

Islam and democracy :  
Indonesia's 2004 Election and Beyond

The endeavours of a fragile state sustained by a resilient nation

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In the wake of the Bali bombing (12 Oct 2002), doubts have been raised regarding the stability of the largest Islamic country in the world. Was it going to turn fundamentalist and support a new brand of Islamic state ?

Actually, strong and successful measures have been taken by the Megawati government to fight terrorism. An amount of stabilisation has been reached, while the 2004 election process has been started on April 5, with the election of national and regional assemblies, to be followed on July 5, by the presidential election.

A real-size picture of Indonesia:

The post-election political setup

Intent on establishing a most democratic regime, Indonesian reformers have set up a complicated system and a lengthy political process under laws No. 31/2002 (political parties), 12/2003 (general and regional elections) and 23/2003 (presidential election). It took the Election Commission (KPU) a full month to tabulate the voting results for the three-tier election held on April 5 for national, regional and district legislative bodies. On the same day, voters also elected the members of the new "senate", the Council of Regional Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah or DPD).

The results of the election

Out of the 148 million eligible voters, some 124.4 million cast their votes, or 83 per cent (compare with 93 per cent in 1999). Of this number, some 10.9 million were rejected as invalid (voters had to choose among lists of names presented by parties; they could also check favoured names in lists).

Despite the large number of invalid votes and some logistical shortcomings, Indonesia won plaudits from the international community for its legislative election, which was called fair and transparent.

A quick glance at election results (table 1.) reveals a photograph of Indonesia's current political setup. What do we see?

Out of 24 contending parties, the first 11 parties cumulate close to 90

percent of the votes (89,36 percent).

Golkar, the former electoral machine of general Soeharto, wins the election (with the same percentage as in the 1999 general election when it was number two). It is followed by PDIP which has lost almost half of its voters, and by PKB and PPP. Then the surprise comes from two newcomers: number five is general Susilo's Democrat Party, which did not exist in 1999; while number six is PKS, which in 1999 was a small party with less than 2 percent of the vote. Amien Rais' PAN is only number seven, followed by PBB. Three new parties appear as number nine, ten and eleven, with each more than 2 percent of the vote: PBR, which has seceded from PPP, PDS, which is a christian party, and PKPB, a party recently created to promote Soeharto's daughter for president.

13 other parties with a combined total of some 10 percent of the vote do not appear in table 1.

Table 1.

2004 Legislative Election : final results, 5 May 2004

(source: Electoral Commission, <http://tnp.kpu.go.id/>)

No.	Party	Major figure	Votes	Percentage	1999 %
1.	Golkar Party	Gen. Wiranto	24.480.757	21.58	22.43
2.	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P)	Megawati Soekarnoputri	21.026.629	18.53	33.73
3.	National Awakening Party (PKB)	Abdurrahman Wahid	11.989.564	10.57	12.60
4.	United Development Party (PPP)	Hamzah Haz	9.248.769	8.15	10.70
5.	Democratic Party (PD)	Gen. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono	8.450.225	7.45	-
6.	Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)	Hidayat Nur Wahid	8.325.020	7.34	1.36
7.	National Mandate Party (PAN)	Amien Rais	7.303.324	6.44	7.11
8.	Crescent Star Party (PBB)	Yusril Ihza Mahendra	2.970.487	2.62	1.94
9.	Reform Star Party (PBR)	Zainuddin MZ	2.764.998	2.44	-
10.	Prosperous Peace Party (PDS)	Ruyandi Hutasoit	2.414.254	2.13	-
11.	Concern for the Nation Functional Party (PKPB)	Tutut Soeharto	2.399.290	2.11	-

Source : KPU, 2000 & 2004.

### The Jakarta vote

The situation is very different in the Jakarta constituency (DKI), where the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) won the election (22 percent), followed by general Susilo's Democrat Party (21 percent). This indicate a huge

discrepancy with the rest of Indonesia. In Jakarta, Golkar is only number four.

Table 2.

Jakarta (DKI) vote for the national parliament (DPR RI), 2004

No	Party	Votes	%
1	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)	985,031	22.82%
2	Partai Demokrat (PD)	908,246	21.04%
3	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDIP)	581,806	13.48%
4	Partai Golongan Karya (Golkar)	359,122	8.32%
5	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP)	354,449	8.21%
6	Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN)	309,230	7.16%
7	Partai Damai Sejahtera (PDS)	231,537	5.36%
8	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB)	144,666	3.35%
9	Partai Bintang Reformasi (PBR)	129,437	3.00%
10	Partai Karya Peduli Bangsa (PKPB)	80,561	1.87%
11	Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB)	56,809	1.32%
	Other parties	175,742	4.07%
	Total	4,316,636	100.00%

### Fragmentation of Political elites

At the national level, no political party has received a clear mandate to govern the country. No one commands an absolute majority. The topmost party (Golkar) does not even reach a quarter of the electorate.

### An interpretation of the April election

Several aspects can be considered here.

#### Megawati: a negative assessment

The election returns reflect a negative assessment by voters of the reformasi period and of the Megawati government. It appears as a rejection based on extreme disappointment and unfulfilled expectations. Discontent may also have been fed by too naive anticipations: people believed Megawati Soekarnoputri would improve the lot of simple folk by waging a war on poverty. By placing Golkar back at the first place, voters conveyed a nostalgia for the Soeharto years, which are now perceived as stable and prosperous. Despite Soeharto's cronyism, public opinion now wants to believe that corruption under the New Order was more limited in scope than under the current regime. And above all, so goes the general feeling about that not so distant past, security was guaranteed.

However, the judgment on Megawati's performance is severe. The current head of state managed to stabilize the country after the hectic years of the Wahid presidency. She encouraged a competent and thorough investigation of the Bali bombings, which led to the arrests of more than 30

Muslim militants and key players in the Jemaah Islamiah (JI) network, which is allegedly linked to al-Qaeda. But Megawati had to move cautiously, in order not to alienate Muslim voters or not to be branded a U.S. lackey.

Under Megawati, annual GDP growth has improved—some 4 percent in 2003, the fastest rate since 2000—although this remains far from the 6.5 percent achieved by all other developing East Asian countries. Indonesia's rate is expected to rise to 4.8 percent this year, but the economy ought to be growing as much as 7 percent to reduce unemployment.

The Jakarta Stock Exchange index hit an all-time high in April and foreign-currency reserves are the largest ever at \$37 billion. Global confidence in Indonesia's prospects has also improved somewhat. In March, the country successfully raised \$1 billion in its first international sovereign-bond issue since the 1997 Asian crisis.

But the government continues to vacillate when it comes to attracting businesses that could help create many new jobs. Tough labor laws, which among other things make it difficult for companies to lay off workers, discourage hiring at a time when more than 9 million Indonesians are unemployed and another 30 million—almost a third of the work force—can't find as much work as they would like.

Megawati's aloofness has become a handicap for PDIP. She has not succeeded in convincing the public that her government and her party are different or any better than other political elites and parties.

#### The distance between Jakarta and the rest of Indonesia

Middle class Jakarta believes in Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and PKS, the Prosperous Justice Party: the former is wishfully seen as a ksatria piningit or "hidden knight", while the latter is perceived as clean Islamic party. Both are unconventional political actors, the one being a democratic general preordained to save the nation, while the other is expected to generate an alternate Islamic government and society. While Jakarta voters gave more than 40 percent of their vote to these two political phenomena, the rest of the country reacted in a more traditional way, continuing to support conventional parties like Golkar, PDIP, PKB, etc.

For provincial Indonesia, reformasi is no longer the order of the day. To many voters, it has become a shallow discourse, somewhat monopolized by a class of politicians and advocates of change for change's sake. Jakarta is hardly trusted, and regarded almost as an alien power. However, two benefits gained from reformasi must be maintained and defended: decentralisation, and the free electoral process. Voters have duly elected local leaders for provincial and district assemblies.

Excesses and extremes are to be discarded. Political parties have been given a moderate chance, with no clear winner. PDIP has been sanctioned for its lackluster performance while in power. Golkar has received the same amount of votes as in 1999 (some 22 percent). All in all, the electoral process has been peaceful with a violence-free campaign and a quiet voting day. Voters want moderation and order.

The emergence of military candidates raises some questions regarding the sustainability of the current democratic transition. Indeed, retired generals dutifully dressed as civilian politicians have apparently subscribed to democratic politics via the election process. However, Reformasi supporters accuse the military of having “managed” the election in the regions through their powerful territorial commands.

As a matter of fact, the practice of democracy is uneven throughout the country. Democratic ideals seem more rooted in big cities, while villages tend to display a more traditional approach, where local leaders still command a lot of influence, either through the power of custom or of money politics.

As a reaction, a growing movement to oppose money politics has emerged during the elections, and a campaign has been launched against crooked politicians, but again it was more urban than rural.

Political Islam: no progress, except for the spectacular gains of PKS

A comparison of the performance of Muslim and secular parties in 1999 and 2004 shows a relative stability, except for the take-off of PKS (table 3). Even if the gains of PKS are included, political Islam remains a minority on the Indonesian scene, with only some 20 percent of the total vote. Nationalist and secular (Pancasila-based) parties still garner more than two thirds of the vote. It is interesting to note that despite santrinisasi or reislamization, Islam in the largest muslim country does not translate into a powerful political force. It has not even managed to recover the 43 percent of the total vote gained in the 1955 general election. It may be that violence exerted under the name of Islam by terrorists (Bali bombings, Mariott blast) has not helped the islamist cause.

Table 3  
Islam-based vs secular-based parties,  
% of the vote (1999 & 2004)

	1999	2004
Secular-Nationalist vote		
Golkar+PDIP+PKB+PD+PAN+PDS+PKPB	75	68
Islam-based parties vote		
PPP+PKS+PBB+PBR	14	20

The surge of the Prosperous Justice party may be due to the switch of disaffected PDIP supporters to PKS. Indeed the middle class, especially in Jakarta, has developed a strange fascination for the PKS: the Prosperous Justice Party conveys the image of a disciplined organization, unsoiled in dress and thinking, free of corruption, morally pure. As a righteous redeemer, it offers a political alternative to the urban educated but politically naïve, younger voters. All those tired of the wheeling and dealing of traditional politics are tempted by the simplifications of PKS.

Its program (a 50-odd pages booklet) when it was still the Partai Keadilan (the Justice Party) in 1999 reveals a hardly veiled islamist agenda. PKS is probably the only party to have a substantial political platform.

Basically, it aims at placing the Ulama, the intellectuals and the “government apparatus” in a system of cooperating state institutions; it intends to make use of a “syari’a council” within the structure of the party itself; it plans to diminish the influence of “Western law” on the Indonesian legislation (p. 52); it wants to achieve Islamic solidarity and to reestablish the Caliphate (p.19); and it regards dakwah as all-important. The PKS program also contains fierce criticism of rampant capitalism. It is pro-Masyumi, the former major islamic party, banned by Soekarno in 1960. It regards itself as a hizbullah, a party of God. In many respects, including its style, it appears to have been inspired by the Egyptian Muslim brothers (al-Ihwanul Muslimun).<sup>1</sup>

#### Towards the presidential election

As the country faces its first ever direct presidential election, uncertainties still hamper the workings of the new system. While political elites have tried to preserve their monopoly on power, a direct election has never been tried before, and it may induce surprises caused by a volatile electorate. Still the political establishment has worked hard to secure its control of the presidential electoral process.

#### Regulations and rules

Two major rules have been endorsed to regulate the future election:

First, only parties or coalitions getting 3 percent of the seats in the House or 5 percent of the popular vote may field candidates (in pairs) in the presidential election on July 5.

Secondly, the presidential election is won by the pair of candidates that

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<sup>1</sup> See Mathias Diederich, “A closer look at Dakwah and politics in Indonesia: The Partai Keadilan”, Archipel n° 64, Paris, 2002.

secures more than 50 percent of the vote with at least 20 percent of votes in more than half of the country's 32 provinces (Article 66, Law No. 23/2003 on elections). If no one achieves such qualified majority in the first round, then the best two tickets compete again in a second round that is scheduled to take place on September, 20.

#### Strategy: the pairing process

In this context, politicians have had to build coalitions in order to face the presidential race. Until mid-May 2004 when the registration of presidential candidates was ended, intense political horse trading developed among party leaders. The general strategy for the major parties was to combine candidates bridging the basic dichotomies in Indonesian politics: Civilian-Military, nationalist-islamist and Java-outer islands.

Given the fragmentation of the voters and the number of candidates, 30 percent of the votes in the first round will probably be enough to guarantee participation in the second round. Consequently, if the larger parties (Golkar and PDIP) do not enter into any alliance with each other, they will require the support of a party able to bring some 10 percent of the total votes: PKB, and PPP. It is assumed that parties effectively command the vote of their supporters, which may not be entirely the case.

#### Major candidates and allies

At the mid May deadline, five pairs eventually emerged, including two military dominated ones. For the time being, the two retired generals, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Wiranto, even appear to be the leading contenders for the presidency.

The pairing is as follows: two former senior ministers -- Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Democrat Party) and Jusuf Kalla (Golkar) -- will run on the one ticket. General Wiranto who gained Golkar's nomination at the expense of its chairman, Akbar Tandjung, will associate with Solahuddin Wahid, a younger brother of former president Wahid, Amien Rais with former transmigration minister Siswono Yudohusodo, and current vice-president Hamzah Haz with Agum Gumelar, the third general in the competition. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) chairman Hasyim Muzadi has agreed to be Megawati's running mate. The incumbent president who is also PDIP's chairwoman had considered asking Yogyakarta Governor Sultan Hamengku Buwono X to be her running mate, but he declined.

#### Pairing of presidential candidates, with campaign numbers

(1) Wiranto	Solahuddin Wahid
(2) Megawati Soekarnoputri	Hasyim Muzadi
(3) Amien Rais	Siswono Yudo Husodo
(4) Bambang Yudhoyono	Jusuf Kalla
(5) Hamzah Haz	Agum Gumelar

Despite his vocal protest, former president Wahid who intended to run again for the presidency was discarded by the Electoral Commission (KPU) for failing to pass the mandatory health test.

Golkar, the political vehicle of former president Soeharto for more than three decades, and its candidate, Wiranto, plan to capitalize on popular longing for the political stability and economic progress Indonesia enjoyed under Suharto's rule. Wiranto means to play on the widespread expectation of a strong leadership reminiscent of the New Order regime and its long-ruling supremo.

But perceptions of members of the international community that Wiranto is a war criminal might disturb his candidacy, at least in some limited circles. Wiranto has been indicted in February 2003 by prosecutors in East Timor for crimes against humanity connected with the territory's bloody split from Indonesia in 1999. He denies the charges and says he was a peacemaker in the territory.

On the other hand, Susilo, cofounder of the Democratic Party, is intensifying efforts to build a coalition with at least five political parties. Among these, the Crescent Star Party (PBB) led by Yusril Ihza Mahendra and the Indonesian Justice and Unity Party (PKPI) led by former defense minister Gen. (ret) Eddy Sudrajat -- have agreed to support his presidential bid. PKB (Wahid's party) is also being courted.

Megawati, by enrolling Hasyim Muzadi as her presidential partner, is also counting on Nahdatul Ulama votes. But Wahid still refuses to renounce the presidential race, and in any case is not ready to support Megawati. Would Wahid, again, be the key in the future election? If he can no longer be a candidate himself for health reasons, he may be a kingmaker. Amien Rais and Hamzah Haz, the only significant muslim candidates to the presidency do not seem to have much of a chance to be elected; but they might play a decisive role in the second round of the election by choosing to support whichever of the two surviving tickets.

## Presidential scenarios

Three presidential tickets should be able to approach the 30 percent threshold necessary to stand a chance to run in the second round: Megawati's, Susilo's and Wiranto's.

Megawati will probably be able to pass the first round of the election. The question is who will be the other surviving contender: Wiranto or Susilo. The former controls a strong political machine, Golkar, while the latter so far enjoys the best results in opinion pollings. In case Megawati fails to pass the first round, the second one would pit two TNI men, with general Susilo as the favourite—for the time being.

If Megawati is present in the second round, how will she perform? There are two possibilities: Mega vs Susilo, and Mega vs Wiranto. If TNI solidarity is strong, Megawati loses in both cases. If not, Megawati would lose to Susilo whose popularity is high, but win to Wiranto, who cannot prevail without Susilo's backing.

## Conclusion:

The drift of a weak state maintained by a resilient nation

Jakarta and its political elite seem isolated from the rest of the country. State institutions (government and administration) weakened by the reformation process and the infighting of the oligarchs remain in a fragile condition. The national body politics is still disempowered by anarchic tendencies and seemingly unable to lead the country toward a sustainable recovery. Whoever wins the presidential competition will face the heavy task of putting the house in order. But no candidate has a clear, exhaustive program of what should be done to improve Indonesia's lot; the only parameters that can be counted on are the personality and diverse administrative skills of each candidate.

The good news, however, is the healthy reaction of the Indonesian people that remain committed to major democratic gains such as free elections and decentralization. The local brand of Islam remains moderate in its vast majority, with a preference for pluralism as shown by the scattering of the vote among numerous parties in the recent election. The temptation of fundamentalism is limited, whatever advances can be made by the Prosperous Justice Party. Despite various localized conflicts still simmering (in central Celebes and the Moluccas, or in Aceh and Papua), regional Indonesia remains very Indonesian in its way of thinking, its syncretic approach to culture, and its acceptance of a common rule of the game. Despite numerous ordeals in the last few years (a terrible social-economic crisis, ethnic-religious strife, bouts of terrorism), the archipelago has not

disintegrated. For the time being, while Indonesia is a headless nation in waiting for a new president, it is still a nation. It lacks clear directions, but still manages to survive.

## Appendix:

Table 4.

Seats obtained by parties  
at the national parliament (DPR RI)

No.	Party	Seats	percentage
1.	Golkar	128	23,27
2.	PDI-P	109	19,82
3.	PPP	58	10,55
4.	Demokrat (PD)	57	10,36
5.	PKB	52	9,45
6.	PAN	52	9,45
7.	PKS	45	8,18
8.	PBR	13	2,36
9.	PDS	12	2,18
10.	PBB	11	2,00
11.	PDK	5	0,91
12.	PKPB	2	0,36
13.	Pelopor	2	0,36
14.	PNBK	1	0,18
15.	PKPI	1	0,18
16.	PPDI	1	0,18
17.	PNI Marhaenisme	1	0,18