



## Election Update

Issue 2, Oct/Nov 2008

### The Multi-Choice Elections

***2009 will be an important year for reformasi in Indonesia, which began in 1998 after the downfall of the dictatorial Suharto regime. On 9 April 2009, elections will be held for the Indonesian Parliament, the DPR (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, People's Representative Assembly), the DPD (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah, Regional Representatives Council) and provincial assemblies. Three months later, the first round of direct elections will be held for the President and Vice-President. No fewer than 38 political parties will participate in the legislative elections. Just ten years ago, Indonesia emerged from what was in effect a one-party system.***

The bicameral system of Indonesian governance is only five years old, following the creation of the DPD, first elected in 2004. The DPD is composed of four representatives from each province, all non-party independents. It has the right to make proposals and submit opinions on legislative matters and monitor the implementation of laws, but it does not yet have the revising function of second chambers in other countries such as the (unelected) House of Lords in the UK or the US Senate. There is growing unease about what some lawyers and politicians regard as the disproportionate influence of the DPR.

In September this year, agreement was reached to form a constitutional commission to consider ways of empowering the second chamber to exercise a revisionary function towards the DPR but this could take years to agree and put into practice.

MPs elected to the DPR during Indonesia's new ten-year-old democracy are also still learning their trade as regards holding the Government to account. During the Guided Democracy period of former President Sukarno (1959-1965) and subsequently during the 32 years of dictatorial rule under Suharto,

Parliament became increasingly powerless.

MPs were only allowed to rubber-stamp new laws. Serious discussions were seen as a hindrance to authoritarian rule.

As is the case under the US presidential system, members of the government are appointees of the President. In Indonesia, they are not directly answerable to parliament though they can be, and frequently are, summoned to give an account of their policies and actions to parliamentary committees.

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#### **PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES**

The parliamentary elections are organised by the *Komisi Pemilihan Umum* (KPU, General Elections Committee), which has announced that 11,868 candidates have been registered to contest the 560 parliamentary seats. The names of all the candidates have been

published in a national newspaper, relevant local newspapers, and on television, with their photos, to allow the public to comment on the list with a view to ensuring their compliance with the legal requirements.

The list includes many family members of party executives. One of the most striking examples is Megawati Sukarnoputri, the chair of the PDI-P (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan* - Indonesian Democracy Party of Struggle) whose father, Sukarno, proclaimed Indonesian independence in 1945 and became the country's first President. Her husband, Taufiq Kiemas, her daughter, Puan Maharani, and her youngest brother, Guruh Sukarnoputra, will all be standing for election. Other family members such as Megawati's sisters Rachmawati and Sukmawati, have set up their own parties in the hope of winning seats.

Megawati was President from July 2001 till October 2004 and is again seeking election as President. The incumbent President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (popularly known as SBY), is seeking re-election as the candidate for *Partai Demokrat* (Democratic Party) while his son is a candidate for the same party in Central Java. Agung Laksono, the deputy chair of GOLKAR, is seeking re-election for the party which won the most DPR seats in 2004, his son is contesting a seat in West Java and several other close relatives are standing in constituencies around the country.

**Women's groups doubt that there will be a substantial number of women in the next legislature**

Parties are required to ensure that 30 percent of their candidates are women but there are no sanctions for parties which fail to do so. Women candidates would need to be high up on their party's list to have the same chance as men to secure a seat. All but six of the parties have complied with this regulation but women's groups doubt that there will be a substantial number of women in the next legislature.

**The current method of listing has been criticised for giving too much power to party elites**

One contentious issue relates to the way candidates are listed on the ballot paper. The required method is for parties to list the names in order of preference. This means that voters will not vote for their candidate of choice but for the party list and seats will go to candidates according to their position on the list. However, in many places, politicians have won local elections thanks to their popularity. The current method of listing has been criticised for giving too much power to party elites and failing to recognise that voters' choices may conflict with the choices of the party leadership.

## **GOLPUT**

The term GOLPUT (*Golongan Putih* - White Group) emerged soon after Suharto's New Order regime came to power. Some student activists and intellectuals who had initially supported the military seizure of power realised that the democratic changes Suharto had promised were a sham and the country had become a military dictatorship. They formed a movement, GOLPUT, that aimed to show that the elections were a fraud and called for them to be boycotted. It was a pro-active boycott with those involved registering as voters, going to the polling stations and invalidating their ballot papers. Some left them blank, others pierced more than one party emblem.

Abdurrahman Wahid, President from 1999 to 2001, was recently ousted from his own party and has called on his supporters to boycott the elections, but GOLPUT now has a different meaning and applies to voters who cannot be bothered to vote. According to groups monitoring the elections, the number of non-voters could be very high indeed. An important indication is the high number of non-voters in the recent elections for the governors of Jakarta and three provinces in Java, which together form the most densely populated

areas of the country. In Jakarta, 39.2% failed to turn up, with a similar number of absentees in East Java. In Central Java, the GOLPUT figure was as high as 41.5% while in West Java, more than 9 million voters failed to turn up.

Some observers have criticised local KPUs (election commissions) for compiling inadequate voter lists with many names unrecorded. Moreover, Indonesians frequently move home and may fail to register in their new home. Another factor may be voting fatigue. In the first post-Suharto election, people were very enthusiastic, full of expectations and queued for hours to cast their vote. But since then, apathy and dissatisfaction have set in because economic and social conditions have failed to improve. Few parties have been successful in reaching out to the electorate with attractive programmes. As with many parliamentary democracies around the world, the number of voters is likely to be quite low, possibly much lower than in 1999 and 2004.

## **THE POLITICAL PARTIES**

Recent public opinion surveys suggest that not more than a dozen or so parties will win a significant number of seats in 2009. In 2004, of the 24 parties which took part, 11 parties won five seats or more, six won one or two seats, and seven parties failed to win any seats. The parties can be broadly divided into secular parties and religious-based parties with further sub-categories of military-connected and nationalist parties.

### **1 THE SECULAR PARTIES**

#### **GOLKAR (Functional Groups)**

The party which won the largest number of seats in 2004 was GOLKAR (*Golongan Karya*, Functional Groups) with 128 seats. GOLKAR was founded by a small number of middle-ranking officers and bureaucrats in 1964 as an anti-Communist umbrella. It became the largest party in the country after Suharto's seizure of power in 1966 and was re-shaped by Suharto and his inner core of army generals into a winning electoral machine. It was an entity above parties constructed in the corporatist mould.

GOLKAR dominated Indonesian politics throughout the New Order and easily won all the elections as the *de facto* state party. It became recognised as 'the ruling party' or, more correctly, 'the party of the ruler'. General elections were stage-managed affairs; targets for the party were set by a clique of Suharto officials and were invariably achieved with the help of the bureaucracy and the territorial structure of the army.

In the mid-1970s, all the parties that had survived the purge when Suharto came to power were forced into two straight jackets, to become part of a nationalist federation, the PDI, *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (Indonesian Democracy Party), or a Muslim federation, the PPP, *Partai Pembangunan Persatuan* (United Development Party), both of which played nothing more than a decorative role.

These three outfits provide the basic framework of the political map in Indonesia today: The vast majority of the 38 parties that will participate in the 2009 elections are in some way spin-offs of GOLKAR or the two other parties.

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GOLKAR also became the embodiment of the *Dwifungsi* (Dual Function) doctrine, allowing the military to participate actively in politics. Both the military and GOLKAR had representatives in Parliament. By the mid-eighties, the political role of the military had become so extreme that Suharto, seeing it as a threat, decided to reduce its influence.

Following the restoration of the pluralist political system in 1999, GOLKAR lost its hegemonic position. Under the chairmanship of Akbar Tandjung (1999 – 2004), military officers were removed from the party. This paved the way for GOLKAR to transform itself into a normal

political party. It can now be described as a conservative party with several liberal wings. The technocratic and bureaucratic tendencies remain as a legacy of its three-decade long status as the ruling party and a consequence of the large number of civil servants which remain within its ranks. It also retains the attraction of being a reliable way of securing a top position in local administrations.

GOLKAR has displayed a striking resilience and many of its stalwarts continue to occupy elected positions in provincial, regional and local administrations. The party is today chaired by Jusuf Kalla, the country's Vice-President. It has managed to stay in politics thanks to its organisational strength throughout the archipelago and to money politics. Its nationwide spread has given it the advantage of greater electoral weight. For example, to gain a seat in South Sulawesi requires only 155,518 votes as compared with Central Java where the required number is 291,597 votes.

In recent months, there have been fierce disputes within the party and calls for a rejuvenation to promote a younger generation. However, this has been sluggish and new ideas about the party's political position have failed to emerge. Some groups have expressed dissatisfaction with Jusuf Kalla and are promoting the Sultan of Yogyakarta as their preferred candidate for President. Another complication is that the duo, SBY/JK who now hold the two top positions are very likely to stand again. But many GOLKAR stalwarts find it unacceptable that the largest party should accept the position of Vice-President. Akbar Tandjung (its former chairman) and the Sultan of Yogyakarta will continue to press for the party to field its own presidential candidate.

Despite its resilience, GOLKAR has felt the electoral effects of its past history and its position as the ruling party of a despised regime. In recent local elections, it has suffered humiliating defeats because it is seen by large sections of the electorate, especially younger voters, as a relic of the dictatorship, the main source of large-scale corruption and abuse of power. These and other problems are likely to result in a decline in support for the party in 2009.

## 1.1 MILITARY-CONNECTED PARTIES

After the fall of Suharto in 1998, one of the priorities of the reform movement was to curtail the influence of the military. The *Dwifungsi* doctrine was made redundant and the military lost much of its political clout. It is no coincidence that in the past two years, a number of new parties run by retired generals have emerged outside GOLKAR. These new parties can be seen as moves by retired officers to compensate for their loss of political and economic clout.

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The five parties set up for these purposes are Hanura (*Hati Nurani Rakyat*, People's Conscience Party), Gerindra (*Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya*, Greater Indonesia Movement Party), PKPB (*Partai Karya Peduli Bangsa*, Functional Party of Care for the Nation), PKP (*Partai Karya Perjuangan*, Functional Party for Struggle) and PRN (*Partai Republika Nusantara*, Archipelago Republican Party).

Retired officers can also be found in almost all the other parties.

### **Hanura (*Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat* - People's Conscience Party)**

Hanura was set up in December 2006 by a number of retired military officers, the foremost among them being retired General Wiranto. Wiranto was commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces at the time of Suharto's downfall in May 1998 and was at the centre of events when Suharto handed over to his Vice President, B.J Habibie.

**Wiranto was indicted for crimes against humanity in East Timor but has never been extradited to face the charges.**

In 1999, when the East Timorese people voted overwhelmingly in a UN-organised referendum to separate from the Indonesian Republic, the Indonesian Army under Wiranto's command took revenge against the Timorese people by perpetrating acts of violence throughout East Timor, destroying its infrastructure and causing over 1,400 deaths. Wiranto was subsequently indicted for crimes against humanity in East Timor but has never been extradited to face the charges.

In the presidential election of 2004, Wiranto stood as the GOLKAR candidate, along with Solahuddin Wahid of the Muslim party PKB (see below) as his running mate; they came third in the first round of voting, receiving 22 percent of the votes.

Wiranto is very ambitious and his election target is clear. He hopes to achieve the support of the required 20 percent of MPs to become the third candidate in the Presidential election and the only one who has never held the top post.

Hanura is a party with seemingly unlimited amounts of money; Wiranto has been able to attract a number of local businessmen with political ambitions who hope to use Hanura as their political vehicle. The Hanura head office is located in Jalan Diponegoro, one of the most affluent streets in central Jakarta, and its branches in various cities also have well-endowed offices. Hanura aims to attract a large number of supporters in the rural areas by setting up co-operatives in every Hanura branch.

Hanura's board is loaded with star-studded retired generals, including retired officers from the Navy, Air Force and Police. It has spent a huge amount of money investing in

paraphernalia such as caps, T-shirts, flags, banners and folders. Billboards with Wiranto's image can be found in many strategic locations.

### **Gerindra, (*Partai gerakan indonesia raya* - Greater Indonesia Movement Party)**

Gerindra is the political vehicle of Prabowo Subianto, a retired army general and former son-in-law of Suharto. His final posts in the army were as commander of its elite force, Kopassus, and then as commander of Kostrad, the army's strategic command. He was involved in a bitter dispute with General Wiranto in the final days of Suharto's government, in connection with his attempts to keep his father-in-law in power and safeguard his own position in post-Suharto Indonesia.

Prabowo was allegedly responsible for the abduction of a number of activists in late 1997 and the shooting dead of six Trisakti University students in May 1998. He was also in charge of paramilitary forces which earlier terrorised and tortured Timorese. There were calls for him to be prosecuted for atrocities committed in East Timor by KOPASSUS while under his command.' It was alleged that 'the numerous kidnappings, disappearances, torture and killings by instruments of the state to keep Suharto in power and to consolidate the armed forces presence and control over East Timor can be traced back to Prabowo.'

According to Robert Gelbard, a former US ambassador to Indonesia, Prabowo's deeds in the late 90s 'were shocking even by TNI [*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, Indonesian National Army] standards, involving extraordinary human rights violations, particularly in 1998. For this reason, he has been denied an American visa for life. And it is quite remarkable, in terms of his own ego, that he would now put himself forward as a candidate for the presidency.'

**Prabowo's deeds in the late 90s were 'shocking even by TNI standards'**

Following the downfall of Suharto, Prabowo fled to the UK where he had studied as a youth, then settled down for years in Jordan.

Gerindra was set up on Prabowo's initiative for the specific purpose of backing his candidacy for the presidency in 2009. One member of its executive board is Muchdi Purwopranjono, former deputy chief of the state intelligence agency, BIN, now on trial for the premeditated murder in 2004 of one of Indonesia's foremost human rights activists, Munir. Prabowo has taken a back-seat strategy, letting other people organise Gerindra, and ultimately emerging as its presidential candidate.

He has succeeded in promoting his presidential bid with large-scale TV advertising which has placed him high up in several recent opinion polls. He has also managed to get himself elected as the chairman of HKTI, the umbrella organisation for peasants. With the help of local HKTI chapters, Gerindra hopes to attract millions of votes.

#### **PKPB, (*Partai Kekayaan Peduli Bangsa - Functional Party for Care for the Nation*)**

The PKPB is quite frank about its military credentials. Some two dozen retired generals, marshals and admirals hold key positions on the party's board. Its general chairman is retired four-star General Hartono, a former army chief-of-staff, who was also notorious for his unbending allegiance to GOLKAR and for his close relationship with Suharto's eldest daughter Tutut.

#### **PKP (*Partai Kekayaan Perjuangan - Functional Party of Struggle*)**

The PKP is also known as *Partai Pakar Pangan* (Party of Concern for Basic Foodstuffs) and is the political vehicle of retired Lt. General Muhammad Yasin. Like the PKPB, the PKP is a spin-off from GOLKAR, with a strongly-stated loyalty to the state doctrine, the Constitution and to national unity. While Lt. General Muh.Yasin is regarded as a powerhouse, he has never held high office in the military. Being an intelligence officer, his profile was always low, retaining close relations with SBY. He was a close advisor of the President, but there are

now serious differences between the two men. At one point he was a serious candidate for Home Affairs Minister but the post went to another retired general.

**he [Syahrir] is one of three former Kopassus chiefs to compete for the presidency in 2009**

PKP was an expression of Yasin's political ambitions and the role of PKP can be seen as typical of many of other small, new parties. While they are too small to be of importance on their own, they can play a pivotal role in the bargaining over a government coalition.

#### **PRN, (*Partai Republik Nusantara - the Archipelago Republican Party*)**

This is another obscure party, seen as the toy of retired Lt. General Syahrir, strongly focussed on preserving a centralised state in contrast with the trend towards greater autonomy existing since the fall of Suharto. Lt General Syahrir is a former commander of Kopassus, the notorious red berets special forces. As such he is one of three former Kopassus chiefs to compete for the presidency in 2009. Recently, PRN has emerged as one of the vehicles to be used to promote the Sultan of Yogyakarta as a presidential candidate. It has been able to create the necessary national party structure with branches in many parts of the country. Like the PKPB and PKP and many other small parties, it could gain enough votes to be part of the bargaining process to establish post-election coalitions to support Presidential nominations.

#### **PPRN (*Partai Peduli Rakyat Nasional - National People's Concern Party*)**

Two other small parties have emerged with close family ties to the military. The first, PPRN, was founded and is chaired by Amelia Yani, the daughter of the late General Ahmad Yani, commander-in-chief in 1965 who was killed in the abortive coup. From time to time, she has emerged on behalf of the party but its political agenda remains vague.

### **Partai Patriot (Patriot Party)**

PP is chaired by Yapto Sulistyono Suryosumarno, son of General Suryo Sumarno. In the Suharto era, Yapto was the leader of the notorious *Pemuda Pancasila* (Pancasila Youth), a nationwide gang involved in organised crime. During Suharto's heydays in the nineties, the PP was given dirty political jobs and Yapto as a mafia-boss gradually became a political broker. He has lost political clout since 1998 and this party is likely to be stillborn.

## **1.2 NATIONALIST PARTIES**

### **PDI-P (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan* - Indonesian Democracy Party of Struggle)**

The PDI-P is the successor to the PNI, the Indonesian Nationalist Party, which topped the elections in 1955. Its founder was Sukarno and its mission was described as nationalist and marhaenist (for the common people). Following the destruction of the political party system after 1965, the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (PDI) came into existence in January 1973 as a result of a lengthy and fractious struggle between competing groups and attempts by the military to take control. It was permitted to participate as one of the two minor parties in the five-yearly elections held during Suharto's New Order. In 1993, Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Sukarno, was elected to chair the party despite efforts by the military government to prevent her. She has remained head of the party ever since.

In the mid-1990s, when sections of the party fell under the control of pro-Suharto elements, hundreds of Megawati supporters staged a 'Democracy Forum' at the party's head office in July 1996 as part of the *reformasi* movement that was gathering strength towards the end of the Suharto regime. At least five people were killed, 149 were injured and 23 went missing when military-backed thugs stormed the building.

In 1998, the party changed its name to *PDI-Perjuangan* (PDI-P). Following the election of 1999, Megawati became Vice-President and

**Megawati's popularity is based to a considerable extent on her being the daughter of the country's founder**

took over as President after the removal of President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) from power in July 2001. She was re-elected as chair of the party in 2005.

The main support for the party is primarily in heavily-populated Central and East Java and in Bali, which secured it enough votes to take the top position in the country in 1999. However, it fell to second place in 2004 when it gained 109 parliamentary seats. Megawati's popularity is based to a considerable extent on her being the daughter of the country's founder. Her husband, Taufiq Kiemas, a wealthy businessman, has always played an upfront role in her election campaigns and heads the party's advisory board.

In March this year, the PDI-P formed a new wing called *Baitul Muslimin*, which is intended to accommodate the aspirations of Islamic nationalist *ulemas* (religious leaders) and attract members from the Muslim parties. This brought the number of party wings to three, the other two being a youth group, *Banteng Muda Indonesia* (Indonesia Youth Buffalo Party) and a women's group, *Srikandi Demokrasi Indonesia* (Indonesian Srikandi Democracy). Representatives of Indonesia's two main Muslim organisations, *Nadlatul Ulama* and *Mohammadiyah*, were in attendance when the *Baitul Muslimin* was founded, implying their endorsement of the decision.

Several smaller parties are based on similar nationalist principles to the PDI-P with party logos that use the buffalo like the PDI-P. These are the *Partai Nasional Indonesia Marhaenisme* (Marhaenism Indonesian National Party), *Partai Demokrasi Pembaruan* (Renewal Democracy Party), *Partai Penegak Demokrasi Indonesia* (Party to Consolidate Indonesian Democracy), *Partai Pelopor*

(Pioneer Party) and *Partai Nasional Benteng Kerakyatan Indonesia* (Indonesian People's Fortress National Party).

*PNI Marhaenisme* and *Partai Pelopor* are chaired by Megawati's sisters, Sukmawati and Rachmawati respectively. Although they are unlikely to seriously threaten the PDI-P, they could attract some of its potential voters.

A more serious split off from the PDI-P is the PDP, *Partai Demokrasi Pembaruan* with Roy Janis as chairman (previously the chairman of the Jakarta chapter of PDI-P) and Laksamana Sukardi (a former cabinet minister) in the leadership. Two smaller split-offs are the PPD ( *Partai Penegak Demokrasi Indonesia* - Party to Uphold Democracy), chaired by a younger generation politician, Endang Sutrisno, and PNBK (*Partai Nasional Benteng Kerakyatan Indonesia* - Indonesian National People's Fortress Party) chaired by Eros Djarot, a well-known artist and filmmaker, previously a vote-getter for the PDI-P.

**SBY became closely associated with the reform wing of the army**

### **Partai Demokrat (Democratic Party)**

Partai Demokrat was founded in September 2001, following SBY's failure to become Vice-President earlier that year. Some of his supporters felt that a bid for the Presidency would only succeed with the establishment of a new political party chaired by a Muslim of Javanese origin with a Christian from the outer islands as secretary-general. They went to great lengths to make sure that this would be seen as his personal political party. It was founded on 9 September 2001, SBY's birthday, with 99 members, symbolising the day and month of its foundation.

PD, through its mission statement, is committed to the *reformasi* movement for renewal in all sections of society, in accordance with the 1945 Proclamation of Independence, with the object of achieving peace, democracy and people's welfare. It

promotes equal rights for all citizens regardless of race, religion or social status, and favours a strong civil society, regional autonomy and the realisation of people's sovereignty based on consensus.

SBY rose through the ranks of the Indonesian Army, serving several stints in occupied East Timor, and retired with the rank of lieutenant-general. He became closely associated with the reform wing of the army and together with another reformist officer, Agus Wirahadikusumah, published a book entitled 'The Challenges of Development'. This earned him a reputation as the 'thinking general'. One of his tasks was to get the army out of politics. He said at the time:

*'The basic idea of military reform is to go back to the role and function of the military as a defence force and move away from politics'*

He became Minister of Mines and Energy in the government of Abdurrahman Wahid in 1999 and after a cabinet reshuffle, became Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security. Prior to his impeachment in 2001, Wahid wanted SBY to freeze Parliament and declare a state of emergency but he refused and was dismissed from the cabinet, reinforcing his reputation as a liberal.

While serving in Megawati's government as Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security, he complained of being excluded from policy-making decisions and gained popularity as the underdog.

SBY's manifesto for the presidential election in 2004 was built on four pillars, prosperity, peace, justice and democracy, and included the objectives of promoting annual economic growth of at least 7 percent and reviving small and medium-sized enterprises. His bid was successful and he became president in October 2004. He has now declared himself ready to be nominated in 2009.

*Partai Demokrat* is a rather strange political animal. Although it is the electoral vehicle of SBY, the President shows little interest in the party and behaves as if he were above party. The presidential election is direct and his view

is that he won because of the popular vote and not because of *Partai Demokrat*.

*Partai Demokrat* is now a party full of ambitious people, able politicians and young people who are seeking a relatively moderate political home. According to the polls, the party is likely to score well and could be strong enough to compete with the two other secular big hitters, GOLKAR and PDI-P.

### 1.3 THE SMALLER PARTIES

There are two parties committed to defending the interests of workers. The first is *Partai Buruh*, established and chaired by Muchtar Pakpahan, a well-known union organiser who served a prison sentence under Suharto. It upholds modern social-democratic principles along the lines of trade unions in Europe.

The other one is PPPI (*Partai Pengusaha dan Pekerja Indonesia* - Indonesian Employers and Workers Party) chaired by Daniel Hutapea, a successful businessman. The party advocates harmony between employers and workers. Another party based on social-democratic principles is *Partai PIB (Perjuangan Indonesia Baru* - Party of Struggle for a New Indonesia), set up by the late economist and presidential advisor, Syahrir. After his death, his wife Kartini Syahrir took over as the chairperson.

Several new parties focus strongly on the grassroots economy: PIS (*Partai Indonesia Sejahtera* - Indonesian Welfare Party) is chaired by Budiyanto and is the political vehicle of the ambitious Lt. General Sutiyoso, the former governor of Jakarta; and *Partai Merdeka* (Independence Party), chaired by Rosmawi Hasan. These will be among the smaller parties likely to combine their votes after the elections in order to be able to bargain with others ahead of the Presidential election.

The daughter of Muhammad Hatta, Indonesia's first Vice-President, Meuthia Farida, currently in charge of women's empowerment in the SBY government has set up the PKPI (*Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia* - Indonesian Justice and Unity Party) which focuses on economic development.

Two parties focus on decentralisation or regionalism: PPD (*Partai Persatuan Daerah* - Regional Unity Party) and PDK (*Partai Demokrasi Kebangsaan* - National Democratic Party). Decentralisation is a relatively new issue and is seen by many Indonesians as a threat to the unitary and strongly centralised state. Professor Ryas Rasyid who chairs the PDK drafted the autonomy law during the early post-Suharto period. The emergence of local parties in Aceh and the results of local elections in many parts of Indonesia have led to the emergence of popular local leaders, a feature that is likely to increase in future.

Several parties have been set up by the younger generation: most of them are nationalist but not inspired by the PNI founded by Sukarno in 1927. Two are the PBN (*Partai Barisan Nasional* - National Movement Party), which is chaired by Roy Sembel and is expected to support the candidacy of SBY for President and the PK (*Partai Kedaulatan* - Sovereignty Party). The PPI (*Partai Pemuda Indonesia* - Party of Indonesian Youth) is inspired by the idea of the unitary state dating back to the Hindu kingdom of Mojopahit. The PMB (*Partai Matahari Bangsa* - National Sun Party) is another new party with little chance of getting many seats.

**The combined votes of the secular parties have always been marginally higher than those of the Muslim parties**

## 2. THE RELIGIOUS-BASED PARTIES

Throughout the country's history, parties have been divided into those with secular and religious backgrounds. The combined votes of the secular parties have always been marginally higher than those of the Muslim parties.

A year after BJ Habibie took over from Suharto as caretaker President, the combined efforts of the Muslim parties, led the People's Consultative Congress (MPR) to elect

Abdurrachman Wahid (Gus Dur) as President while Amien Rais, another important Muslim leader, became the chairman of the MPR. Habibie was also politically important as the chairman of the ICMI, the new group for Muslim intellectuals, while Gus Dur was the leader of NU, *Nahdlatul Ulama*, arguably the world's biggest Muslim organisation with around 40 million adherents.

Gus Dur and Habibie were Presidents in the crucial post-dictatorship period. With hindsight it can be said that both Muslim leaders, despite their flaws, introduced a number of important democratic reforms. Basic freedoms such as freedom of speech and freedom of assembly were largely restored, the press also enjoyed greater freedom while a general autonomy law was adopted in 1999. During Habibie's Presidency, a referendum was held in East Timor, which led to the country's independence. Other important policies were introduced in conflict areas such as Aceh and Papua and perhaps most important of all, the role of the military was strongly curtailed.

Despite the efforts of these two Muslim-backed Presidents, the next two presidents, Megawati Sukarnoputri, and SBY came from a secular background. According to recent opinion polls, the popularity of all Muslim parties with the exception of the PKS (see below), has declined.

### **PPP (*Partai persatuan pembangunan* - United Development Party)**

The PPP was founded in 1973 and became the only officially recognised Muslim party during Suharto's New Order. It was a merger of four Muslim parties but was weakened by deep internal divisions due to the divergent policies of its members. Its role was always a minor one during the New Order and it was compelled to abandon its Muslim principles and replace them with Pancasila, the five principles of state ideology: belief in One God, humanity, national unity, democracy and social justice.

In the post-Suharto period, the PPP restored its Muslim profile and formed under its leadership the *Poros Tengah* (Central Axis) with several newly-established Muslim parties. In 2004, the

PPP won 58 seats to become the third largest party.

In 2007, its newly-elected chairman, Suryadarma Ali, who is also a government minister, vowed to improve the party's performance in 2009 by paying greater attention to the economy. He said he would work for Islamic teachings to be the basic guidelines for Indonesian Muslims and especially for party members and supporters.

**Gus Dur and Habibie, Presidents in the crucial post-dictatorship period, despite their flaws, introduced a number of important democratic reforms**

But serious internal conflicts over the selection of new activists as candidates led to discontent among older activists resulting in a dispute between the chairman and the general secretary. One party leader said that money politics was damaging the party's reputation. The party also lacks well-known personalities, a factor widely regarded as improving a party's chances of winning seats. During the Megawati presidency, the chairman of the PPP, Hamzah Haz, was appointed Vice-President. His performance was widely recognised as woeful and the fact that he has four wives was a constant source of bad publicity.

The emergence of many new Muslim parties has left the PPP with reduced support and it is not expected to equal its performance in 2004.

### **PKB (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* - National Awakening Party)**

The PKB was founded by NU leader Gus Dur. The NU is a conservative Sunni Islam organisation of Ulamas (Islamic scholar preachers trained in Qur'anic studies) founded in 1926. It funds schools and hospitals and organises community groups to help combat poverty and is organised around groups which

provide religious education and involve themselves in community activities. In 1984, Gus Dur, grandson of NU founder Hasyim Asy'ari, inherited the leadership from his father. He became President following the 1999 elections but was removed from power amid charges of financial impropriety in July 2001.

In the 1970s, Gus Dur worked as a journalist, contributing articles to the monthly journal *Prisma*, and conducting lecture tours in *pesantren* and *madrasah* (religious schools) all over Java. Despite attempts by Suharto to clip its wings, the NU succeeded in organising mass rallies. Gus Dur pushed for inter-faith dialogue and caused quite a stir when he accepted an invitation to visit Israel in 1994.

In his third term as chairman of NU, Gus Dur moved towards a political alliance with Megawati Sukarnoputri. The two were elected President and Vice-President in October 1999 but the partnership ended with Gus Dur's impeachment in July 2001 when Megawati took over as President.

The PKB won 52 seats in 2004 but recently became embroiled in a protracted internal conflict after Gus Dur dismissed his nephew, Muhaimin Iskandar, as the party's leader. It was the Muhaimin-led PKB faction that won the right to contest the 2009 elections after the Supreme Court ruled that the dismissal was illegal.

The Muhaimin fraction is now recognised as the legitimate PKB party and Gus Dur and his followers have decided to call on their members to boycott the 2009 elections. NU has become a neutral organisation and no longer endorses PKB.

### **PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* - Prosperous Justice Party**

The PKS is the successor to *Partai Keadilan*, the Justice Party, set up in July 1998, two months after the fall of the Suharto regime. All the parties which failed to reach the electoral threshold in 1999 were required to re-register as a new party with a new name. The PK then became the PKS and won formal recognition as a party, taking over the assets of the Justice Party in July 2003.

**PKS is arguably the best organised political party in the country, an urban-based movement with a strong presence in university campuses**

PKS is arguably the best organised political party in the country with a clear political agenda. It focuses strongly on clean governance, the eradication of corruption and campaigns for a strong social programme. The party leaders were inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, an organisation that is to be found among Muslim communities in many parts of the world. The PKS has a firm belief in solid Muslim ideals such as the creation of a Muslim state and implementation of Syariah Law. But it also accepts the basic principle of democracy, that decisions are based on the views of the majority of the electorate.

PKS is a relatively new phenomenon which has been surprisingly successful at winning new members. The party is an urban-based movement with a strong presence especially in university campuses. It is now the strongest party in Jakarta: the Indonesian capital is a huge metropolis surrounded by a green belt of kampongs and lower middle class areas where the presence of the PKS predominates.

The party's mission attaches great importance to training cadres to a high standard morally, intellectually and professionally. In the 2004 election, it took sixth place with 45 seats. The leader of the party, Hidayat Nurwahid, was elected to chair the MPR, the body that formerly elected the country's President and Vice-President and adopted the country's Broad Lines of State Policy.

PKS frequently takes the lead in demonstrations and rallies on matters of national and local interest, which are attended by thousands of its members and supporters. It is generally regarded as one of the more formidable Muslim parties which is likely to do well in the 2009 elections.

## **PAN (*Partai Amanat Nasional* - National Mandate Party)**

PAN was set up in the immediate aftermath of Suharto's downfall, on the initiative of the *Majelis Amanat Rakyat* (People's Mandate Council), a Muslim council which was part of the reform movement that took shape in the closing years of the Suharto regime. PAN was set up by Amien Rias, at the time the chairman of the Muslim organisation, *Muhammadiyah* whose roots go back to the days before Suharto took power. *Muhammadiyah* was the second largest Muslim organisation after NU in the days of Sukarno. In 1999 Amien Rais became the chairman of the MPR.

Having failed to win election as President in 1999 when his party won only seven percent of the votes, Amien Rais exercised his skills as a 'king-maker'. He took the initiative to set up the *Poros Tengah* (Central Axis) of Muslim parties which is credited with having undermined Megawati Sukarnoputri chances of securing the Presidency in 1999 by persuading the PKB to leave its coalition with the PDI-P. As a result, Gus Dur became President with Megawati as his Vice-President. Amien Rais claimed at the time that his manoeuvres had succeeded in saving the nation from disintegration.

He is also credited with having led the campaign to scupper the chances of B.J Habibie, Vice-President during Suharto's final term, from winning the support of the MPR. When the MPR rejected Habibie's Presidential Address, he was forced to give way to Gus Dur who became President in October 1999.

In 2004, PAN won fifty-two seats in Parliament, to become the seventh largest party and the fourth largest Muslim party, with 6.4 percent of the votes. The present chairman of PAN is Soetrisno Bachir, a wealthy businessman.

**Many people who today form the country's political elite hail from a *Muhammadiyah* background**

## **2.1 THE SMALLER MUSLIM PARTIES**

Back in 1955, the Muslim electorate was represented by four parties. *Masyumi*, the largest Muslim party was spread across the country and represented the followers of *Muhammadiyah*. *Nahdlatul Ulama* was the second largest party with strong bases in East Java, parts of Central Java and South Kalimantan. PSII was composed of the remnants of *Sarekat Islam*, the Muslim movement dating back to the 1920s, which was the backbone of the independence movement. *Perti* was a small Muslim movement with a progressive outlook and a mass following in places like West Sumatra and Aceh.

Although *Perti* had a distinct following of its own, it was later integrated into the PPP. The PSII was also dissolved and re-constituted itself as a new party called PSI (*Partai Sarekat Islam*) claiming the heritage of *Sarekat Islam*. The PSII had been a federation of six small parties and had both a secular and a religious identity.

These Muslim parties were largely spin-offs from *Masyumi* (*Muhammadiyah*) and the NU. PAN, already mentioned above, has a largely *Muhammadiyah* following, while NU is largely rural based, decentralised and organised around numerous pesantrens (Muslim schools). *Muhammadiyah* is largely urban based with a more centralised structure and runs schools, universities, hospitals and orphanages. Many people who today form the country's political elite (the bureaucracy, academia and business) hail from a *Muhammadiyah* background.

The PBB (*Partai Bulan Bintang* - Crescent and Star Party) is inspired by *Masyumi* and also uses the same symbols. Its founder is Yusril Mahendra who was Justice Minister in the Gus Dur cabinet. Its present chairman is M.S.Kaban, a member of the present cabinet. Another somewhat less evident off-shoot of the *Masyumi* is the PBR (*Partai Bintang Reformasi* - Star Reform Party) which was set up by, amongst others, the charismatic Muslim preacher Zainuddin MZ. Several former activists, including Dita Sari, a former trade

union leader, have joined the ranks of PBR. Rizal Ramli, a well-known economist is being promoted by the PBR as a Presidential candidate.

The off-shoots of the NU are relatively new. Ever since it was first set up, the PKB (see above) was embroiled in a number of conflicts and splits. In the most recent conflict, its founder, Gus Dur, was ousted from the party. As a result, the huge following of the NU is now split with members joining several new parties. While some of the dissidents have not yet formed parties of their own, two new parties have emerged. The first is PKNU (*Partai Kebangkitan Nasional Ulama* - National Preachers Awakening Party) and the second is PPNUI (*Partai Persatuan Nahdlatul Ummah Indonesia* - Indonesian Unity of NU Followers Party). They are composed largely of disgruntled people who would like to restore unity among the followers of the NU.

## 2.2 CHRISTIAN PARTIES

### **PDS (*Partai Damai Sejahtera* - Prosperous Peace Party)**

This party is one of Indonesia's two Christian parties which won 13 seats in the 2004 parliamentary elections as well as 52 seats in a number of regional councils (DPRD) and 329 seats in several regencies and municipalities. The other Christian party, *Partai Kasih Demokrasi Indonesia*, Party of Devotion to Democracy, is new and therefore not yet represented in the DPR. The PDS was set up at the time of the *reformasi*, soon after the downfall of the Suharto regime.

The PDS describes itself as independent, open (which indicates that it is open to persons of all faiths) and based on the principles of devotion, nationalism, and a just and civilised humanitarianism. Its mission is to seek reconciliation, reform and transformation in all sectors of life.

The Party was set up by several colourful preachers like Ruyandi Hutasoit (chair of PDS). They are known for their fiery Sunday sermons; PDS won many votes in Christian areas like Manado, Tapanuli but also from the Chinese Indonesian community. It is the only party with

a cross as the party symbol. The other Christian Party PKDI uses a rosary and Christmas tree as its logo.