C. van Dijk
Recent developments in Indonesian politics; The year 1993: 1998 casts its shadow

In: Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 150 (1994), no: 2, Leiden, 386-413

This PDF-file was downloaded from http://www.kitlv-journals.nl
In Indonesia 1998 is a year which looms large in the minds of many people. It is thought very likely that in that year Soeharto will decline to stand for re-election for a new term of office and that Indonesia will have to seek a new president. Who this will be and from what group he will come is a source of continual speculation: will it be an army officer or, perhaps, a civilian from the Golkar party? As many suspect that the battle over who is to succeed Soeharto has already started, this is a question that has become a yardstick by which to evaluate all political moves.

Once the general election of June 1992 was over, a decision had to be made about who would hold the key positions in Indonesian political life. The first rumours about a competition for important posts concerned the presidency itself, as well as the vice-presidency. It was beyond doubt that Soeharto would seek another term in office. It was also virtually certain that the People’s Congress (MPR), the institution which had to elect the new president during its general session of March 1993, would indeed re-elect him. The question that remained was whether all the factions in the MPR – Golkar, the armed forces, the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP), the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI), and the Regional Representatives – would nominate him, making possible a unanimous decision by acclamation, or whether one of the groups would take the unprecedented step of advancing a rival candidate.

As on previous occasions prior to the election, a variety of organizations had already publicly affirmed their support for a new term of office for Soeharto. Soeharto’s name was also frequently mentioned during the campaign period, though for a time it seemed as if one of the political parties, the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, would propose another candidate for the presidency. The PDI had conducted an election campaign on the
theme 'Status Quo, No! Changes, Yes!'. Its politicians, during their campaign, had pressed for political reforms, including the introduction of a limitation on the number of terms a president could be in office.

Moreover, PDI leaders had at various times publicly advanced the name of an alternative candidate. In April 1992, even before the campaign period had started, one of the PDI chairmen, Yahya Nasution, had already proposed the Minister for Internal Affairs, retired General Rudini. He repeated his suggestion a number of times, while Soekarno's son, Guruh Soekarnoputra, who figured prominently in the PDI campaign, left no room for doubt that – if invited – he himself was prepared to become the next president. Later, at the end of December, Guruh Soekarnoputra went so far as to write a letter to the board of the PDI suggesting that the party should nominate him as future president. At that time the tendency within the PDI in favour of an alternative still seemed quite strong. It was reported that various provincial branches, including those of West Java, Lampung, Bengkulu, and South Kalimantan, would like to see someone other than Soeharto become the next president. Among the possible candidates mentioned were the PDI general chairman, Soerjadi; the commander of the armed forces, Try Sutrisno (often regarded, also by PDI politicians, as the best successor for Sudharmono as vice-president); the well-known dissident Ali Sadikin; and, once again, Rudini.

In the end nothing came of it, however. At a party meeting in mid-January the delegates unanimously supported the nomination of Soeharto. Moreover, PDI general chairman Soerjadi offered a public apology for the fact that the wrong conclusion, namely that the PDI had an 'alternative' in mind, could have been drawn from the campaign speeches. The remarks about a limitation of the number of terms of office, which among others he himself had made, had not been meant as a hint that the PDI was aiming at a change of presidency. The PDI only wanted such a restriction to come into force after 1998, when another presidential election was due to be held.

Soerjadi's apology did not help him much. The stance he and his party had adopted during the election campaign had displeased powerful government officials. The consequences became evident during and after the PDI national congress, which took place at the end of June 1993. At the congress, Soerjadi was still able to maintain his position and succeeded in being re-elected general chairman by acclamation. During the turmoil in the PDI which resulted from this, it transpired that Soerjadi had lost all his backing from the government. The latter withheld its support from him and agreed with those who were suggesting that an extraordinary party congress be held to elect a new board, and finally, in August, supported a
group of 23 'caretakers', among whom Soerjadi and his supporters were not represented.²

The vice-presidency

Soerjadi's remark in mid-January about 1998 fits in with the widely held belief that Soeharto's new term of office may perhaps also be his last and that, in view of his advanced age, he will not seek re-election. This consideration, as well as the publicly raised point that it was important to prepare for the eventuality that Soeharto, for one reason or another, for instance because of serious illness, might not serve the full five years, made it all the more necessary to decide who should become vice-president.

Consequently, the discussions and speculations about who was to succeed Sudharmono as the new vice-president centred not only on names but also on the question of whether or not the candidate should be a military man. This was because it is generally assumed that the new vice-president, as well as the group to which he belongs, will have a head start in the struggle for the presidential succession in 1998, or earlier in the event of Soeharto's failing to complete his term of office. In substantiation of his preference for a military candidate, the Minister for Internal Affairs, Rudini, stated that during the next five years the vice-presidency would be of vital and strategic importance. The holder of this office should be prepared to step into the presidency in the event of the future incumbent's no longer being able to perform his presidential functions. Golkar's general chairman, Wahono, also showed a preference for an army candidate, because, as he stated in early October 1992, in his experience the majority of the population was in favour of a vice-president from the armed forces. The preference for a military officer was also expressed by a number of civilian politicians, including many from the PPP, as well as by Try Sutrisno, himself a strong candidate for the position. The latter believed that the choice of such a candidate would be a guarantee for continuity and stability. Others, however, did not rule out the possibility of a civilian filling the post.

There were some, among them the former chairman of the PPP, J. Naro, who were completely opposed to any public discussion of the question of whether or not the next vice-president should come from the armed forces. Naro expressed the opinion that the issue had been raised deliberately in order to create a dichotomy between civilians and the military. Indicating the unrest in Thailand at the time, he warned that such a discussion might pose a threat to national unity. After Rudini and Sudomo, Co-ordinating

² It was not easy to solve the political crisis in the PDI and to elect a new board. In the end, in December 1993, it was Soekarno's daughter, Megawati Soekarnoputri, who became general chairwoman of the PDI.
Minister of Political Affairs and Security, had made similar statements, the matter was relegated to the background.

Somebody who was mentioned with surprising frequency as a suitable candidate was the commander of the armed forces, Try Sutrisno. His name had been on a list circulating in October 1992 from which the armed forces were said to be going to select their candidate. Moreover, PDI and PPP politicians had also spoken out in support of him before and during the election campaign; in the case of the PDI, his name was sometimes linked with that of Rudini as its presidential candidate.

As with the formal nomination of the presidential candidate, it has also become good form in Indonesia to wait with any formal nomination for the vice-presidency until the general session of the People's Congress, and, if possible, even until after it has become clear who the new president will be. Then all factions should officially put forward the name of their candidate – preferably one and the same person. This rule had already been transgressed by the PDI, however. An announcement had been made in January, at the same meeting in which the PDI spoke out in favour of Soeharto as president, that the party would nominate Try Sutrisno as its candidate for the vice-presidency, but would, of course, withdraw this nomination if the new president should object to having him as his deputy. This had earned the PDI a reprimand from Sudomo, who stressed that, in view of the prerequisite of a good relationship between the president and vice-president, the name of the candidate for the vice-presidency should only be announced after the new president had been elected by the People's Congress.

To the outside world it came as a surprise that the armed forces, too, failed to heed the unwritten convention. On February 11, Harsudiyono Hartas, chairman of the armed forces faction in the People's Congress, announced the nomination of Try Sutrisno – a choice which it was said had already been made by the armed forces in 1988. By speaking out early, the leaders of the armed forces were trying to steer clear of a situation like the one which had arisen five years earlier, when they had waited till the last moment, allowing other groups to have their say first, and had been more or less forced to accept the nomination and election of Sudhamono as vice-president. This time the armed forces were determined not to be outmanoeuvred. Three days later, and probably earlier than intended, the PPP followed suit.

The move by the armed forces caused some consternation, all the more so because it was not clear whether there had been any prior consultation with Soeharto. Some tried to play down its importance, stressing that all was not yet decided and that somebody else, not necessarily Try Sutrisno, might still become the next vice-president. Sudomo reacted with a statement that the final choice might still come as a surprise to many and that the new president had the right to reject even the candidate proposed by the People's Congress. Various officials, including the Minister for Internal
Recent Developments in Indonesian Politics

Affairs, Rudini, now also began to stress that there was no law against there being more than one candidate for the vice-presidency, or even for the presidency. Rudini, as well as the sitting vice-president, Sudharmono, now even saw some 'theoretical' advantages in having a number of candidates. If there was only one and the new president were to reject him, there might be a problem; if there were more, the president would have a choice.

Within Golkar, too, suggestions were made that there might be several candidates. Golkar continued to refuse to mention who its own final candidate would be, though its general chairman Wahono did indicate, as he had also done on earlier occasions, that the new vice-president should be an officer of the post-1945 generation. This could only be Try Sutrisno.

Golkar's refusal to speak out in public gave rise to speculations that its politicians had not yet been able to reach a consensus and that possibly Habibie, generally described as somebody very close to Soeharto and a rival of Try Sutrisno in the race for the vice-presidency, was making a final bid for the nomination. There were also reported to be differences of opinion within Golkar, in particular between its central board, headed by Wahono, which was supposed to be in favour of Try Sutrisno, and its faction in the People's Congress, where Habibie supporters were influential, which was not. Wahono and the Minister/Secretary of State Moerdiono denied that any such conflict did indeed exist.

One day before the opening of the general session of the People's Congress, the date Wahono had already proposed when the armed forces had announced their candidate, Golkar finally officially put forward Try Sutrisno's name. Wahono explained that they had waited so long because Golkar had the largest faction in the People's Congress, and had wanted to avoid giving the impression that other factions, in nominating Try Sutrisno, were perhaps just following the Golkar decision. Others, while not publicly mentioning the possibility of internal strife, hinted that the size of Golkar complicated its internal decision-making process. According to Jakob Tobing, a chairman of Golkar, this party, as the organization with the largest faction in the People's Congress, needed more time to put its ear to the ground to find out what society wanted. Earlier, Sudharmono had also pointed out that it was far from easy for Golkar, as the largest organization, to take decisions and reach internal consensus.

With only one candidate for the presidency and one for the vice-presidency, the People's Congress duly elected Soeharto and Try Sutrisno at the end of its general session.

The new cabinet

The developments around the somewhat premature announcement by the armed forces of its candidate for the vice-presidency focused attention on two points: the position of Habibie, Minister of Research and Technology
Recent Developments in Indonesian Politics

since 1978, and the way in which the army was preparing itself for the moment when Soeharto will leave the political scene.

B.J. Habibie, the founder of Indonesia's aircraft industry, the Industri Pesawat Terbang Nusantara (IPTN, formerly PT Nurtanio, of which he is still director-general) in Bandung, and a champion of advanced technology, is a man with many jobs and functions – about twenty-five all told. He founded and still chairs the Badan Pengkajian dan Penerapan Teknologi (BPPT, the Body for Technological Research and Applied Technology); the Pusat Penelitian Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Teknologi (Puspitek, the Centre for Scientific and Technological Research); the Badan Pengelola Industri Strategis (BPIS, the Strategic Industries Management Body); and the Dewan Riset Nasional (DRN, the National Research Council). He is also the director-general of PT PAL, the naval dockyard in Surabaya, and of PT Pindad, the army industrial company for the manufacture of arms and ammunition. Both of these are supervised, as are also for instance Krakatau Steel and the IPTN, by the BPIS. Habibie is furthermore chairman of the Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia (ICMI, the All-Indonesia League of Muslim Intellectuals), founded in December 1990 in Malang, East Java, when he turned an initiative by Brawijaya University students to hold a symposium of Muslim intellectuals into a big event, opened by President Soeharto and closed by Vice-President Sudharmono. Another important function held by Habibie is that of co-ordinator of the daily presidium of the advisory board of Golkar, the all-powerful institution within Golkar which has powers to nullify decisions taken by its central board, and of which Soeharto himself is general chairman.

His many functions are an asset to Habibie in extending his political influence. People from the organizations of which he is head, such as the ICMI and the BPPT, are now acquiring important positions in Golkar and in the representative bodies. In the People's Congress, of which he himself is a member, they still form a minority, but in its working committee, where the MPR decisions are prepared, they constitute about half of the Golkar representatives. Moreover, the deputy chairman of Parliament and of the People's Congress, Joh. Ario Katili from the National Research Council, attained this position without first having to climb up gradually through the Golkar hierarchy.

Habibie's progress has not gone unopposed. Some Muslim leaders, including the general chairman of Nahdatul Ulama, Abdurrahman Wahid, tend to cast a disapproving eye at the ICMI, as they regard its foundation as a political move and reject the use of religion as a means of gaining

secular political power. Within the armed forces there is fear that the way in which the ICMI functions may be detrimental to the officially avowed policy of a low-key role for religion in political life and that it may be an indication of a revival of particularist Islamic sentiments. In mid-June 1993, for instance, Vice-President Try Sutrisno, receiving the general chairman of the PMII, the Indonesian Islamic Student Movement, condemned the use of Islam for purposes of political legitimation as a retrogressive step and a reversion to the ways of liberal democracy, and, as such, a threat to national unity. Moreover, Habibie’s role in the PAL and Pindad cannot be said to be conducive to a smooth relationship with key officers in the armed forces. Reportedly, there have been a number of conflicts with the armed forces in the past over decisions taken by Habibie without prior consultation with its top brass, though they did affect them. For instance, when Benny Moerdani was still commander of the armed forces, that is, between 1983 and 1988, Habibie is supposed to have suggested to Soeharto that all navy vessels be serviced and repaired at the PAL. However, the dockyard did not have the capacity to deal with the demand, only being able to cater for about one third of all naval vessels. Similarly, he is supposed to have proposed to Soeharto that the armed forces be equipped exclusively with FN rifles manufactured by Pindad, and that the import of such weapons from abroad be stopped, although again, according to the same reports, Pindad does not have the required capacity. So it was calculated that it would take about ten years to equip all the soldiers with Pindad weapons – which by the end of this period might have become obsolete, it was added. More recently, in 1992, Habibie was instrumental in arranging the purchase of 39 warships from the former East German navy, probably only involving the Indonesian navy in the deal at a later stage, after the decision to buy had already been made.

When President Soeharto announced his new cabinet shortly after his re-election, one of the first questions people asked was to what extent it bore Habibie’s stamp. They wondered how many of his ‘technocrats’ had seats in the new cabinet, and conversely, how the groups that were regarded as his competitors – the economists associated with Widjojo Nitisastro’s policy, the central board of Golkar, and the armed forces – had fared.

It had been reported already in January that the PPP and PDI were not the only parties to have their own ideas about what shape the new cabinet should have, both wanting to see some of their own politicians in it. The Golkar faction in the People’s Congress, in particular the members of its working committee, also had their list of suggestions.

The new government – the Sixth Development Cabinet – was an-

---

8 *Forum Keadilan* 7-1-1993:15.
nounced on March 17th. Again, there were no ministers from either the PPP or the PDI in it. About half the faces were new. A number of long-serving ministers responsible for the economic policies of the New Order had disappeared from the cabinet. Among those retiring were Emil Salim (Population Affairs and the Environment and, before that, Communications), Radius Prawiro (Co-ordinating Minister for Economic, Financial and Industrial Affairs and for the Supervision of Development), and J.B. Sumarlin (Finance). Important military officers who did not return in the new cabinet were Sudomo (Co-ordinating Minister for Security and Political Affairs), Rudini (Internal Affairs) and Benny Moerdani (Defence and Security).

In the new cabinet, Habibie continued to hold the Technology and Research portfolio. He was now the longest-serving minister. There were three ministers with an affiliation with either the BPPT (Body for Technological Research and Applied Technology) or the DRN (National Research Council), two of the institutions headed by Habibie: Dr Ing. Wardiman Djojonegoro (Education and Culture), who is also executive secretary of the ICMI; Satrio Budihardjo Joedono (Trade); and Dr Haryanto Dhanutirto (Communications). The last-mentioned is also a member of the ICMI board, like Prof. Dr Sujudi (Health). It was reported that a member of staff of the BPPT had asked him for his curriculum vitae in early March. It was also rumoured that Habibie had had a hand in the retention of Ir Azwar Anas (formerly of Communications, now Co-ordinating Minister for Public Welfare), chairman of the Golkar faction in the People’s Congress.

None of the key figures on the Golkar central board appeared in the cabinet. Some observers interpreted this as a clear indication that Wahono, the sitting general chairman of Golkar, had been a failure and had not been able to exercise much influence. In the eyes of both Budi Hardjono of the PDI and Darussamin of the PPP, too, the exclusion of the key members of the Golkar central board from the cabinet was evidence of the weak bargaining position of this board, while Golkar, they stressed, had won the general election. Budi Hardjono posited that it clearly showed that power in Golkar rested not in its central board but in its advisory board. In the contest for the general chairmanship at the next national congress of Golkar a few months later, Wahono, whom some also held responsible for Golkar’s relatively poor election results in 1992, indeed played an insignificant role. His name was not even mentioned on the lists of candidates for the position that circulated.

Sudomo, who had been replaced as Co-ordinating Minister of Political

---

9 Among the ministers who kept their position were Ali Alatas SH (Foreign Affairs), Moerdiono (Secretary of State), and H. Harmoko (Information).
10 Editor 13-3-1993; Tempo 27-3-1993.
11 Media Indonesia 20-3-1993.
Recent Developments in Indonesian Politics

Affairs and Security by Soesilo Soedarman (formerly of Tourism, Post and Telecommunications), in an initial reaction described the new cabinet as a civilian one, only eight of the forty ministers being members of the armed forces. Even so, key positions are still held by active or retired officers, though not necessarily all of them represent the army’s first choice. These military ministers include General Edi Sudradjat (Defence and Security), who for the time being also retained the function of commander of the armed forces; Lieutenant-General Mohamad Yogie Suardi Memet (Internal Affairs); General Soesilo Soedarman (Co-ordinating Minister of Political Affairs and Security); Lieutenant-General Drs Moerdiono (Minister/Secretary of State); First Marshal Ginandjar Kartasasmita (Minister without Portfolio for National Development Planning and Chairman of Bappenas); Lieutenant-General Ida Bagus Sudjana (Mining and Energy); Major-General Tiopsan Bernhard Silalahi (Minister without Portfolio for Administrative Reforms); and Rear-Admiral Tarmizi Taher (Religion).

Rudini was not replaced as Minister of Internal Affairs by the armed forces Chief of Staff of Political and Social Affairs Harsudiyono Hartas, as the armed forces reportedly had wished. It was he who had made the early announcement, as chairman of the armed forces faction in the People’s Congress, about the nomination of Try Sutrisno. Instead Yogie Memet, somebody ‘close to Soeharto’, had been chosen.

The future economic policy

Shortly after the announcement of the new cabinet, Minister without Portfolio and Secretary of State Moerdiono denied rumours that its composition had been dictated to Soeharto by the ICMI and its chairman Habibie. He stressed that there had been no question of any sort of pressure and that he knew nothing about any such thing. A few days later, Habibie himself – who, in an editorial in Media Indonesia of March 19th, had been dubbed the ‘stage manager’ of a cabinet dominated by technologists and technocrats – also denied that the ICMI had played any part in the selection of ministers. If there were ICMI members in the cabinet, they had been chosen by the president because they were outstanding and capable representatives of the younger generation, he added.

The composition of the new cabinet, and in particular the appointments to its economic posts – notably the advance of Habibie supporters at the expense of Emil Salim, Radius Prawiro and Sumarlin –, highlighted the question of whether there would be any change in Indonesia’s economic policy, and whether the macro-economic approach of ‘Widjojonomics’ was to be replaced by the greater emphasis on advanced technology of

Of these, only Edi Sudradjat, Sudjana, and Silalahi are still in active service.

Editor 27-3-1993.
‘Habibienomics’. In early April, to remove the impression that a definite choice had already been made, two well-known representatives of the former school, Widjojo Nitisastro (who had not reappeared in the 1988 cabinet) and Ali Wardhana, were appointed by Soeharto as his economic advisors. This, State Secretary Moerdiono explained, was because the president valued the continuation of a macro-economic approach. In an era when Indonesia was preparing for an economic take-off, matters like tried and tested economic stability, economic growth, and a more even distribution of wealth should still be given the utmost attention.

In early June, just prior to a meeting between representatives of Indonesia and its donor countries in preparation of the annual conference of the Consultative Group for Indonesia (CGI) later that month, the issue once again became a focus of attention. The newspaper *Kompas*, quoting Reuter, reported that a World Bank Report was critical of plans for the development of advanced technological industries in Indonesia and of the increasing domination of its economy by large business conglomerates. The report (which was still in the draft stage) expressed approval, on the other hand, of the economic policy which Indonesia had pursued so far, coupling economic growth with the creation of employment opportunities. According to it, Indonesia should focus on labour-intensive industries, for instance in the textile and footwear branches, so as to accommodate its growing workforce. The report was critical of a ‘technological leapfrogging strategy, involving the development of high-tech industries supported by direct public investment or subsidies and high levels of protection’. It called such a policy ‘ill-advised’.

Habibie reacted by stating that there were many World Bank experts, not just one, and that in the past he himself had received much assistance from the World Bank, including fellowships for Indonesians to study abroad and programmes to increase efficiency and productivity in Indonesia. He further pointed out that, at the time of Indonesia’s first five-year plan, the World Bank had raised objections to the establishment of fertilizer factories because imports were cheaper, but that President Soeharto fortunately had not heeded this advice. A similar reaction came from the Minister without Portfolio for National Development Planning and Chairman of Bappenas, Indonesia’s National Planning Bureau, Ginandjar Kartasasmita. Praising the World Bank for its earlier support and for the advice it had given, he added that not every recommendation made by the World Bank suited Indonesia and its specific circumstances. As an example he mentioned the World Bank’s reservations in the 1970s about Indonesia’s domestic satellite programme – a programme which had proved vital for communications in a far-flung archipelago like Indonesia.

14 In addition the Governor of the Bank Indonesia, A. Mooy, had been replaced by Soedradjad Djiwandono, the former Junior Minister of Trade.
15 *The Jakarta Post* 7-6-1993.
He explained that the Indonesian government had opted for the development of its own aircraft and shipping industries for the same reason, namely to prevent Indonesia from becoming dependent on others in the field of transportation and communication.\textsuperscript{16} Ginandjar Kartasasmita, not relishing the thought of being condemned to a ‘pinching sandals technology’\textsuperscript{17}, underlined that Indonesia had its own strategy with regard to technological development, which combined both approaches. He felt that it was a mistake to conclude that Indonesia was inclined to stress advanced technological development at the expense of labour-intensive industries. The two were mutually complementary – as experience in China and India had taught – and not incompatible, or mutually exclusive opposites between which a choice had to be made, as some people seemed to imply. In defence of investments in high-tech industries like the satellite and aircraft ones he pointed out that, in contrast to the World Bank, which was taking a short-term view, Indonesia, which had its own economic experts and which had just embarked on its second long-term development plan, was looking ahead for the next twenty-five years. In the years to come Indonesia wanted to be able to stand on its own feet, and not find itself lagging behind other nations. To achieve this, Ginandjar Kartasasmita explained, it would need sophisticated technology, the technology of the next century. This did not mean, however, that issues such as the battle against poverty and the creation of jobs would be neglected.

Support for this view also came from retired Lieutenant-General Alam-syah, a former Minister of Religion, and from what came to be known as the Joint Prayer Group, a group of about thirty-five organizations, including the ICMI and the Muhammadiyah, of which he is the leader. Early in 1992, at the end of April, to be exact, this Joint Prayer Group had organized a mass prayer meeting for the re-election of Soeharto, and now, in the middle of June 1993, it expressed its support for Habibie’s economic policy.

Notwithstanding the critical note sounded by it at the CGI meeting in Paris, as expected, the World Bank endorsed Indonesia’s economic performance, as did Indonesia’s major donors like the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and Japan.

\textit{A more lenient approach towards dissidents}

Also in early June, before the critical remarks of the World Bank became public, Habibie started a campaign aimed at showing a number of his critics what he had achieved. In this connection he took the unprecedented step of inviting Ali Sadikin, one of Indonesia’s leading dissidents and key

\textsuperscript{16} A third example given by Ginandjar Kartasasmita was that of nuclear technology.

\textsuperscript{17} Republika 7-6-1993.
member of the ‘Petition of 50 Group’, to visit the naval PT PAL dockyards in Surabaya to attend the launching of two ships which had been built there.

Habibie and Ali Sadikin, who have known each other for a long time through Wardiman Djojonegoro, the new Minister of Education and Culture and former member of Ali Sadikin’s staff when the latter was Governor of Jakarta, both denied that the invitation was politically motivated. Habibie had extended the invitation to Ali Sadikin when the two of them had visited retired General Abdul Haris Nasution at the end of the Fasting Month, as they did each year. On that occasion, Ali Sadikin had inquired about reports he had read in the press of money being wasted by the PT PAL. Habibie had spontaneously invited him there and then to visit the shipyard and see for himself. Ali Sadikin, like the other members of the Group of 50, had up to that moment been treated as a social and political outcast by the political elite. Therefore, his immediate reaction had been to ask Habibie whether he indeed had the courage to invite him. So far no cabinet member had been prepared to meet him, nor did they ever invite him, for instance, to the wedding receptions of their children. The details of the visit were arranged by retired Lieutenant-General Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo, a staff member of the BPPT, the Body for Technological Research and Applied Technology, who asked Ali Sadikin among other things how many members of the Petition of 50 group would accompany him.

Sadikin visited the PT PAL on June 3rd. He was accompanied by Anwar Harjono, Wachdiat Sukardi, Suyitno Sukirno, M. Radjab Ranggasoli, and Chris Siner Key Timu, all of them key members of the dissident Petition of 50 group. He had gone as an ‘ordinary citizen’, Ali Sadikin explained to the press, and expressed his appreciation at the progress made by the PT PAL under Habibie’s management, with ships, including merchant vessels, now not only being repaired, but also built. Also present on this occasion were retired General Soemitro and retired Lieutenant-General Hasan Habib, both known to be Habibie advisors.

The visit engendered some discord within the Petition of 50 group. Some of its members felt that the civil rights of all its members should be restored first before the invitation was accepted; this, it was reported, had been settled. In reaction to the critical remarks voiced by a group of six students from the Institut Teknologi Bandung, Ali Sadikin once more denied that his visit to the PT PAL had been politically motivated. He assured them that he still believed in what he stood for and underlined the positive effects of the visit to the PAL dockyard. One of the good things that had come of it, he said, was an extensive press coverage, while the press usually kept silent about the activities of the Petition of 50 group.

After this visit, Habibie explained that the only reason why Ali Sadikin and his friends had been invited was because they were former freedom fighters, who had participated in Indonesia’s struggle for independence.
As such, they had a right to know how the next generation was implementing their ideals. He disclosed that, immediately after inviting Ali Sadikin, he had informed President Soeharto of this, and that the latter's instantaneous reaction had been to agree with this viewpoint. The President had acknowledged the past contribution to Indonesia's welfare of these men as members of the Generation of 45, and recognized the duty to show them what was being achieved. The Minister of Defence and Security, Edi Sudradjat, had also been informed of the visit beforehand – by Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo – but he had already known about it from Soeharto.

Officially it was underlined that the visit to the PT PAL shipyard by Ali Sadikin, who was also invited to attend the celebrations to commemorate the founding of Jakarta at the end of June, did not signal a rehabilitation of the members of the Group of 50. In initial reactions from the Minister for Internal Affairs and the recently appointed armed forces Chief of Staff for Political and Social Affairs, Haryoto PS, it was argued that Ali Sadikin had been invited as an ordinary citizen, not as a member of the Group of 50. The visit to the shipyard was an ordinary visit without political implications. The Minister of Defence also made it clear that the government's policy towards the members of the Group of 50 remained unchanged. A similar statement was made by the new commander of the armed forces, General Feisal Tanjung, after a meeting with the Parliamentary Commission for Security. In his opinion, the government would never be reconciled with the members of the group unless the latter first apologized for the statements they had made in the past. They were still banned from traveling abroad, except for medical or religious purposes. As Feisal Tanjung had never heard of their formally protesting against this ban to the armed forces (they had done so to Parliament), he saw no reason why it should be reconsidered.

Yet, Ali Sadikin's visit to the PAL dockyard proved to be the first step in a change in government policy towards certain groups of dissidents, which also extended to the ban on foreign travel. Early in July, and again at the invitation of Habibie, Ali Sadikin visited the IPTN aircraft plant in Bandung — once more, Habibie stressed, as a member of the 1945 generation and as a comrade-in-arms of President Soeharto in the joint struggle for independence, not as a member of the Petition Group. As in the case of the PT PAL visit, he took along some key members of the Petition of 50 group, this time including Azis Saleh, who at the time of the PT PAL visit had been on the pilgrimage. In Bandung, Ali Sadikin made an emotional plea to allow Nasution, whom he called the father of the Indonesian army, to travel abroad freely. He said that he did not mind so much being on the list of people who were not allowed to leave the country himself, but that Nasution's civil rights should be restored on account of his age and his past services to the country.

In the days following this speech by Ali Sadikin, both the list of people
banned from travelling abroad and the position of Nasution were the focus of a lot of attention. First a spokesman of the armed forces, one of the institutions responsible for the compilation of the list, stated that in the half-yearly evaluation of the list the names of 30 of the 41 people who featured on it for political reasons had been deleted. Among the remaining eleven were the eight members of the working party of the Petition of 50.\(^{18}\) The ban on foreign travel would also be revised in their case in the near future. Reacting to Ali Sadikin’s statements about Nasution, the spokesman stressed that the latter’s name had not been on the list when the system had been formally introduced in accordance with the 1992 Immigration Act.\(^{19}\) In September the travel ban was also lifted for the remaining eleven.

Nasution, also a member of the Group of 50, now found himself the focus of friendly attention. In his own words, his freedom of movement had been curtailed since 1972, when he had clashed with the then Secretary of State over the status of the Provisional People’s Congress, which according to the Secretary of State had become obsolete after the installation of the elected Parliament. He had often been prevented from attending ceremonies, receptions, and other functions, and in 1988 had still not been allowed to travel to Malaysia.

In the middle of July, when Nasution had to be admitted to hospital, he received a much publicized visit from the Co-ordinating Minister of Political Affairs and Security, the Minister of Defence and Security, and the commander of the armed forces and the Deputy Chief of Staff of the army. The two last-mentioned, together with Nasution, also visited another important dissident, Dharsono, who was undergoing medical treatment at the same hospital.

The visit to Nasution in hospital, which the Co-ordinating Minister of Political Affairs and Security, Soesilo Soedarman, said had been undertaken on his initiative, was afterwards given the blessing of President Soeharto. Soeharto, using Soesilo Soedarman as his spokesman, also let it be known that he had never regarded Nasution as a dissident and that there were no hard feelings between them. That the relationship between President Soeharto and Nasution was a good one was illustrated by Soesilo in pointing out that they had shaken hands in April, when they had both paid a visit of condolence at the house of the former Coordinating Minister of Public Welfare, Soepardjo Rustam. Soesilo once again

---

\(^{18}\) Meaning Ali Sadikin, Azis Saleh, Anwar Harjono, Chris Siner Key Timu, M. Radjab Ranggasoli, Suyitno Sukirno, Wachdidi Sukardi and Hoegeng Iman Santoso. The remaining three were Adnan Buyung Nasution, Deliar Noer and H.J.C. Princen.

\(^{19}\) The decision not to allow the members of the Petition of 50 group to travel abroad, however, had been taken much earlier, namely by Sudomo, commander of Kopkamtib, the Command for the Restoration or Security and Order, at the time the Group of 50 had first voiced its criticism of Soeharto in May 1980.
reiterated, however, that the government's position regarding dissidents had not changed notwithstanding, adding that, while Nasution was not a dissident, Dharsono was. Vice-President Try Sutrisno also pointed out that the hospital visit had by no means been extraordinary. It was an old tradition in the armed forces to call upon senior officers when they fell ill. Earlier, in 1986, he had also visited Nasution when he had been hospitalized. Another retired officer, J.M. Mailoa, comparing the visit to Ali Sadikin's trip to the PT PAL and Pindad, said that the visit had a great moral and ethical force, far outweighing the effect of the mere extension of an invitation to a former official and member of the Group of 50. Nasution had been visited, and not merely invited.

Now speculations began to circulate about a meeting between Nasution and Soeharto. According to Sudomo, such a meeting could certainly be arranged should Nasution want it. Ali Sadikin, on the other hand, clearly indicated after a visit to Nasution that the initiative should be taken by the government, and that Nasution would not refuse if he was invited. Soeharto and Nasution met about a week later. Nasution was received by Soeharto and Try Sutrisno for a brief visit at the Presidential Palace following a commissioning ceremony for young officers, who included a grandson of Nasution, on July 24th. Later, in September, Nasution was seen off at the airport by high-ranking military officers when he departed for the United States for medical treatment on a trip paid for by the government. The pattern was repeated when he was visited by the commander of the armed forces and the Chiefs of Staff of the army, navy, air force and police upon his return home. On the latter occasion Nasution was moreover invited to be present at the military ceremonies on Armed Forces Day, which he had not attended for more than twenty years.

Equally remarkable, and also the object of extensive coverage in the Indonesian press, was the early release, on August 23rd and 24th, of a number of prisoners, including A.M. Fatwa, usually described in official parlance as far-right extremists, being devout Muslims suspected of violent opposition to the Pancasila as the constitutional basis of the Indonesian State. Those released had been arrested and convicted after the Tanjung Priok riots and the subsequent bomb attempts in 1984. On the occasion of Independence Day over 16,000 prisoners, including people sentenced for political reasons, were granted a remission, moreover. The sentences of Fatwa and the political prisoners released together with him, contrary to those of others who had been convicted of subversion, were not simply

---

20 Released at the same time were Abdul Qodir Jaelani, Tashrif Tuasikal and Eddy Ramli, who had been sentenced for the same offence. Dharsono had been released after serving his full sentence already in 1991. Yet another prisoner convicted in connection with the Tanjung Priok affair, H.M. Sanusi, was granted the right of 'assimilation', allowing him to work outside the prison.
As they had served two thirds of their prison sentence, they had become eligible for an early conditional release. So they were released for good behaviour, also in the political sense of the phrase. They do, however, have to report to the authorities once a month. For Fatwa this conditional release involved the obligation to present a ‘paper’ explaining his views on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution to an audience of about 50 people, including the military commander of Jakarta, Major-General A.M. Hendropriyono, and the chief of police. He had written the paper to be presented, entitled ‘I believe in the Pancasila and put it into practice, for the very reason that I am a Muslim’, in 1990 after being ordered, as he put it, to comment on a book on the structure of the state in Islam by the Indonesian Minister of Religion. For the others an oral statement sufficed. Though formally implemented in accordance with the current legal rules – a new set of regulations on conditional release or the right of assimilation drawn up by the Minister of Justice and introduced in January 1991 – this release was still interpreted as forming part of the ‘national programme of reconciliation’ which had started with Ali Sadikin’s visit to the PAL dockyard, followed by the meeting between Nasution and Soeharto. There were speculations about who had set the process of early release in motion. Some believed it to have been the former Minister of Religion, Munawir Sjadzali, who had contacted President Soeharto after reading the paper written by Fatwa; others simply mentioned government officials who were members of the ICMI. Yet others attributed this to the military commander of Jakarta, who was said to have been impressed by the paper presented by Fatwa, by his own admission declaring it at the ceremony preceding Fatwa’s release to be worthy of the predicate ‘cum laude’.22

Besides Ali Sadikin, a number of other dissidents were approached by Habibie in his drive to demonstrate the effects of his policy to people. So H.R. Dharsono and Hoegeng had also been invited for the PT PAL visit, though illness had prevented them from joining the party.23 Later in June Habibie invited two critics of his economic policy, Dr Sjahrir and Dr Pande Radja Silalahi, to accompany him on a visit to an aerospace exhibition in France. They were, as he put it, ‘super-computers which up to now had received incomplete data input’, which accordingly had made ‘their output less than satisfactory’. He further said that he blamed himself for

21 This remission was referred to by some as a potongan HAM (Hak Asas Manusia), or human rights remission.
22 Forum Keadilan 16-9-1993:18-9, 30-4; Editor 4-9-1993:19-29; Tempo 4-9-1993:13-21. When in December and January a number of newspapers and periodicals elected their ‘Man of the Year’, the more lenient approach towards dissidents figured prominently among the arguments put forward for their choice. For Forum Keadilan it constituted one of the reasons for choosing Habibie, for Editor to choose the Military Commander of Jakarta, Major-General A.M. Hendropriyono, and for Republika to nominate the commander of the armed forces, General Feisal Tanjung.
23 Later it transpired that their medical expenses had been paid by the government.
the fact that, owing to the pressure of work, he had not given them enough information in the past.

The control over Golkar

After the matters of the appointment to the vice-presidency and the composition of the new cabinet had been settled, the next important event with respect to the distribution of political power in Indonesia and the future political constellation was the election of a new general chairman of Golkar. Within Golkar, Indonesia's largest political organization, which in view of its dominant position in the representative bodies controls civil political life in Indonesia, there are three main currents or groups which define its policy: its central board, the armed forces, and the civil service and its professional organization, Korpri, represented by the general chairman of Golkar, the commander of the armed forces and the Minister of Internal Affairs respectively. Soeharto has the final say in his capacity as chairman of the advisory board of Golkar. On October 20th, just prior to the party's national congress, when people had started speculating about whether the new general chairman would also be the next national president, the Indonesian newspaper *The Jakarta Post* stated itself to consider this congress an even more important factor in determining who would succeed Soeharto than either the 1992 election had been or the 1997 election would be.

As had been the case at the time the nomination of the candidate for the vice-presidency had to be decided, the major question was whether a retired military officer or a civilian should get the post. Now even more than in the months prior to the general session of the People's Congress it was stressed that Soeharto's backing would be decisive in determining which candidate would win.

Once again, the relationship between the senior military officers on the one hand and Habibie and the ICMI on the other coloured the debate. It was a public secret that the army leaders wanted above all to block any further advance of the ICMI in Golkar. Sometimes this was openly hinted at by intimating that the ICMI was a group with capable civilian leaders who had the expertise and experience to replace military officers in important positions and could challenge the military's political role. Sometimes the hint was more discreet, intimating in veiled terms that the army did not want anyone who did not put the unity of Indonesia first in charge of Golkar.

The election of a new Golkar board was due to take place at the end of October, but speculation about who would win the position of chairman and from what group he would come started as early as April. The possible candidates suggested at the time included civilians as well as military officers. The sitting general chairman, Wahono, did not figure on the lists of candidates which were circulated. Among those mentioned at that early
stage were the Minister/State Secretary Moerdiono; the former Minister of Internal Affairs, Rudini; the (then) armed forces Chief of Staff of Political and Social Affairs, Harsudiyono Hartas; the Co-ordinating Minister of Political Affairs and Security, General Soesilo Soedarman; and the Ministers of Information and Justice, Harmoko and Oetojo Oesman.

The debate revolved around the question of whether the future general chairman of Golkar could be a civilian or whether the position should go to a retired military officer, as had always been the case since the foundation of Golkar in 1964. In the latter case he had to be retired because it is prohibited for members of the armed forces still on active service to become a member of any political organization, not even Golkar.

The public speculation about a possible power contest within Golkar, whereby concrete names were mentioned and it was suggested that the main issue was a choice between a military and a civilian candidate, was in striking contrast to what had been the case in the past. Wahono was still the only candidate put forward and had been unanimously elected. Some, like Sarwono Kusumaatmadja, a former secretary-general of Golkar, considered the new development a healthy one. Others expressed the opinion that it was too early yet to discuss the matter, months before the national congress was due to take place. The issue also seems to have confused members of Golkar, even senior ones, who did not know what stance to adopt.\textsuperscript{24} Later, as the time for Golkar’s national congress drew nearer, it prompted suggestions that all was not well with Golkar, and even gave rise to rumours that some Golkar members were displaying an attitude that did not wholly accord with Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Some, like the chairman of the Jakarta branch, Basofi Soedirman, and the former Minister for Internal Affairs, Rudini, at the end of August complained publicly about the less than harmonious relationship between the three main groups (the armed forces, the civil service, and the Golkar central board). According to Rudini, this was a recent phenomenon. In the days when he, Try Sutrisno, and Wahono had represented the three groups, consultations had still proceeded smoothly. A few days later, Vice-President Try Sutrisno joined in the discussion, comparing Golkar to an overweight person and as such susceptible to various diseases. Others continued to stress that it was only natural that there should be speculation about who would be the next general chairman and that unity within Golkar was still intact.

Initially the armed forces publicly showed themselves to be determined to have somebody from their own ranks as general chairman. This was explicitly indicated by the Minister of Defence, Edi Sudradjat. He made it known almost immediately after publication of the first list of names of potential candidates in the Indonesian press, which included that of the

\textsuperscript{24} The Jakarta Post 23-4-93.
Minister of Information, Harmoko, a civilian, that the army was looking in its own ranks for a successor to Wahono. Underlining the strategic position of Golkar in the Indonesian political system, he said he felt it to be only logical that the armed forces should want one of their officers to become its next general chairman. The army valued what he called the 'single majority' of Golkar and would strive to preserve this, as well as the close bonds which had always existed between the armed forces and Golkar. This implied, according to him, that the armed forces were preparing retired officers as candidates not only for the general chairmanship, but also for chairmanships in regional branches. He was backed up by Wahono. As one of those who considered it too early to discuss his succession in the months prior to the Golkar national congress, the latter stated it to be a serious thing when people wanted to 'take over' Golkar by allowing civilians a greater share in it. He warned that it was important to be on the alert, inside as well as outside Golkar, against elements which were willfully trying to disrupt its unity or to take advantage of the situation to further their own individual or group interests. Cosmas Batubara also touched upon this subject. After a meeting with President Soeharto, in which he referred to what was happening with the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan, he warned that Golkar should retain its absolute majority and that any split in Golkar would only result in a coalition government, the first chink in the armour of political stability. Golkar should realize that people wanted greater freedom, but at the same time should not lose sight of what had happened to the Japanese LDP. Minister/Secretary of State Moerdiono reacted immediately by saying that, as far as the single majority of Golkar was concerned, the LDP had only cropped up in the conversation between the President and Cosmas Batubara by chance.

The person at that time considered by many to be the strongest military candidate was Harsudiyono Hartas, who was due to be retired from active service. In a preliminary comment, he stated that, as a soldier, he was prepared to take up any position to which he was assigned by the army. He, too, stressed that it was only natural that an organization as large as Golkar should experience a battle for the leadership. There was nothing wrong with this, provided that no cliques formed and that the rules were followed. He pointed out that these rules do not prescribe that the general chairman should be a retired officer, adding at the same time that Golkar's existence was inseparable from that of the armed forces. The trend towards greater democracy did not yet carry the implication that there should be no retired officers present in the organization. He stressed that they had a legal right to play a role in Golkar, though this did not automatically imply that the armed forces themselves actually interfered in the affairs of Golkar. That was why he objected to the use of a term like 'the autonomy of Golkar', which was used by people who wanted Golkar to become independent of the armed forces and of the civil bureaucracy.
Edi Sudradjat's and Harsudiyono Hartas' remarks were toned down somewhat in May by the recently appointed new armed forces Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs, Hariyoto PS. What Edi Sudradjat had meant, he explained, was that the armed forces were eager to find the best possible candidate because they wanted to give substance to their feeling of responsibility for Golkar. This candidate should be somebody from the 'great Golkar family', but did not necessarily have to be a member of the armed forces. He did not believe Edi Sudradjat to be someone who wanted to foment discord between the various segments making up Golkar. But because of the onerous tasks ahead, the leaders of Golkar should be the best people for the job, irrespective of the group from which they came. Moreover, the armed forces were still in the process of taking stock of the situation; a choice would only be made later, after the Golkar national congress had decided on its programme, when it would become clear what kind of person was needed. Notwithstanding, the reality was that the armed forces did play a role in both government and Golkar. They were doing so solely in the interests of the nation, to safeguard the Pancasila and national development. And, as one of the main component elements of Golkar, a member of the 'great Golkar family', they were in fact preparing their officers for positions on Golkar's central and regional boards. Around the same time, the new commander of the armed forces, General Feisal Tanjung, explained that it was not the armed forces but the Pepabri, the association of retired members of the armed forces, which would produce the candidates, admitting that, this being so, the commander of the armed forces would still have the ultimate say.

One person who was not pleased with this discussion was the new Minister of Internal Affairs, Yogie S. Memet. He criticized the way in which people were discussing the matter. It reminded him of a 'mob in the street [...] with people talking for the sake of talking'. Such openness, such 'free-for-all' discussions, were not in agreement with the Pancasila tradition. The chairman could be either a civilian or a retired officer, he pointed out. Edi Sudradjat's proposal was merely a suggestion. Asked by journalists whether the Korpri would also put forward a candidate, he replied that he had not yet thought about it, but that, as one of the three main groups in Golkar, the Korpri certainly had the right to propose its own champion. Civil servants would surely make good candidates, he pointed out. They were very familiar with the culture of the people, while it was also they who were entrusted with the implementation of the national development plans.25

The reason why representatives of the armed forces refrained from insisting in public, at least for some time, that the new Golkar general chairman should come from their ranks was probably that Soeharto might not

agree with them. Harmoko was considered the strongest candidate right from the start. It was he who, it had been rumoured almost from the beginning, had the blessing of Soeharto, though the latter refrained from making any public statement to that effect. For instance Harmoko, who also happened to be a member of the advisory board of the ICMI, stated after one of his meetings with Soeharto early in June that, if asked, he was prepared to become the next general chairman of Golkar, while at the same time denying that he had ever discussed his nomination as such with Soeharto. Alamsyah revealed on the same day, and also after a meeting with Soeharto, that he had discussed the matter with the latter, but declined to be specific about what had been said. He merely stated after his talks with the President that everything would certainly be decided by 'the floor' and that Soeharto, as chairman of the advisory board, had not yet selected anybody. Indeed, Soeharto continued to refrain from giving Harmoko his support in public till the congress actually took place.

The armed forces now turned their attention to 'the floor'. It was what happened in the regions, in the Golkar branches at the provincial level and at the levels of the regencies and the larger cities, that was important for the final outcome. The chairmen of the provincial branches, which were to send representatives to the national congress, would influence the course of events at this congress.

It was in these elections that the army was to play an important role, trying to get as many representatives of what it called the 'Great Armed Forces Family' as possible elected as chairmen. Probably the aim was to ensure not so much that a strong armed forces representation at the coming national congress would nominate a retired officer as general chairman (by that time it was almost certain that Harmoko would be elected), as that, irrespective of the outcome of the nomination, the army would maintain its strong position in Golkar. By controlling the regional branches and securing a good bargaining position at the national congress, it hoped to block any significant advance of those whom it considered to be its rivals in Golkar.

In preparation of the national congress, the branches at the regency and larger city level held their own congresses in June and July, while the provincial branches followed in August and September. The armed forces did well here. After these local congresses, the chairmanships were held by military officers in three quarters of the provincial branches. At the lower level, too, the role of the armed forces was dominant. So it was reported that in West Java, for instance, 23 of the 25 branch chairmen came from the armed forces; in Central Java these figures were 29 out of 35; and in North Sumatra 11 out of 17. In a number of regions the competition for the chairmanship between the three main groups in Golkar ended in a deadlock. The congresses in Central Kalimantan, in Medan, and in
Simalungun did not succeed in appointing a new board and had to refer the matter to the central board. In the end, Central Kalimantan became one of the few Golkar provincial branches to have a civilian as chairman.

At the time all this was taking place, the ICMI was busy forming its own advisory board. On August 24th and 25th Habibie and a delegation of board members visited President Soeharto, Vice-President Try Sutrisno and the commander of the armed forces, Feisal Tanjung. Both Soeharto and Try Sutrisno stated their preparedness to participate in the advisory board, as did two former vice-presidents, Umar Wirahadikusumah and Sudharmono. Try Sutrisno, addressing the ICMI delegation, aired some of his criticism. He asked the members of the ICMI to keep an open mind and not to lapse into sectarianism.

The army's strong position on the regional boards of Golkar once again raised the question of whether it was really the national congress which would elect the new general chairman or whether somebody would simply be designated as such. The latter alternative definitely seemed likely to the former Co-ordinating Minister of Political Affairs and Security, Sudomo, now chairman of the Supreme Advisory Council and vice-chairman of the advisory board of Golkar. He believed that the matter would be decided in the same way as in the past, namely by 'dropping' names of likely candidates. The successful candidate might be a civilian or might be a military officer, but Sudomo's intuition told him that it would be a 'pure' civilian, and not a retired officer. He stated that the ideal age for leaders of political organizations was between 40 and 50, while retired officers were all over 55. Wahono, reacting to Sudomo's statement about the 'dropping' of names of candidates, stated his continued belief that the election would be a democratic one. He said that Soeharto, when asked by him whether he had a name in mind, had replied in the negative and told him that he would not designate anybody. Harmoko also continued to insist that he was not, as he was to describe it in early October, the 'crown prince' being prepared for Golkar and that Soeharto, as a democrat, would leave the matter to the national congress to decide. As others had also intimated, he took the fact that the names of various candidates were circulating to be an indication that matters were decided in a democratic way in Golkar.

A contingent issue was the question of the significance of the army's securing control of many provincial boards and thus also providing many delegates to the national congress. In accordance with the Indonesian custom, a committee of *formatur* (in this case seven, of whom four would be drawn from among the delegates from the provincial branches, two from the sitting central board, and one from the advisory board) who would make the final choice would be appointed at the congress, irrespective of whether the demands of some person or group from outside

---

were decisive. On the one hand, Soehardiman, general chairman of SOKSI, one of the major organizations within Golkar, stated that the outcome of the national congress would not be a carbon copy of that of the local congresses. He had already announced SOKSI’s preference for a civilian over a ‘civilian plus’, i.e., a retired military officer, and its support for Harmoko a few days earlier, at the end of September. On the other hand, Abu Hartono, chairman of the armed forces in Parliament, stressed at around the same time that the Golkar national congress should reflect the aspirations of the regional representatives, who in turn should act in accordance with the wishes of the members of their respective branches.

Matters began to ‘heat up’, as it is called in Indonesia, the more so as people began speculating that whoever became the new Golkar general chairman would also be the next president. The former Minister for Internal Affairs, Rudini, for instance, considered it a logical step for the chairman of the largest political organization to become a presidential candidate. This was immediately contradicted by people like Habibie and Harmoko, who pointed out that it was the People’s Congress which would decide this issue, not Golkar.

At the end of September and the beginning of October a number of organizations spoke out for the first time in favour of Harmoko. The first and most outspoken of these was SOKSI, the labour organization in which Harmoko himself had his roots. The second large Golkar organization to do so, Kosgoro, also pledged its support for Harmoko, providing he was nominated. The third big Golkar organization, the MKGR, refused to commit itself before the congress got under way. Harmoko also was the best civilian candidate as far as the Ulama working committee of Golkar was concerned, on account of his great concern for the Islamic community, as its chairman Tjokropranolo explained, which had been testified by his many visits to pesantren in remote spots all over the country. If the candidate was to be a retired officer, then the working committee opted for Soesilo Soedarman. The board of the Jamiatul Muslimin Indonesia – an organization chaired by retired Colonel Dr Abdul Gafur, himself occasionally mentioned as one of the candidates for the position of secretary-general of Golkar – also spoke out in favour of Harmoko in early October.27

This bandying about of names once again displeased the Minister for Internal Affairs, Yogie S. Memet. He accused those responsible of merely making a lot of noise and of wanting to attract publicity to themselves. He refused to reveal the name of the candidate proposed by his group before the opening of the national congress and before he had consulted the other two groups, namely the armed forces and the Golkar central board.

By now, in early October, suggestions were also being made that, if the general chairman were a civilian, then the secretary-general should be a

27 Abdul Gafur reiterated this preference as chairman of the board of the Dewan Gabungan Karyawan Pembangunan Indonesia.
Recent Developments in Indonesian Politics

retired officer – a compromise which would by that time already have been discussed by the army leaders and the advisory board of Golkar, meaning Soeharto. One person proposed as a likely candidate at that time was retired Major-General Ari Mardjono, a member of staff of the State Secretariat and also head of the advisory board secretariat. The name of Oetojo Oesman was also occasionally still mentioned as that of a candidate for the general chairmanship. He would have been preferred by some because he was a long-standing member of Golkar.

In early October the armed forces again began to intimate that they had their own candidate. Among those referring to an armed forces candidate were the Commander General of these forces, Feisal Tanjung, and Major-General Hariyoto P.S., Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs. Rudini and the Minister without Portfolio for Public Housing, Akbar Tanjung (a member of the Golkar advisory board and, in the eyes of some, a civilian candidate who was acceptable to the armed forces as general chairman), also hinted that the armed forces had a candidate and that this might well be somebody other than Harmoko. No specific names were mentioned.

Amid all the discussions and speculation about the chances of Harmoko and about the possible reaction of the armed forces, one name, that of Harsudiyyono Hartas – who had announced the armed forces’ nomination of Try Sutrisno for the vice-presidency – disappeared from the list of likely candidates (though in mid-October the Ikatan Sarjana Kosgoro, or Kosgoro Scholars’ Union, still supported him). At this juncture the name of Soesilo Soedarman was dropped from time to time as that of a possible armed forces candidate. Even the name of Try Sutrisno cropped up now and then. He had been suggested as the person most suited to the post by a member of the Golkar parliamentary faction in mid-September. About two weeks later, Ali Masykur, general chairman of the Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII), or Indonesian Islamic Student Movement, speaking at the Nahdatul Ulama head office, argued that, in the interests of an eventual, smooth succession in the national leadership, Try Sutrisno should become the new general chairman of Golkar, thereby implying that he believed that functionary to be the person who would probably be the next president.

It was only on the very eve of the congress that the commander of the armed forces, Feisal Tanjung, explicitly stated that the armed forces would not be putting forward their own candidate. He did so during a meeting with the board of the Pemuda Muslimin Indonesia, or Indonesian Islamic Youth. It was its general chairman who broke the news to the press.

A related question, discussed both before and after the congress, was that of the degree of independence of Golkar from the armed forces and the bureaucracy, which would increase should its chairman be a civilian. Politicians from the PPP and the PDI suggested that, at its forthcoming congress, Golkar should transform itself into an ordinary political party, no longer sheltering under the ‘umbrella of power’, as Handjojo Putro, a PDI...
Member of Parliament, put it. Others urging a greater degree of independence were Rudini (speaking as general chairman of the LPSI, Lembaga Pengkajian Strategis Indonesia, Indonesian Institute for Strategic Research) and Soemitro, a former head of Kopkamtib. They suggested on a number of occasions that, in view of the present political stability in Indonesia, the armed forces should relinquish their control over Golkar. Both also queried the advisory board’s dominant position. Rudini, pointing out that many considered the internal structure of Golkar to be undemocratic, referred to the Golkar statutes, which, in his words, made the general chairman of the advisory board its ‘supreme commander’, possessing special powers. In the past these special powers of the advisory board might well have been necessary, but under the present circumstances they were no longer so. Similarly Soemitro called upon Golkar to free itself from its dependence on the advisory board, the armed forces, and the civil service. Another member of the LPSI, Soebijakto Prawirasoebrata, regarded the function of the advisory board as one indication that Golkar was not yet a democratic organization. The fact that high government officials could just snap up important positions within Golkar, blocking the career opportunities of ordinary members and confining the decision-making process to a small circle of people, was yet another sign of this. He added that there had been a proposal to make it a more democratic organization as early as 1986, during a seminar at the Lemhanas, but that at that moment even the civilians in Golkar had not considered such a move necessary. In spite of this criticism, it soon became clear that the position of the advisory board would not be changed. Wahono reacted almost immediately by stressing that there would be no move to change the statutes of Golkar at the national congress, and that the special powers with which the chairman of that board was vested were still considered relevant.

The armed forces Chief of Staff for Political Affairs, Lieutenant-General Hariyoto, also joined the fray. Stressing the fact that Golkar was made up of various organizations – which, he said, was a potential source of rivalry and could open the way for factionalism and conflict – he praised Soeharto for his unifying role within Golkar. But, in guarding the continuity of the principles for which Golkar stood, one should not just rely dogmatically on Soeharto’s authority and charisma, he added.

The congress took place from October 20th-25th, 1993, and was attended by about 3000 delegates. Though at its opening it was almost a foregone conclusion that Harmoko would be elected, two other candidates still had not been completely ruled out. These were the Coordinating Minister of Political Affairs and Security, General Soesilo Soedarman, and the Minister of Justice, Oetojo Oesman.

As many had expected, it was Harmoko who became the new general chairman. However, his appointment was marked by a number of remarkable incidents which did not escape the general attention. The first was that only half the regional branches spoke out in favour of the Harmoko-
Ari Mardjono ticket on the 21st and 22nd, the remainder leaving the matter up to the formatur to decide. The latter branches mentioned no names, only stating the criteria which the new general chairman should meet, some, like the Central Java branch, declaring that they had not been able to find a suitable candidate. Delegates from other groups represented at the national congress, including entrepreneurs, youth, women, and intellectuals, on the other hand, did suggest Harmoko.

The second remarkable incident, for which there was no precedent, was that the advisory board, through the former Minister of Religion, Munawir Sjadzali, on the evening of the 22nd formally pledged its support for the candidacy of Harmoko and Ari Mardjono as general chairman and secretary-general respectively. At no earlier Golkar national congress had the advisory board stated its position publicly. Munawir Sjadzali explained in his speech that the advisory board’s decision had been unanimous and had the chairman’s consent. One of the reasons advanced for this choice was that Harmoko had been a Golkar member since 1964, a time when the political situation was still fraught with tension and strife, and had played an active role in the fight against communism. Referring to the criticism that a relative new-comer could attain a high position in Golkar, he pointed out that Harmoko was not like other members who had joined Golkar more recently and who had as it were jumped into the driver’s seat.

An important role was played at the congress by Habibie. It was he who read out an advisory board report, signed by Soeharto, in which the sitting central board, presided over by Wahono, was strongly censured and blamed for the disappointing results of Golkar in the 1992 election. Presented as ‘self-criticism’ rather than criticism of any particular individual, the report accused Golkar of lacking the initiative to deal with the various political problems occasioned by the excesses accompanying the economic development of Indonesia and the misconduct of some members of the government apparatus. It had not been responsive to public demands for greater democracy, for more ‘openness’, for more respect for human rights, for social and legal justice, and for the protection of the environment. Moreover, Golkar had failed to implement the government programmes for administrative reform and improvement of the quality of the public services. The report further called for a qualitative upgrading of Golkar members and demanded that Golkar shed its image as an undemocratic organization leaning heavily on the bureaucracy. The report was read out just after Wahono had held his speech accounting for the activities of his board, in which he had pointed out among other things that, whereas Golkar might not have done so well in the 1992 election from a national perspective, it had won in difficult regions, while the number of Golkar voters had increased in 23 of the 27 provinces.

It also fell to Habibie to chair the team of seven formatur. Two of the four representatives of provincial boards sitting on this came from the
Recent Developments in Indonesian Politics

provincial branches which had spoken out in favour of Harmoko as the next general chairman at the national congress. Only after consultation with Soeharto, who by that time had been re-elected as chairman of the advisory board by acclamation, at the suggestion of all the regional boards, did the team announce the members of the new central board.

Harmoko and Ari Mardjono became the new general chairman and secretary-general respectively. Only 11 members of the old board reappeared on the new board of 45 members. Apart from Ari Mardjono, it included only two retired officers, both as chairman, namely retired Major-General Mochtar and retired Colonel Dr Abdul Gafur. One new development at this congress was the advancement of the sons and daughters of the political elite, including members of the Communication Forum for Sons and Daughters of Retired Officers. So one of the chairmanships went to Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, the eldest daughter of Soeharto, while her brother Bambang Trihatmodjo became treasurer. The new board also included the sons of Sudharmono; Ali Said, a former chairman of the Supreme Court; Yoga Sugama, a former head of Bakin, the Intelligence Services Co-ordinating Body; Soehardiman, a prominent leader of SOKSI; Ibnu Sutowo; and former Minister of Religion Alamsyah.

Just after Harmoko's election an Indonesian weekly, Detik, published an interview with Major-General Sembiring Meliala, deputy chairman of the armed forces faction in parliament. Here Sembiring Meliala stated that the next president would still have to be someone from the armed forces. He further warned that, if Golkar should fall into the hands of another group, the armed forces might drop their support for it and turn to the PPP or the PDI. And if the armed forces were to support the PDI, for instance, that party would certainly win the 1997 election. Harmoko and Habibie — the man whom he believed to have paved the way for Harmoko — had no power base and were completely dependent on Soeharto. Thus he was patently drawing a comparison with the fall of Soekarno, in consequence of which many of his supporters had also been unable to retain their position.

This strong public statement was an exception, however. Brigadier General Syarwan Hamid, head of the armed forces Information Centre, hastened at a press conference to pledge the armed forces' full support for whatever was decided at the Golkar national congress, pointing out that Sembiring Meliala had merely stated a personal opinion not representing the official view of the armed forces. Representatives of the armed forces did not show much disappointment in other comments about the composition of the new central board of Golkar. Brigadier General Syarwan Hamid stated, for instance, that, although only a few of its members were from the armed forces, the new central board was sufficiently balanced. The armed forces Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs also voiced his appreciation for the new board, which he claimed mirrored the aspirations of the three main groups within Golkar.
If any concern was voiced, this was done in general terms, not bearing any relation to Golkar. Even at the beginning of 1994 such military leaders as army Chief of Staff Wismoyo Arismanandar and commander of the armed forces Feisal Tanjung still stressed that the major challenge to Indonesia's unity in the years to come would be posed by the tendency to put personal or group interests above the interests of the nation.

Soeharto's succession continued to attract public attention from time to time also after the Golkar congress. One such time was in February 1994, when an American scholar, Donald Wilson, reported to the press after a meeting with Soeharto that the President had confided to him that he knew when to step down. This statement caused some unease. According to the Minister of Religion, Tarmizi Taher, it had provoked a flood of questions and phone calls from concerned ulama who were anxious to know whether this should be regarded as a sign that Soeharto would resign before he had served his full term of office. Tarmizi Taher attributed the disquiet in part to the Fasting Month, which he alleged was a time when ulama were generally 'more sensitive'. Another religious leader, Hasan Basri, Chairman of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), also noting the unrest among the ulama, pointed out that the apprehension of these religious leaders was understandable. Many of them had spoken out in favour of Soeharto in 1992, and they did not know who would succeed him if he stepped down earlier. To dispel these rumours, the President indicated on several occasions within the next few days that he would act in conformity with the constitutional rules and remain in office the full five years. He would only resign after he had accounted for his policies at the MPR's general session in 1998.