

## Round Table Workshop "Indonesia after the Asian Crisis — Plural Society between reform and disintegration"

Munich, October 29, 2001

Two years after the first democratic elections since 1955, the Herbert Quandt Foundation of the BMW AG in co-operation with the Department of Political Science of the University of Freiburg gathered a round of experts from academia and business to discuss the achievements and prospects of the new democratic regime in Indonesia. In this conference, the second of its kind after last years expert round on China, the immediate and mid-term future of the Indonesian archipelago was at question in the face of a prolonged economic crisis, the still looming threat of disintegration and a democratisation process that is losing its dynamics. Establishing a link between domestic stability and international security issues, the events of September 11 have added an extra momentum to the Indonesian case and the workshop itself.

Speaking on the sustainability of the democratisation process, Prof. Theodor Hanf, Arnold Bergstraesser Institute Freiburg, gave a two-sided account on institutional and attitudinal issues. The unresolved question of amending or rewriting the constitution and the immense project-in-progress decentralisation both reflect the anxiety of the elite to lose control of its monopoly of power, resources, and symbols. Whereas decentralisation is essential for a pluralistic Indonesian society, Hanf warned against rushing this process. Some of its evident drawbacks are the loss of the state monopoly of the use of force and the emergence of various types of conflicts, be they endogenously produced (transmigration) or manipulated by religious motivations. The latter type occurred inter alia due to the activities of Laskar Jihad whose agenda involves the Islamization of Indonesia.

On a more positive note, Hanf affirmed the existence of a significant majority of the populace with clearly democratic attitudes. While the proportion of reliable democrats is positively correlated to rising incomes and higher education, the thesis of modernisation theory linking democratisation with economic growth is reversed in Indonesia: Democratisation is a result of economic downturn and crisis.

For the successful consolidation of democracy, transition theory accords a central role to political parties. However, in Prof. Ingrid Wessels', Humboldt University Berlin, analysis, the Indonesian party System is as fragmented and authoritarian as it lacks programmatic appeals and firm roots within society. Not only have parties thus far contributed little to the solving of socio-economic problems, their appreciation in society is extremely low due to their personalization and focus on power and patronage politics. Reformists are having a difficult stand in the face of a conservative re-orientation of party elites. As elsewhere in Asia, there is no party on the left side of the political spectrum, which leaves the handling of socio-economic issues to extra-parliamentary arenas, thus risking radicalisation. The dominant if only cleavage is between secular and religious parties both of whom are predicted to resort to money politics and patronage in the coming elections in 2004.

To this rather grim picture, the argument was added that due to the identified fragmentation there are checks and balances within society not allowing any dominant

force to implement its own agenda. On the other hand, this leaves ample room for blocking any move towards reform.

Turning to ethno-religious conflicts and separatism, Dr. Martin Ramstedt of the International Institute for Asian Studies at Leiden, Netherlands, saw the Suharto-clan and the military at the heart of the issue. Having seen the manipulating potential of these forces even under the New Order, intra-elite power games are now carried out to destabilize the fragile democracy. Acknowledging a high organisational potential, Dr. Ramstedt explained the links between the old regime, the military, military-trained militias, their use of criminals (*preman*) and ethno-religious motives. Added to this view was the interpretation that there are also small-scale operating groups with individual and often material as well as religious objectives. However, it was agreed that religion, more precisely Islamism, played only a secondary role in most of the conflicts designated as religious conflicts. One participant observed the Islamic radicalism in Indonesia as less virulent than elsewhere, being as there is even an opposition to the perceived Arab imperialism. It was concluded that the key in solving these conflicts were in social justice and the restoring of the state monopoly of the use of force.

Focusing on the most relevant veto power in Indonesia's democratising process, Dr. Klaus Schreiner of INFID (International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development), Brussels, reported on the state of the Indonesian military (TNI) and its reform. He saw little progress. The TNI are still hanging on to their old doctrine, i.e. they are unwilling to give up *dwifungsi* as their ideology and the territorial structure as their real power base. Whereas professionalization and civilisation have made little progress, civilian politicians are unwilling or incapable of implementing civilian primacy over the military. Instead of taking responsibility for reform by controlling the military budget, politicians have too gladly used the military for their politicization. Unfortunately, Megawati's taking over has not brought any clear signs of ambition to exclude the military from politics, to reform its inner structure and to deal with past abuses of power.

Speaking on 'Human rights and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*', Dr. Anja Jetschke, University of Freiburg, continued in exploring the role of the military and the efforts to come to terms with its past actions. Explaining that Indonesia has chosen the remarkable way of prosecution under criminal law and established a criminal court, Dr. Jetschke nevertheless concluded that due to the lack of legal certainty no case has yet been brought to court. This in turn has prevented any meaningful attempt to come to terms with the past as well as the coming to life of constitutional institutions to deal with past human rights abuses. Dr. Jetschke emphasized the importance of international pressure, however, given the contemporary international situation with its priority on 'Realpolitik' instead of a human rights focus, this pressure is likely to be reduced. On a concluding note, the military was seen as still being part of the problem in its need of conflicts to legitimize its very existence. However, a civilian effort to reform the military's role and to bring it under civilian supremacy can — for the time being — not be expected.

Little positive news has one heard about the Indonesian economy. Dr. Rüdiger Machetzi, Institute for Asian Studies, Hamburg, was not able to deliver any either. His



prospects for economic recovery were grim: a weak growth rate, high indebtedness, very little Foreign Direct Investment, the remaining of capital abroad. Even more troubling, there have been no and there are no signs for any substantial *reforms*. The most important reasons are to be found in the widespread absence of the rule of law and an effective judicial system as well as the deadlock in parliament, where nationalist ideas have gained prominence and a return to the corporatist Asian model is aspired. Adding to the prevailing uncertainty is the current decentralization drive in which a lack of supervision and monitoring has caused an abundance of economy-hampering regulations.

Rounding up the conference, Prof. Jürgen Rüländ, University of Freiburg, invited on a fast-pace tour on Indonesia's foreign policy. The main thesis was to expect inconsistent see-saw policies, the argument being backed up theoretically in that young democracies in their search for identity are aspiring for a truly autonomous foreign policy. Often attempting to compensate domestic problems, democratising countries by no means guarantee civil, community-oriented policies. International relations in Southeast Asia are still dominated by the realism-paradigm resulting in a state of paralysis within ASEAN after Indonesia's resigning from its leadership claim. Given the lack of agreement on organisational principles and alternative leadership, ASEAN has failed to manage both the financial and the East Timor crisis. Recent initiatives for new regional fora or the extending of ASEAN becoming ASEAN+3 are signs for the diversion of attention as well as the attempt to regain bargaining power in international fora. With the events of September 11, however, there is a new perspective for collective action, both within ASEAN and for more Indo-US co-operation.

Mirko Herberg/Jürgen Rüländ

### **Bericht zur siebten Tagung des Münsteraner Asien-Pazifik-Forums (MAPF): "Die Philippinen zwischen Aufbruch und Abstieg"**

Münster, 9.-19.11.2001

Mit der Absetzung Josef Estradas und dem Antritt Gloria Macapagal Arroyos als neuer Präsidentin stellt sich auf den Philippinen, denen lange unter den zehn ASEAN-Staaten die besten Zukunftsaussichten prophezeit wurden, nun die Frage "Aufbruch oder Abstieg".

Im Januar 2001 hatte die Bürgerbewegung "People Power II" die Amtsenthebung Estradas bewirkt. Während dies einerseits als Ausdruck einer funktionierenden Demokratie angesehen wurde, wirft dieser eilige Machtwechsel andererseits einige Fragen auf. Vor allem die Geschwindigkeit, mit der in Manila "aufgeräumt" wurde, rückt die Ereignisse in die Nähe eines Putsches. Die von Präsidentin Arroyo angeführte People's Power Coalition hat zwar bei den Wahlen am 14. Mai 2001 einen hauchdünnen Sieg errungen, aber die soziale und politische Polarisierung auf den Philippinen besteht nach wie vor. Eine wirtschaftliche Erholung von der Asienkrise von 1997 ist ebenfalls derzeit nicht in Sicht.