

The New Order of General Soeharto

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Summary

In this article an attempt is made to determine to what extent the policies of General Soeharto constitute a principal change from those of the late President Sukarno. It is maintained here that a number of important policy changes have been effected in particularly the foreign affairs and economic fields, and that different political forces have now the controlling influence in internal politics. At the same time it is suggested that the political style and form of government in Indonesia has not yet changed to the extent to justify the regime's claim of having established a New Order. However, the changes that have taken place so far are seen here as indicating a possibility in the future for changes in the polity as well.

When General Soeharto between 1966 and 1968 gradually replaced Sukarno in the Indonesian presidency, the military clearly became the dominant political force. Army leaders pronounced the arrival of a "New Order" but many critics of the new regime dismissed this claim. For them the "New Order" was not much more than the "Old Order minus Sukarno and the Communist Party": the slogans had changed, admittedly, but all powers continued to rest with and originate in the government. In this article an attempt will be made to evaluate whether — and to what extent — military rule has transformed the politics and polity of the country.

Basic Policies

From March onwards, after President Sukarno had been forced to sign what commonly came to be known as the March 11 Order, in which he transferred significant political powers to General Soeharto, and before Soeharto was elected Acting President by the Provisional People's Deliberative Congress (MPRS) in March 1967, a number of policy decisions were made which greatly affected the politics of Indonesia. These policies, it will be suggested here, both reflected values which had been current in the officer corps for some time, and were designed to establish and maintain the new elite in power.

1. The Banning of the Communist Party of Indonesia

Most Indonesian army officers have held strongly anti-communist convictions ever since the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) unsuccessfully rebelled at Madiun in 1948 against the embattled Republic of Indonesia which was fighting for survival against the Dutch. Moreover a majority of the officers are drawn from the upper

strata of the Indonesian society and are basically hostile towards radical socialism.

After the attainment of national sovereignty in 1949 the officers witnessed with some dismay the resurgence of "the traitors of Madiun". During the period of "Guided Democracy" (1959–1965) the PKI with the support of President Sukarno developed rapidly into the largest and most powerful political party, contesting the army's position of power in almost every field.

On October 1, 1965 the army commander, General A. Yani, and five of his colleagues were kidnapped and killed by a "September 30 Movement" under the leadership of army and air force officers in contact with the Communists. The emerging new army leadership around General Soeharto was convinced that this movement was masterminded by the PKI¹. Partly to avenge their slain comrades, partly to rid themselves of their most dangerous competitors for the succession of the ailing President, but also out of conviction that Communism would not provide a suitable political format for Indonesia, the army officers moved forcefully against the PKI. Party leaders were arrested, some were summarily shot, while others were put before a military tribunal. Where communists tried to organize resistance, army crack troops broke it up. In several instances local army commanders tacitly consented while Moslems, Nationalists, and Christians, frustrated in years of severe intimidation by the powerful PKI, killed communists and their sympathisers by the hundred thousands. Significantly, in areas where the army was firmly in control as in West Java and Djakarta, army commanders were content with just arresting communists, and comparatively few of these lost their lives. In areas such as East Java and Atjeh, where the Moslem population conducted a "holy war" against the communists, the army had no means to stop the mass slaughter², even if some army commanders had had the intention of doing so. But even officers who resented the extent of the blood-letting were probably not really prepared to employ force against those sections of the society whose backing they needed in destroying the PKI as a political party.

While the Communist Party organization was being destroyed President Sukarno continued to cling to his concept of NASAKOM, National Unity built on a front of Nationalists, Religious Groupings, and the Communists. In fact his refusal to give in to the demand of the anti-communist groupings to ban the PKI only forced these groups to intensify their campaign against the communists. As soon as General Soeharto had been charged on March 11, 1966 with restoring internal security the already defunct Communist Party was formally banned.

2. Economic Development

The Indonesian army had taken an interest in economic matters for a long time. This is mainly due to the realization that the military is only as strong as the national

¹ The army's point of view is best summarized in Nugroho Notokusanto and Ismail Saleh, *The Coup Attempt of the "September 30 Movement in Indonesia"*, Djakarta, 1967.

² It has to be borne in mind that a very large proportion of the army combat troops were still deployed along the Malaysian border and opposite the Malayan peninsula in the framework of the anti-Malaysia "confrontation" policy.

economy is able to finance and equip it, and to the ideological commitment of the army to the goals of the independence struggle which include the creation of a just and prosperous society³.

After March 1966 the military leaders and their civilian allies addressed themselves to the task of re-building an economy which suffered from mismanagement, corruption, shortage of foreign exchange, collapse of the infrastructure, exhaustion of capital equipment and, above all, from a crippling inflation. But such a radical departure from Sukarno's policy of neglecting the economy for the sake of pursuing his particular brand of "revolution", constituting a complete re-arrangement of national priorities, was felt to require legitimization. Therefore, against Sukarno's will, the MPRS (Provisional Consultative People's Congress), the highest policy-making body under the Indonesian constitution, was convened to legislate on this matter. The MPRS had been purged of its PKI faction, and in order to secure consent for new policies left-leaning Sukarnoist delegates from other parties were replaced by more amenable representatives of the non-communist parties. Furthermore, the army enhanced its influence in the Congress by having General Nasution elected Chairman of the MPRS⁴. On July 5, 1966 the MPRS, partly under army pressure but also reflecting the anxiety of large sections of the community over the virtual collapse of the economy, instructed General Soeharto to form an "AMPERA" ("Message of the People's Suffering") Cabinet, setting as its chief tasks the achievement of "political and economic stabilization"⁵.

The first step towards economic stabilization of the new cabinet was, following another MPRS Decision, to formally abandon the costly "confrontation" against Malaysia. This opened the way to an improvement of relations with western creditor nations which then agreed to a moratorium of immediately re-payable loans and interests, and also to provide further aid. But it was not before the election of Acting President Soeharto as full president in March 1968 that economic reconstruction got seriously under way. These efforts concentrated in the first place on arresting the inflation, freeing overseas trade from many of its restrictions, and providing basic commodities for the population. All purchases of military hardware were completely halted, and the military budget slashed⁶. Furthermore, the Soeharto

³ The goals of the struggle for independence, usually referred to as the "revolution", are expressed in two documents: the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution and the **Pantja Sila** (the Five Pillars). For the 1945 Constitution see Daniel S. Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy: Indonesian Politics 1957-1959*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project Monograph Series, 1966, pp. 290 ff. For a discussion of the **Pantja Sila** see Roeslan Abdulgani, *Pantjasila, the Prime Mover of the Indonesian Revolution*, Djakarta, n.d., especially pp. 14 ff.

⁴ A. H. Nasution had commanded the army in 1950-52, and again in 1955-62, when he was promoted to Armed Forces Chief-of-Staff. During "Guided Democracy" he served also as Minister of Defence and Security. On October 1, 1965 an attempt was made on his life by the "September 30 Movement" but he escaped. He was sacked by Sukarno as Minister of Defence in February 1966.

⁵ Decisions No. XIII and XXIII/MPRS/1966. For all 1966 MPRS decisions referred to in this article see Decisions of the Fourth Plenary Session of the *Madjelis Permusjawaratan Rakjat Sementara*, 20th of June-5th of July 1966, publ. by the Department of Information.

⁶ See, for instance, **Djakarta Times** of September 6, 1967, and **Kompas** (Catholic Djakarta daily) of January 29, 1969. The cuts in the military budget resulted in a shortage of ammunition and the run-down of equipment to an extent which endangers national security. See Nasution's statement in the **Djakarta Times** of August 17, 1967.

government drew up an overall strategy for the rehabilitation of the economy in the form of a 5-Year Development Plan, the implementation of which began on April 1, 1969. This plan aims at increasing the standard of living of the people and accumulating funds for furthering the industrialization of Indonesia⁷.

But this policy should also be seen in a wider context, in the framework of a strategy to keep the present rulers in power, and the communists out. Although the PKI had been crushed the danger of its possible resurgence looms in the minds of many government supporters. Discussing the threat of communist subversion and insurgency, possibly sponsored by China, Soedjatmoko, a leading civilian ally of Soeharto, concluded that it "is not a nation's military capability that will chiefly determine its capacity to overcome these threats to internal security, but rather the cohesion of its political system, the viability and the effectiveness of its government in dealing with the problems of poverty, social inequalities and injustices, in bringing about economic development and in continually expanding its base for popular participation"⁸.

3. Political Stability and Internal Security

The army had from its inception been involved in maintaining internal security for the sake of achieving political stability. During the struggle for independence the army put down a major communist insurrection, and continuously policed unruly bands of "freedom fighters". After the attainment of national sovereignty, whenever Sukarno and the politicians failed to maintain national unity and order by political means, the army went into action against separatists, fanatical Moslems striving for an Islamic state, and regionalists opposing the central government. In these operations the army employed military as well as political means to achieve pacification. Military force was fully used in instances where there was no room for negotiations because of the degree of ideological commitment on the part of the insurgents, and/or because of the level of terrorism employed by them, as in the cases of the communist revolt in Madiun, the "September 30 Movement", the fanatical Moslem organization **Darul Islam**, and the Moluccan separatists. In the case of the regionalist rebellions enough common ground could be found for negotiations to enable the army command to use at least partly political means to overcome these crises.

These patterns have been maintained since Soeharto came to power. When communists attempted to establish a base for guerilla warfare in Blitar in East Java the army destroyed the base and rounded up the assembled communists by

⁷ See Rentjana Pembangunan Lima Tahun, 1969/70—1973/74 (The 5-Year Development Plan . . .), publ. by the Department of Information, Djakarta, 1969).

⁸ Southeast Asia in the 1970's: The New Multi-Polarity (Lecture given at the American University, Washington, D. C., January 19, 1970), circulated by the Embassy of Indonesia in Washington.

For a more recent reference to the dangers of communist subversion with the support of China, see the statement of Foreign Minister Adam Malik in Singapore, reported in **Nusantara** (Moslem Djakarta daily), of April 19, 1972.

force⁹. In Northern Borneo, Indonesian and Malaysian troops combined their efforts to crush remnant communist guerillas. On the other hand, insurrections by West Irianese have often been put down with a combination of tactics including demonstrating military might, offering generous terms of surrender, and giving in to demands of the rebels¹⁰.

Since Soeharto became President, Indonesia has experienced a period characterized by a high degree of internal security and political stability, unmatched by any other period in her turbulent history. The disturbances mentioned above are miniscule compared with the upheavals the country went through until 1967.

This achievement can only partly be explained by the fact that the present government has sufficient loyal troops at its disposal to put down any rebellion. More important is that the government contains crises before they can erupt in major upheavals by treating radical politics of any shade as a security matter. Political stability has thus come to be seen as almost synonymous to internal security.

Consequently, military intelligence organizations such as the KOPKAMTIB (Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order), OPSUS (Special Operations Branch), and BAKIN, the military-run state intelligence organization, play an extremely active role in today's politics¹¹. These organizations often enough over-step their responsibilities and lean heavily on any person or body whom they may regard as a possible threat to political stability/internal security. The accusation of "over-reacting", a word General Nasution introduced in this context into the Indonesian language, is almost constantly levelled against especially KOPKAMTIB and OPSUS. But the government, which is occasionally sensitive enough to respond to such criticism, is basically of the opinion that the advantages of its methods to maintain order outweigh the disadvantages, and that the country must be prepared to pay a price for the maintenance of political stability and security which are seen as indispensable prerequisites for economic development.

4. An "Independent and Active" Foreign Policy

During 1966 the leaders of the "New Order" effected significant tactical changes in Indonesia's foreign policy without abandoning the Indonesian dream of becoming the dominant power in Southeast Asia. Not only was the anti-Malaysia "confrontation" halted, but also Sukarno's "Djakart—Peking axis" dissolved and the relations with China "frozen". According to the new rulers Sukarno in fostering extremely

⁹ For a detailed description see *Operasi Trisula KODAM VIII/Brawidjaja* (Operation "Trisula" of the Military Area Command VIII/Brawidjaja), publ. by the History Section of the 8th Military Area Command, Soerabaja, 1969. A somewhat inflated account of communist activities since the overthrow of Sukarno is contained in J. M. van der Kroef, *Indonesia since Sukarno*, Singapore, 1971, chapter 5.

¹⁰ A good example is the arrangement of the government with the rebellious Arfak people of the Manokwari district in West Irian in 1968. The rebels gained freedom from prosecution, were supplied with housing and live stock, and their leader, L. Mandatjan, was made a major in the Indonesian army in return for laying down their arms.

¹¹ For the best account so far of the activities of the main intelligence services see Peter Polomka, *Indonesia since Sukarno*, Penguin, 1971, chapter 7.

close links with China to a degree that threatened Indonesia's capacity for independent manoeuvre, had violated the absolute principle of Indonesia's desired posture in world politics, namely to follow an "independent and active foreign policy" between East and West, opposing imperialism and colonialism while maintaining friendship with all nations¹².

Seeing the army breaking the ties with Peking and turning to the West for aid led some observers to conclude that the military had set Indonesia on a pro-Western course. In fact, it would be more accurate to describe the attitude of the Indonesian officers as nationalist and pro-Indonesia rather than pro-West, with a considerable amount of distrust in the policies of Western countries. Warning of the attempts of "imperialist and colonialist powers" to "achieve ideological and political domination over Indonesia, exploit the economy, and penetrate Indonesia's culture" an army conference in 1966 and another conference of all armed services resolved that the national defence policy in the international field must be based on two principles: efforts should be directed at achieving international cooperation in the struggle against imperialism and colonialism, and at regional cooperation to create stability in Southeast Asia¹³.

Given the heavy economic dependence of the "New Order" on Western creditor nations for the financing of its 5-Year Development Plan, one may indeed question to what extent Indonesia can remain independent of the "imperialist and colonialist powers". In a policy statement on the Development Plan before parliament Soeharto on January 14, 1969 re-asserted that the "independent and active foreign policy" of Indonesia will be retained but added that "foreign policy must serve the necessities of internal politics, particularly to benefit the economic development". Clarifying this statement he said that aid would be accepted from any country that is willing to contribute to the development of Indonesia without imposing political conditions¹⁴. Also, in order not to become exclusively dependent on the West, the Soeharto administration endeavoured to re-establish economic cooperation with the Soviet Union which had been suspended after October 1965.

Despite massive Western aid Indonesia abstained from joining SEATO or the anti-communist ASPAC. Instead, the Soeharto government took the initiative in 1967 in bringing about the formation of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), a grouping with Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. ASEAN is aimed

¹² Of course, it must not be overlooked in this context that the army dissolved the "axis" also because China had maintained close links with the PKI, and was seen as having secretly supplied arms for the "September 30 Movement", and as sponsoring the PKI underground after 1965.

¹³ See Doktrin Perjuangan TNI-AD "Tri Ubaya Cakti" (The Army's Struggle Doctrine "Tri Ubaya Cakti"), publ. by the Secretary of the 2d Army Seminar, 1966, pp. 38 f; and Doktrin Pertahanan-Keamanan Nasional dan Doktrin Perjuangan Angkatan Bersendjata Republik Indonesia "Tjatur Darma Eka Karma" (The National Defence and Security Doctrine and the Struggle Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia "Tjatur Darma Eka Karma"), publ. by the Defence and Security Staff, 2d ed., 1967, pp. 18-47.

¹⁴ See Keterangan Pemerintah pada Pembahasan Tingkat I Rentjana Undang-Undang Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belandja Negara 1969/70 Berserta Pendjelasan tentang Rentjana Pembangunan Lima Tahun 1969/70-1973/74 (Government Statement in the Discussion on the First Reading of the National Income and Budget Proposals for 1969/70 and Clarification on the 5-Year Development Plan 1969/70 to 1973/74), publ. by the Dept. of Information, Seri Amanat No. 14, pp. 17 f.

at improving economic, cultural, and communication ties, and achieving stability in the region by political cooperation amongst its members against outside powers interfering in the region¹⁵.

In the minds of many officers and civilian backers of the government ASEAN may well develop into the rallying point for those Southeast Asian countries which feel threatened by China and have not yet been absorbed into the orbit of Peking. In the calculation of these Indonesians, Indonesia with her population totalling approximately 120 million, her economic potential, and her military capacity, will conceivably assume a position of leadership within ASEAN¹⁶, thus enhancing her standing in world politics.

The "New Order" Polity

Soeharto's policies as outlined above can be regarded as having reversed some of Sukarno's past policies, particularly in the foreign affairs and economics field, or at least as having greatly affected the politics in Indonesia, as in the case of the banning of the PKI and the "New Order's" crisis management through intelligence services. But these policies and their results alone hardly warrant the description "New Order" for the post-Sukarno era unless they have paved the way for a change in the polity as well.

That such a change has taken or is taking place is denied by a number of Western observers and Western-educated Indonesians, despite the protestations of government leaders¹⁷ who insist that the "New Order" is a definite departure from the polity of the Sukarno era. Since the term "New Order" is unilluminating and in a way indicates reaction to something in the past rather than a new concept in its own right, government leaders coined a new expression for it, namely "Pantjasila Democracy".

1. Constitutional and Legal Fundamentals of the "Pantjasila Democracy"

On the surface the similarities between "Guided Democracy" and "Pantjasila Democracy" are indeed striking. Both systems are based on the **Pantja Sila**, the Five Pillars pronounced by Sukarno prior to national independence as the guiding principles of the future Republic. Both systems function on the basis of the "revolutionary" constitution of 1945 which stipulates a unitary state with a strong presidential executive. Neither the late President Sukarno nor General Soeharto subscribe

¹⁵ See the Declaration of Southeast Asia's Neutrality, signed by ASEAN members on November 27, 1971 in Kuala Lumpur.

¹⁶ In a draft paper titled "The Indonesian Army and the Security of Southeast Asia" (1972) Peter Polomka presents the view that Indonesia's partner in ASEAN may well have become already wary of her claim to a leadership role in the region.

¹⁷ The relationship between Western observers and the Indonesian government has steadily declined over the last few years with the Soeharto regime reportedly reacting to the sometimes coloured evaluations of its policies by making it more difficult for its most ardent critics to obtain entry permits into Indonesia. That a strong anti-military bias exists among Indonesianists has been argued in Ulf Sundhaussen, "The Military in Research on Indonesian Politics", *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXXI, No. 2 (February 1972).

to a Western-type, liberal democracy "where decisions are made by a majority against the minority", but rather to an Indonesian brand of democracy based on the traditional concepts of **gotong-rojong** (Mutual Help), **musjawarah**, extensive deliberation aimed at reaching **mufakat** (unanimous consent), in which the voices of minorities are meant to receive due attention¹⁸.

But in these apparent similarities there are a number of subtle, yet very significant distinctions. Government supporters will argue that Soeharto's policies come closer to the ideals of the **Pantja Sila** than those of the "Guided Democracy" era: with the elimination of the PKI there occurred a greater tolerance of religious communities, the **Sila** of Internationalism is better served by Soeharto's policies of international cooperation, and the implementation of the 5-Year Plan will relieve the suffering of the masses. There are not as many nationalistic pronouncements and exhibitions as during Sukarno's term of office but after all the chauvinism the former President demonstrated especially towards the end of his reign rather contradicted the meaning as well as the letter of the **Pantja Sila**. In fact, during "Guided Democracy" the **Pantja Sila** came to be increasingly replaced by new principles, slogans, and acronyms. In regard to the 1945 Constitution General Soeharto bluntly accused Sukarno of having abused the powers of the President under this constitution¹⁹. According to this view Sukarno had set himself up as a dictator, using intimidation to reduce the parliament and the MPRS to the status of mere rubber-stamps; under the pretext of implementing **musjawarah** and **mufakat** the President assumed the power of unilaterally making decisions whenever the **musjawarah** failed to produce **mufakat**.

One probably may not wholly accept this account, and one may have doubts as to what extent the present political system differs from Sukarno's regime. But while neither President has been an adherent of Western-democratic principles, the parliament as well as the MPRS have played a more significant role in the "New Order", mainly endorsing Soeharto's policy proposals and electing him duely to political office, but also occasionally obstructing, delaying, or modifying his plans, especially in regard to legislation concerning general elections²⁰. Some observers have accused Soeharto of making use of the legislative bodies primarily to enhance the legitimacy of his regime and to consolidate his power but this accusation, if valid, cannot alter the fact that the legislature does enjoy greater importance in the present political system.

It may equally be argued that the army leaders intend to build political institutions and foster what Huntington calls "institutionalization of politics": the creation of a system in which political processes are effected according to established norms²¹.

¹⁸ See, for instance, RE-SO-PIM, Sukarno's speech on August 17, 1961, publ. by the Dept. of Information, pp. 34-36. The point of view of the "New Order" is put by (General) Sajidiman Surjohadiprodjo, *Langkah-Langkah Perdjoangan Kita* (Steps in Our Struggle), publ. by the Dept. of Defence and Security, 1971, p. 80.

¹⁹ See Soeharto's speech before the MPRS on March 7, 1967, quoted in Hasil-Hasil Sidang Istimewa MPRS Pada Tahun 1967 (Results of the Special Session of the MPRS in 1967), publ. by C. V. Pantjuran Tudjuh, especially pp. 79 ff.

²⁰ See Herbert Feith, "Suharto's Search for A Political Format", *Indonesia*, Cornell University, No. 6 (October 1968), pp. 88-92.

²¹ For an explanation of "institutionalization" see Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Yale U. Press, 1968, p. 12.

Armies in control of political power often desire that the functions of government should be discharged in an "orderly" way, with "Law and Order" often overriding "untidy and divisive politics". Promoting, to a limited extent of course, the autonomy of existing institutions may, and in the case of Indonesia did, strengthen the position of the government vis-a-vis other political forces and particularly the detested populist politics of the Sukarno and PKI brand. The proposition that institution-building is a concern of the Soeharto administration is further substantiated by the fact that legal institutions, especially courts, have come to enjoy a relatively high degree of autonomy since the rise to power of Soeharto. During "Guided Democracy" Sukarno suspended the autonomy of the legislature as well as the judiciary and subjected them completely to the will of the executive. Since 1967 army leaders and their civilian supporters have time and again committed the regime to a "rule of law". Consequently, courts have become not independent of the government but **less** dependent than before, and judges and lawyers have acquired a **more** important status²². The regime has even acquiesced in the formation of an Institute of Human Rights, an anomaly in the context of the Indonesian political culture, whose liberal office bearers however suffer often enough from the suspicion and persecution of the intelligence services. But at least these men do not disappear for indefinite periods in prisons as would have been the case during "Guided Democracy".

So while there are indications that the Soeharto government is apparently trying to create within the framework of the 1945 Constitution a political order more democratic and more institutionalized than Sukarno's "democracy" it has, again, to be realized that the army has no intentions of allowing the re-establishment of Western-liberal democracy in Indonesia. According to the officers' point of view, and here they share their opinion with Sukarno, liberal democracy is totally unsuitable for a country like Indonesia where society is deeply divided along ethnic, regional, cultural, religious and political lines. In the societies of the developing countries national unity and territorial integrity have absolute priority over the concern for civil rights of individuals, the corner-stone of Western liberalism, which in regard to **Staatsraison** is considered as a divisive rather than integrative factor.

On the basis of this orientation, courts will not be permitted to become completely independent of the direction from the Department of Justice, but they are allowed a greater degree of autonomy. The legislature will not be completely free of the executive, and the simple fact that President Soeharto appoints 23 per cent of the members of parliament, and one third of the members of the People's Congress, amply testifies for this²³. Having elections at all is an improvement over the "Guided Democracy" period when members of the legislative bodies were all hand-picked by Sukarno. And while the concepts of **musjawarah** and **mufakat** will be maintained in parliamentary procedures they will not be used to enhance the position of the President by bestowing on him the power to make decisions whenever **mufakat** fails to emerge, but the house will take a vote after all resources

²² For the new status of the legal profession and institutions see Daniel S. Lev, "Judicial Institutions and Legal Culture in Indonesia", in Claire Holt (ed.), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, Cornell U. Press, 1972, pp. 273-280.

²³ See Government Ordinance No. 2/1970, dated January 13, 1970, chapter II.

to bring about consensus had been exhausted, thus keeping legislative powers within parliament²⁴.

However, whatever "Pantjasila Democracy" provides in terms of civil and political rights will not be available to those citizens who are regarded as having actively opposed the 1945 Constitution or the **Pantja Sila**. So neither communists nor activists in the regional rebellion 1958–62 were granted the right to vote or to be elected in the 1971 general elections²⁵. Or, to quote another example, thousands of communists are still being held without trial for their alledged involvement in the "September 30 Movement".

2. Political Parties and Representation

Much of the uncertainty about the character of the "New Order" must be attributed to the indecisiveness of the government during the years 1967 to 1970 in the debate on the status and functions of political parties. This lack of clear-cut action on the part of the government can be explained with the preoccupation of Soeharto with reversing Sukarno's policies, establishing his legitimacy vis-a-vis the public, and consolidating his position within the "New Order"-supporting groupings inside as well as outside the military. The consensus within these factions was restricted to the negative attitude of dethroning Sukarno and crushing the PKI, but beyond the policy of resurrecting the economy they could not agree on a positive program of re-building society. There were groups within the military who favoured the Moslems in their demands for a greater penetration of Islamic values into the coming political system. Some officers tacitly backed the Nationalist Party (PNI) which had been closely linked with Sukarno, in order to ward off too drastic a change in Indonesian politics. Most importantly, a group with a foothold in the Siliwangi Division of West Java worked towards a radical overhaul of the party system by trying to establish a 2-party system in which the government-supporting group and the opposition would both adhere to the basic values of the "New Order"²⁶. Moreover, elements in the air force, the navy, and the police showed considerable reluctance to cooperate with Soeharto in creating a new order. But between 1967 and 1969 Soeharto broke the resistance in the other armed services by integrating them more closely into the Department of Defence and Security which remained his personal portfolio apart from the presidency, and by down-grading service commanders to mere chiefs-of-staff. At the same time the leaders of particular army factions were gradually replaced and given less influential positions²⁷.

While this process of consolidation was still in progress Soeharto acted cautiously and hesitantly on the issue of political parties and their representation. There was

²⁴ See Sajidiman, *op. cit.*, pp. 81 f.

²⁵ It is interesting to note in this context that one of the foremost leaders of the regional rebellion, the economist Prof. Sumitro, is Minister for Trade in the Soeharto cabinet.

²⁶ See *Kebutulan Tekad Rakjat Djawa Barat untuk Meningkatkan Perdjuangan Orde Baru* (The Firm Determination of the People of West Java to Advance the Struggle of the New Order), n.pl., n.d.

²⁷ For a description of these measures see Ulf Sundhaussen, "The Fashioning of Unity in the Indonesian Army", *Asia Quarterly*, 1971, No. 2, especially pp. 209 f.

no disagreement among officers as to the future of the Communist Party: the PKI had to remain banned and excluded from politics since it was considered to be opposed to the democratic contents and spirit of both the 1945 Constitution and the **Pantja Sila**²⁸. In regard to the proposed re-constitution of the Masjumi, the main political party of the non-Javanese, modernist Moslems, which had been banned in 1960 by Sukarno for its involvement in the regional rebellion and its generally right-wing orientation, Soeharto had to take into account the distrust many officers (probably including himself) had of these former rebels against the central government. Masjumi was thus not permitted to re-emerge in its old format despite the fact that its followers had been active in crushing the PKI and replacing President Sukarno; instead, a new Moslem party, the **Partai Muslimin Indonesia**, was allowed to constitute itself to cater for the former Masjumi constituency. The Nationalist Party had been "frozen" by radical army commanders in the Outer Islands, but Soeharto successfully insisted that after a period of internal "crystallization" the PNI must be allowed to function again. Seven more political parties continued to exist, in some cases however only after they had purged their leadership bodies of Sukarnoists and "communist sympathisers".

But this did not mean that parties were free now from government control. The intelligence services frequently interfered with party congresses and limited the freedom of parties to deviate too far from government policies. Furthermore, all parties lost whatever foothold they had in the administration when the government instructed civil servants to leave either the political parties or the civil service.

Another blow came in 1970 when the government set out to build existing so-called "functional groups"²⁹ into a powerful, government-supporting political organization (GOLKAR) which with massive government support won an overwhelming victory in the 1971 elections³⁰. In these elections all political parties together won only 124 seats in a parliament of 460.

If Soeharto's assistance to the PNI, the formation of the new Moslem party, and the condemnation of the 2-party proposal are interpreted as actions in support of the political parties against "New Order" radicals then obviously a change in Soeharto's attitude vis-a-vis the parties must have occurred when he decided to build up GOLKAR as the government party. He apparently had come closer again to the traditional attitude of the majority of army officers that parties had only deepened the divisions in society; that they had lost their *raison d'être* when they became so divided in 1957 that they were unable to form a government coalition and when they, in the following years, submitted without much resistance to Sukarno's will;

²⁸ There is an interesting parallel here to the West German constitutional thinking. According to article 21 of the **Grundgesetz** (constitution) only political parties professing to the ideological principles of the state, i.e. liberal democracy, are allowed to exist.

²⁹ According to the 1945 Constitution the membership in the legislative bodies exists not only of representatives of political parties but also of delegates from so-called functional groups (such as peasants, businessmen, artists, youth and women organizations, and the military).

³⁰ For an account of the election campaign and the results see Donald Hindley, "Indonesia 1971: Pantjasila Democracy and the Second Parliamentary Elections", **Asian Survey**, Vol. XII, No. 1 (January 1972).

and that they had for a long time contributed nothing to the development of the country. In the eyes of these officers the parties had again proved their obsolescence when they used their new — admittedly limited — freedom after the downfall of Sukarno only to renew the old squabbles among themselves, to fight for positions and perquisites in the government apparatus, and to fail to back the government's policies on economic development.

However, Soeharto has not intentions of banning the parties. This would be interpreted as oppressive and undemocratic, epithets that the government does not wish to be labelled with. Rather, the President urged the parties to form two factions in parliament, the "Democracy Union" group which will primarily concentrate on propagating spiritual values and will comprise of the four Islamic parties, and the "Democracy Development" faction consisting of the Nationalist and the Christian parties, focussing mainly on the advancement of economic development. Legally and constitutionally, this presidential initiative is based on the 1966 MPRS Decision No. XXII which decrees that efforts be made to "simplify" the party structure in Indonesia. It seems to have the tacit approval of the political parties³¹, which received very meagre support in the elections and which probably saw an advantage in closing their ranks vis-a-vis the government and GOLKAR. For the 1976 elections (the regime has committed itself to holding elections in regular 5-year intervals) it is envisaged that only these two factions and GOLKAR will campaign. It is highly likely that the government and the army will throw their full support again behind GOLKAR, which may in the long run come to play a more important and more independent role in parliament and in politics generally³².

3. The "Dual Function" of the Military

Army leaders have time and again assured the public that they do not intend to create "militarism", that is to set up a military junta in Indonesia. At the same time they have asserted that the army has a vital interest in politics and the political system, and that since it has fought for the independence of the country and since it represents "the people" as much as any other force it has the right — and the obligation — to participate in the determination of policies and politics in Indonesia and to see that the country follows the principles which fired the revolution against the Dutch³³. Accordingly the military has not only the task of national defence and

³¹ The government's point of view is expressed in "Reform of Indonesia's Political Structure", in the semi-official *Indonesia Magazine* (No. 14, 1972, pp. 4–8) which also quotes approving statements of party leaders. For what seems to amount to approval of Moslem leaders for the formation of the "Development Union" group see **Abadi** (Moslem Djakarta daily) of April 17, 1972.

³² There are indications that civilian GOLKAR leaders have already become critical of the pressures by military officers. See the extremely interesting, unpublished paper by K. E. Ward, *The New Order and the Karya Order*, Monash University, 1972, esp. p. 9. This paper analyses primarily the role and ideas of intellectuals in the "New Order".

³³ For the attitudes of army officers on the issue of military involvement in politics see Ulf Sundhausen, "Das Selbstverständnis der indonesischen Armee und ihre Rolle in der Politik" (The Self-Perception of the Indonesian Army and its Role in Politics), *Europa-Archiv*, 1971, No. 6; see also O. G. Roeder, "Zivile und militärische Kräfte in Indonesien"

internal security (the latter being in itself already a political function since putting down, or better, preventing internal revolts and disorder is clearly a matter of internal politics), but, as a functional group, recognized as such in 1959, has also the same political role and rights as political parties. It just so happened, they would argue, that the military has become the most important of the existing political forces.

Since the nomination of the military as a functional group army officers have become members of parliament, the MPRS and the cabinet. They have come to occupy positions in the administration and in nationalized firms. They have been elected as provincial governors, district officers, and village headmen, mainly because party representatives on local legislative bodies have preferred to place army men in these offices rather than to vote for candidates of rival parties. But many officers are critical of a policy of setting too many officers free for civilian tasks since this is bound to affect the quality of leadership in the army which by no means wants to stop functioning as an effective defence force. Even among some of those officers selected for non-military tasks, or elected to political office, there is considerable reluctance to stay out of active military service for too long³⁴. These tendencies in the officer corps may result in an increased withdrawal of officers from civilian duties, especially when in a few years mass retirement of senior officers will deplete the army of much of its top echelon overhead.

But this will not mean that the army will fade from politics. As a functional group it has an institutionalized position in politics. Nor will it cease for some time to remain the dominant political force in the country. As the officers see it, there is no political grouping to which they could hand over the responsibility of government. The political parties are too divided and deficient in concepts and programs. Moreover, the election results are taken as proof that the masses have lost confidence in the parties. The civilian allies of the military — the “administrators” and intellectuals — have no political mass basis. GOLKAR, in which some of them play an important role, cannot yet be regarded as having firmly established itself in the population as the party to vote for, as having consolidated internally, and as having worked out political strategies apart from strict adherence to government policies — partly, of course, because the government has so far not allowed GOLKAR to develop into an autonomous, though closely allied organization. Thus it may be said that the army has at present no intentions of withdrawing to the barracks in the near future. Given its position of power in and control over Indonesia it is equally unlikely that any other force may be able to force it out within the next few years³⁵.

(Civilian and Military Forces in Indonesia), **Internationales Asienforum**, Vol. 1, No. 2 (April 1970).

³⁴ Officers selected for civilian tasks, or elected to political office, do not cease to be members of the army. After a period of time they usually go back to the army on active service. Also, the army headquarters can at any time re-call them for military duty.

³⁵ A number of scholars believe that the cohesiveness of the army may break up and that this may lead to the collapse of the Soeharto regime. But so far little evidence is available to support this thesis. For a discussion of this issue see Sundhaussen, “The Military in Research . . .”, op. cit., pp. 338 f. and 364 f.

Conclusions

In assessing to what extent General Soeharto has transformed the politics and the policy of Indonesia it can only in the case of the former be concluded with certainty that significant changes have taken place. With the banning of the PKI and the replacement of Sukarno radical politics have virtually disappeared since Soeharto has also effectively prevented radicalism from emerging from rightwing and Moslem quarters. This has brought about a period of peace and internal stability unparalleled in Indonesia's history. Indonesia under Soeharto, after years of Sukarno's policy of alienating practically all countries except China, has re-joined the community of nations, improved her relations to the West, been trying to establish accord with the Soviet Union, and established cooperation with her neighbours in Southeast Asia. Soeharto's economic policies have been particularly salient in reducing inflation to manageable proportions, improving the infra-structure, and increasing food production, exports, the industrial out-put and job opportunities. To be sure, the economic policies have not always proven successful but they certainly compare favourably with Sukarno's economic policies. A main criticism of the "New Order's" economy is that its more capitalistic features tend to give the wealthier foreign investor an advantage over the local entrepreneur, and that they make the rich richer and the poor poorer. However, it is highly doubtful whether the quick economic recovery necessary would have been possible without a substantial influx of foreign private capital. Also, the government is trying to set up more adequate tax structures which would discriminate against high income earners. At the same time transistor radios and other commodities have started trickling down to the village level.

These policies have created a political atmosphere which may be suitable to transform the political system. The long-term plans of the government in this regard are not known, and one may assume that Soeharto himself has no exact plan of action yet. But certain trends have emerged so far. Sukarno's disastrous policy of mass mobilization for political purpose without significant mass participation in politics has been changed to institutionalized politics through legislative bodies. Parliament and the People's Deliberative Congress do play a more important role in "Pantjasila Democracy". The fact that these bodies are presently heavily controlled by government supporters, a state that may not last indefinitely, does not detract from the reality that these institutions have been strengthened, and that this may well lead to increased respect of both the government and the public for the legislature, and to greater preparedness of its members to defend their relative autonomy. Equally, more respect for the law, and more autonomy for the judiciary are trends clearly discernible in the "New Order".

But, again, these developments should not be seen as indications of Indonesia adopting a Western-style, liberal democracy, but as her moving towards a **more** democratic form of government suitable to Indonesian conditions. Indonesian society is lacking the values and political traditions of Western Europe and North America, and the government, many intellectuals, and all parties have agreed that Indonesia therefore cannot adopt the political systems of these regions.

The government is working very slowly on its creation of a new polity but this is not only because of the problem of establishing consensus in government-supporting circles on this issue. The crucial task is to determine what the values of Indo-

nesian society at large are on which it is hoped to build a new, unified society. Basically the present government is faced with the same divisiveness of society which both the cabinets of the "liberal period" and Sukarno tried to overcome without any success. A prolonged period of political stability, combined with economic development (which, incidentally, will also provide the funds which will enable the government to buy off disenchanted regional, religious and political groups) may lead to the emergence of a commonly-held interpretation of the **Pantja Sila** and of values and orientations sufficiently widely shared to serve as a foundation for a viable political system. The army is determined to enforce such a period of contemplation and internal peace.