November, 1977, a worried Suharto was warning that unless "feelings of dissatisfaction" would be expressed in "democratic" and "legal ways," there would be "chaos and split" in the country. At the same time it was becoming evident that some Army units were being affected by the student demonstrations, and, particularly in the Army's crack Siliwangi Division in West Java, some officers began expressing open sympathy with the students. Pamphlets started circulating in the Division urging its personnel to stage a revolt against Suharto. The daily *Berita Yudha*, mouthpiece of the Indonesian Army, warned critics of the governments to cease their attacks, contending that the Communists would exploit any situation to their own benefit.¹⁴ Clearly Army commanders were becoming alarmed. In mid-December, twenty-five senior armed forces commanders, after meeting with Defense Minister Maraden Panggabean, issued a statement warning that they would "crush" any "subversive" tendency in the country or any attempt to prevent the forthcoming MPR from discharging its responsibilities. The latter warning seemed ambiguous: some observers saw it as a veiled warning that the armed forces leaders would not tolerate the MPR's election of someone other than Suharto as President.

Within days the armed forces commanders' warning had cost them a remonstrance by their most prestigious colleague, retired General A.H. Nasution, who asserted publicly: "I cannot agree with the military action against the students. In fact the students have noble ideas which will become a reality one day ... or maybe tomorrow." This rebuke by Nasution, who is known to have friends in the PPP and other Muslim quarters, was an astonishing "first" in Indonesian political history — an indication that top Army leaders were publicly split in their support for Suharto. Nasution was not alone, and the anti-Suharto movement soon was to see yet another "first," namely a direct effect on Indonesia's foreign affairs by the President's critics. For on January 24, 1978, the Indonesian government decided to remove the former Siliwangi Division Commander, Lieutenant General H.R. Dharsono, from his post as Secretary General of ASEAN. The reason was that Dharsono, in a West Java campus speech, had charged that the gap between rich and poor was widening in Indonesia, and in the same address the popular general had accentuated other favorite themes of student critics of the regime. The decision to remove Dharsono necessitated hurried and embarrassing diplomatic missions by Indonesia to other ASEAN capitals to explain and justify his dismissal, even as Foreign Ministry spokesmen kept insisting that Dharsono would not be removed. Clearly, as the ASEAN's Secretary General's office was still in the process of being organized (it had been established formally only at the February, 1976 ASEAN summit conference at Denpasar, Bali), the whole episode did the fledgling regional organization little good.

In retrospect, the Suharto regime today has reason to be pleased that, ominously

14) *Berita Yudha* (Jakarta), November 2, 1977 (also FBIS, November 3, 1977).

threatening as the student led revolt sometimes seemed, in the end it lacked a sufficiently broad base to topple the government. At first, however, a serious confrontation seemed to loom ever larger. During the first weeks of 1978 Army units began clashing more frequently with irate students, various campuses were surrounded by armored carriers, and sometimes formally or informally “occupied” by the military, newspapers were being banned, and Defense Minister Panggabean had announced that caches of illegal weapons had been discovered at Padjajaran University and at the Institute of Science (IKIP) in Bandung, West Java. Early in February, the Djakarta military command commenced a three day “exercise” in the capital aimed at “testing the alertness of military units.” It was apparent that army leaders were ready for a fight, but the show of force merely seemed to heighten the public tension and the atmosphere of foreboding. Significant was the appeal of Parliament Speaker (and soon to be Vice President) Adam Malik to “certain generals,” asking them to “stop talking politics” as this “could lead to more trouble among the population.” Malik said this a few days after Lieutenant General Kemal Idris, Commander of KOSTRAD (the Army’s Strategic Reserve) had told a meeting of students that the authorities had failed to understand the aspirations of young people and that the activities of students had been prompted “by the bad political and social situation in the country.”

By this time, some 200 students alone were under arrest for recent demonstrations. Rumors were rife that several students had died in detention centers under brutal Army treatment and in fighting with troops. Government spokesmen alternately threw new fuel on the fire (as, e.g. Djakarta Police Chief Kodrat Samadikun did with his order on March 1, 1978, that private citizens turn in all their firearms within a week, and while military spokesmen kept threatening dire consequences for any one attempting to “upset” the MPR meeting), or attempted to calm down tempers (e.g. President Suharto’s repeated assurances that recently announced restrictions on student activities were not really designed to curb academic freedom but rather “to insure it of its proper place.”).

Yet, though students might keep on protesting Suharto’s re-election and urging the MPR to do its “democratic duty,” though the PPP grudgingly, and only at the last moment, formally agreed to support Suharto in the MPR for a third term and, meanwhile, kept the political pot boiling by refusing to agree to a government attempt to win greater recognition for the various indigenous mystical beliefs and sects (*kepertjajaan*) in the country’s religious life, though the Association of Indonesian Lawyers (*Peradin*) issued a formal demand on February 24, that the government release the arrested students, stop interfering with the press, and “restore democratic life” — though all these and similar developments kept up the pressure on Suharto and his regime, in the end the opposition buckled. Neither students, nor PPP leaders, nor Army, nor other critics were prepared to go out on the streets in a final showdown of force and risk a bloodbath. In the MPR the *Golkar* party and government appointed majority clearly had the needed votes to re-elect Suharto. And by the middle of March it was equally evident that the hard core of the armed forces would not be swayed, even by the criticism of respected colleagues like Generals Idris or Nasution.

Indeed, not even the perhaps most serious blow to Suharto's prestige which he had to sustain before his formal re-election by the MPR was enough to topple him. This was the refusal, which came during a March 11, 1978 cabinet session, of Suharto's Vice President, the respected Hamengku Buwono, Sultan of Djokjakarta, to let himself be nominated as Suharto's running mate for another term. The Sultan's refusal, ostensibly for "reasons of health," was widely rumored to have been caused by his distaste for the regime's high handed tactics against its dissenters. Adam Malik, Parliament Speaker and former Foreign Minister, an astute and adaptable politician, took the Sultan's place. Although Suharto's re-election by the MPR on March 22 formally was "unanimous and unopposed," only 842 of the 920 MPR members were in their seats at the MPR plenary session that elected Suharto and Malik. The large number of absences on a ceremoniously as important occasion as this signified the scope of persistent dissent.

President Suharto begins his third term with the relative confidence that the opposition that aligned itself against him lacks all effective internal cohesion. The liberal or even leftist oriented campus rebels who constituted much of the vanguard of the anti-Suharto campaign have little in common with Muslim traditionalists in and out of the PPP committed to the triumph of Islamic law. Moreover, taken as a whole, the student dissident groups themselves show important fissures, some being mere extensions of the older Muslim organizations that merged into the PPP, others having primarily secular nationalist and/or vaguely social democratic leanings. Next to *Golkar* (the government party), and the PPP there is only one party, the small Democratic Indonesia Party (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-PDI*), which in the elections of 1977 won about 8.6 % of the popular vote (1.41 % less than in the 1971 poll) and 29 seats. Composed of Christian confessional interests and the old, largely Java oriented, National Indonesian Party, the PDI supporters, historically fearful of Islamic political power, during the anti-Suharto student campaign showed no inclination to form a more solid opposition front with others. Thus, in the aftermath of the 1977-78 anti-Suharto movement, nothing has become clearer than that changes in *Orba's* leadership will have to be made through pressures from within the ranks of the top military-business establishment that undergirds the regime. It was the uncertainty as to just what their allies stood for, as much as the quixotic lack of organization at the critical moments of confrontation, and an unwillingness to drive a clash to the point of bloodshed, that caused the Indonesian student revolt in the end to sputter and fail.

Today, campus dissidents pledge themselves to new tactical departures, e.g. "constructive criticism" of the government, and, like their fellow student rebels in Thailand three years ago, to a campaign of winning support "among the people" by performing volunteer village construction and farming labor. Meanwhile, scores of the less serious offenders among the student demonstrators are being released. The new Minister of Education, Dr. Daud Jusuf, has announced a phased, campus "normalization," process, including re-activation of university student councils and seminars which will "teach students how to use the tools of analysis in discussing social life." Students will not be barred from their political activities so long as these do not "hamper" students "from

attending to their studies.”¹⁵⁾ These formulations have already aroused new student criticism. But, fresh from its MPR mandate, *Orba*'s leadership is not likely to be impressed. In Suharto's new cabinet and in the public administrative sector, the dominant role of the military is as conspicuous as before. Of the three principal “minister coordinators” in the new cabinet two are generals, and such a prominent figure in the military and intelligence field as General Ali Murtopo now holds the Information Ministry. Suharto confidant, General Darjatmo, a former Kopkamtib staff chief, has become Speaker of Parliament. Admiral Sudomo, previously chief of staff (or No. 2) in Kopkamtib now assumes the top post of this security agency (taking over the No. 1 position from President Suharto himself), while simultaneously becoming deputy commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces.

Speaking at the dedication of a “National Press Monument” in Solo, Central Java, President Suharto, on February 9, 1978, had already declared that “exercising freedom for freedom's sake is a luxury we cannot afford.” On April 24, 1978, in addressing officials of the Religious Affairs Ministry, Suharto warned all Indonesian Muslims that his government, in future, might have to prohibit certain religious leaders from preaching in public or to give sermons, in order to prevent an “unfavorable” situation from emerging in a particular area. The reason for this announcement clearly was connected with the government's continuing fear of the political implications of religious pronouncements by Muslim leaders. But in the orthodox Muslim community, especially, Suharto's statement was seen as but another anti-Muslim attack. Also judging by the announcement that unauthorized meetings of more than five persons are forbidden, and by the arrests of Junaidi, Suny, et al., noted above, it is evident that Indonesia's President sees the MPR's mandate of a third term in office for him as essentially a confirmation of *Orba*'s “don't rock the boat” philosophy, even as the old problems of maldistribution of wealth, corruption and mismanagement which fueled the opposition against the President's regime are likely to persist.

Suharto's re-election has clearly pleased and produced new signs of aid from his regime's powerful foreign supporters. The Inter-Governmental Group of Indonesia (IGGI), an international aid consortium of mainly advanced Western powers and banks that has been pumping billions of dollars in development aid and credit into Indonesia for more than a decade, agreed on May 24, 1978 to grant Indonesia yet another \$2.5 billion to finance various development projects. U.S. Vice President Walter Mondale, visiting in Djakarta made it a point on May 6, 1978, to meet and discuss civil rights problems in Indonesia with a number of reportedly “non-official Indonesians.” But a clearer indication of the American position, perhaps, was the Indonesian government's May 9, 1978, announcement, in the wake of the Mondale visit, that Washington had offered Djakarta the wherewithal for a modern armament factory, producing M-16 automatic rifles, and also to provide a squadron of A-4 Skyhawk jet fighters in addition to the already approved request for a squadron of F-5E Tiger jets.

15) *The Indonesia Times*, June 1, 1978.

Amidst such gestures of foreign confidence, however, seemingly intractable problems remain such as the persistent corruption (the success of the government's anti-corruption campaign should not be judged by the number of officials caught, but from its value as "a deterrent," a Home Ministry spokesman said in mid-May), and the slowing rice production and maldistribution (on the East Indonesian island of Flores, in April, more than 50 persons died "because local officials could not decide what levy the rice trucks should be paying").¹⁶⁾ Because of the depreciation of the U.S. dollar, the real value of Indonesian exports in the past three years, though rising in dollar numbers has actually decreased by some 19 percent, and production of existing oil fields (e.g. Caltex' Minas field in Sumatra) is swiftly running out and no new fields have been opened, partly because Suharto's recent unilateral increases in production sharing returns has discouraged companies from exploring. New case studies reveal the serious polarizations of wealth in the village society, where "many" high school graduates seek to become "peasants, rubber tappers and woodcutters" for want of employment opportunities commensurate with their training, as meanwhile three million a year are added to the nation's total population of 138 million.¹⁷⁾

Although, in consequence largely of foreign clamoring, thousands of political prisoners, held because of suspected complicity in the 1965 coup, are finally being released, it says something about the pressures on the Suharto regime today that former President Sukarno is about to be officially rehabilitated and that the Suharto government is considering bestowing the title *pahlawan nasional* (national hero) upon him.¹⁸⁾ Matters appear to have reached a point for this regime that a new official encomium for Sukarno has become a desirable gesture to make. Somewhat over a decade ago, when the Suharto regime began, it sought to put as much distance as possible between itself and the then publicly disgraced Sukarno. Neither the elections of 1977, nor the MPR's conferral in 1978 of a third Presidential term on the incumbent Suharto, can be taken as meaningful indications of domestic stability in Indonesia in the foreseeable future.

16) *Ibid.*, May 17, 1978, and *The Economist* (London), May 27, 1978.

17) See e.g. A. Harts-Broekhuis and H. Palte-Gooszen, *Demografische Aspecten van Armoede in een Javaans Dorp, Jambidan, D.I.Y.* (Geografisch Instituut, Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, 1977), and D. Hendyana, "Youth Problems: Job and Education," *The Indonesia Times*, February 10, 1978.

18) Antara despatch, Djakarta, May 22, 1978 (FBIS, May 23, 1978).