

## POLITICAL PARTIES

## Changing of the guard

The following portraits of elite competition in Indonesian politics have much to tell us about the current state and possible future of political life in the archipelago. They focus on and reflect the jostling for position among the country's top political elites within five of the country's top political parties, three of which have evolved from the state-sanctioned parties allowed under Soeharto: Golkar, PDIP, and PPP. The remaining two are more recent creations representing new directions in Indonesia's political parties. *Partai Demokrat* is widely considered an empty party, existing only as a vehicle created to support SBY's successful presidential bid. *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* represents the new generation of Indonesian Islamic parties with a more conservative, religiously inspired platform than the traditional Islamic parties. Together, these five parties accounted for almost 65 percent of the total vote in the 2004 legislative elections.

These five accounts paint a telling picture about who the 2009 presidential candidates may be, and although it could seem premature to begin such speculation, all of the major parties are looking to consolidate their executive before the end of 2007 with the hope of embedding any leadership changes before contesting the 2009 elections. While it does not automatically follow that the leader of each political party will become the party's presidential candidate for 2009, the competition is nevertheless a good indication of how political elites are positioning themselves in relation to each other, which could also give clues about future political coalitions.

From a broader perspective, the information presented here also gives indications about the progress of Indonesia's democratisation. Although it is unusual for political parties to play a role in the downfall of a dictatorial regime, they are widely considered as key to the consolidation of a democracy, which requires political parties to build both a new system of competition for political office as well as representing the interests of the populace. How far Indonesia's parties are fulfilling both of these requirements will be considered further in the conclusion.

	<p><b>Name</b> : PDIP          Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (<i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan</i>)</p> <p><b>Background</b> : As the secular-based PDI, it was formed in 1974 as one of the three parties allowed under Soeharto's New Order. Became the PDIP in 1998.</p> <p><b>Percent of Vote 1999 (seats in DPR)</b> : 33.73% (135)</p> <p><b>Percent of Vote 2004 (seats in DPR)</b> : 18.53% (109)</p>
---	---

In response to former President Megawati Soekarnoputri's continued hold over the party's top position, a deep fissure of discontent with her leadership erupted publicly at the end of 2005. Many of the party's highest profile members left and formed a new political party, the PDP, *Partai Demokrasi Pembaruan*: Democratic Renewal Party.

*POLITICAL ELITES ARE CURRENTLY JOSTLING FOR TOP POSITIONS WITHIN POLITICAL PARTIES.*

*POSITIONS ARE BEING DECIDED BEFORE 2007 TO PREPARE FOR THE 2009 ELECTIONS.*

*THE FOLLOWING PORTRAITS OF ELITE COMPETITION ALSO INDICATE THE PROGRESS OF INDONESIA'S POLITICAL TRANSITION.*

*PDIP IS WRACKED BY A SERIOUS  
FACTIONAL SPLIT, BUT MEGAWATI REMAINS  
IN CHARGE.*

Those making the jump include top level political cadres who had been instrumental in PDIP since its formation in 1999, such as oil tycoon cum politician Arifin Panigoro, former cabinet minister Laksamana Sukardi, and former chairman of the PDIP's Jakarta branch Roy Janis.

The leadership crisis first became apparent after the PDIP held its national congress in April 2005 to decide who the party's leader should be. At that time, the party's executive were split over proposing a new candidate for the position, with half in favour of proposing Laksamana Sukardi and half insisting that Megawati should remain the sole candidate. In the end, Megawati's camp won out and with her sole candidacy she automatically retained the party's top job.

*DISSATISFACTION WITH MEGAWATI CENTRES  
ON SUSPICIONS OF CORRUPTION.*

Since Megawati's presidential defeat in 2004, simmering dissatisfaction with her leadership began to boil. Most of the concern centred on alleged corruption within the party. One political analyst said that Megawati had turned the PDIP into her "own family treasurer." Of particular concern was the influence of Megawati's husband, Taufik Kiemas, who is widely believed to have been instrumental in the siphoning of funds from state owned enterprises during Megawati's presidency.

Other corruption allegations have surfaced too, including a 2002 scandal involving the mark-up of four Russian-made jetfighters purchased by the state. A DPR source told the *Report* that legislators from Commission I dropped plans to investigate the case after receiving bribes of Rp 200 million each from a PDIP member. "I understand that it was mostly the Golkar legislators in Commission I which received the money," the source added.

*MEGAWATI'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH  
GOLKAR HAS ALSO CAUSED PROBLEMS  
AMONG SOME OF HER SUPPORTERS.*

Politically, Megawati is also considered to have made some bad decisions, particularly concerning her connection with disgraced Golkar politician Akbar Tandjung, who threw his weight behind Megawati's failed bid to retain the presidency in 2004. Many consider the relationship to have seriously dented Megawati's credibility and called into question the party's image as reformist.

*MEGAWATI HAS BEEN REPLACING  
UNSUPPOORTIVE MEMBERS WITH LOYALISTS.*

In the wake of the defections to the PDP, Megawati has been consolidating her control over the PDIP by recalling senior PDIP members from the DPR whom she considers to be unsupportive and replacing them with loyalists. According to the 2002 Law on Political Parties, this is something that the executive branches of all political parties have the right to do.

*MEGAWATI REMAINS THE PDIP'S BIGGEST  
ASSET.*

Despite the problems that Megawati faces trying to maintain authority over her own executive, the rank and file members of her party are considered likely to remain loyal to her due to her status as daughter of the highly revered first president of Indonesia, Soekarno. As Soetjito, the PDIP's former secretary general, said in 2004, "How can we sell the party? We can't sell its agenda or its programme, all we have is Megawati's name, so we have to focus on selling that."

	<b>Name</b>	: <b>Golkar</b> Golkar Party ( <i>Partai Golongan Karya</i> )
	<b>Background</b>	: Formed in 1964, President Soeharto controlled the party throughout his tenure.
	<b>Percent of Vote 1999 (seats in DPR)</b>	: 22.43% (99)
	<b>Percent of Vote 2004 (seats in DPR)</b>	: 21.58% (127)

Golkar's December 2005 national congress was by all accounts an emotional affair, as Akbar Tandjung's accountability speech was met with a standing ovation; some party members reportedly even broke into tears. However, Akbar's famed political instincts were not enough to regain him the party leadership, which went to the newly incumbent Vice President, Jusuf Kalla, in a landslide victory of 326 votes out of the 484 cast.

"Tomorrow we will get money," someone in the audience shouted shortly after the result of the first round was announced. "In the end," according to Ray Rangkuti, a researcher from Soegeng Saryadi Syndicate, "the political mechanism within Golkar is determined by two main factors: power and money." At this point in his career, Jusuf Kalla clearly has a surfeit of both.

However, despite its united front, there is intense internal rivalry within the party which may yet affect who Golkar chooses as a presidential candidate for 2009.

Analysts detect five main factions within Golkar. The first is Kalla's camp, whose success in promoting Kalla to the top position within the party belies a fundamental weakness: an almost complete lack of support at the grassroots level. This has led to a frenzied degree of activity in the regions as Kalla's camp aggressively recruits incumbent mayors, governors, and bupatis who won their seats with the backing of other political parties.

"Figures within Kalla's camp hope that Kalla will be able to win the 2009 elections once the regions are under their influence," a source close to the palace told the *Report*. Such a tactic would rely on these regional power-holders supporting a Golkar presidential campaign in their locales, including the type of vote-gathering strategies which Golkar was famous for during the Soeharto years.

In contrast to Kalla, Akbar Tandjung grew up as a politician inside Golkar and is today still very popular at the grassroots level. Although most analysts predict that Tandjung will not attempt to gain Golkar's presidential candidacy for 2009, his continuing political influence within the party will likely mean that he will still have a strong role to play in Golkar's future plans.

In recent months many of Akbar's loyalists have allegedly switched their affiliation to a third faction, favouring current DPR speaker Agung Laksono. Although it is unlikely that Laksono will aim to be a presidential candidate, his desire to be leader of Golkar is well known and insiders say is likely to be realised.

*DESPISE STRONG SUPPORT FOR AKBAR TANDJUNG THE LEADERSHIP WENT TO JUSUF KALLA.*

*ANALYSTS SAY MONEY AND POWER DETERMINE GOLKAR'S PARTY LEADERSHIP.*

*THERE ARE FIVE CAMPS WITHIN GOLKAR.*

*KALLA HAS LITTLE SUPPORT AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL, PROMPTING THE RECRUITMENT OF REGIONAL HEADS TO GOLKAR.*

*AKBAR TANDJUNG REMAINS INFLUENTIAL WITHIN THE PARTY.*

*AGUNG LAKSONO HAS HIS EYE ON THE LEADERSHIP OF GOLKAR.*

*ABURIZAL BAKRIE REPORTEDLY HAS AMBITIONS FOR A HIGHER OFFICE.*

*SURYA PALLOH REPRESENTS GOLKAR'S NEW GENERATION.*

A fourth camp is Aburizal Bakrie, who, according to Golkar sources, is a potential presidential candidate for 2009. A highly ambitious politician, Bakrie already has the support of many business and political elites within Golkar.

Finally, the new generation of Golkar cadres is represented by media baron Surya Palloh. Ray, the political researcher, maintains that Palloh is on the verge of a much greater share of power within Golkar, as the so-called "1966 generation," which includes Kalla and Tandjung, moves over to make way for the "1970s recruits," of which Palloh is a key figure.

Ray nevertheless believes that Kalla will be able to maintain his current political momentum and will stand as presidential candidate for Golkar in 2009.

	<b>Name</b> : PPP United Development Party ( <i>Partai Persatuan Pembangunan</i> )
<b>Background</b>	: An Islamic party formed in 1974 as one of the three parties allowed under Soeharto's New Order.
<b>Percent of Vote 1999 (seats in DPR)</b>	: 10.7% (39)
<b>Percent of Vote 2004 (seats in DPR)</b>	: 8.15% (58)

*HAMZAH HAZ IS LIKELY TO BE REPLACED AS LEADER OF PPP IN THE 2007 PARTY CONGRESS.*

*HAMZAH DISAPPOINTED HIS SUPPORTERS IN THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.*

*THERE IS DISCONTENT WITH HAMZAH OVER HIS LACK OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ON MANY IMPORTANT ISSUES.*

*PPP IS SEARCHING FOR SOME NEW BLOOD TO BRING FRESH IDEAS TO THE PARTY.*

With their national congress scheduled for early 2007, the PPP are expecting to elect a new leader to replace Hamzah Haz, according to the head of PPP research and development, Lukman Hakim Syaifuddin.

Former vice president under Megawati, Hamzah Haz has led the PPP since 1999, but his poor showing as a presidential candidate in 2004 produced great disappointment within the party. Voting figures show that he was the only presidential candidate not to secure at least the same amount of votes as his party gained in the 2004 legislative elections. His party scored just over 8 percent of the vote in the legislative elections, while he obtained only 3 percent as a presidential candidate, indicating that PPP supporters were not prepared to back the PPP head as president.

The general feeling within the PPP is that it is time for some new blood at the top, with internal discontent over Hamzah's perceived lack of leadership on a wide range of political issues, from the conflict in the Middle East to education and relief efforts for domestic disasters. Partly because of such dissatisfaction, the PPP has also had to contend with some of its members leaving the party and forming a splinter group under the leadership of flamboyant Muslim preacher Zainuddin MZ.

Referring to the idea that Hamzah's age helped gain him the leadership post in 1999 against other younger contenders, Lukman told the *Report*, "For the time being, seniority will no longer become the main factor in picking a figure to the top leadership, as we now need a figure with the capacity to bring fresh ideas to the party. Of course, public acceptability is another main factor."

The two favourite candidates so far appear to be PPP cadres Sugiharto, the current Minister of State-Owned Enterprises, and Suryadharma, the current

Minister of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises. At this stage, Suryadharma is considered the front runner due to his reportedly close relationship with President Yudhoyono's inner circle and because he is considered a representative of the younger generation within the PPP.

Even though Sugiharto holds the position of Minister of State-Owned Enterprises, a key post due to the access to extra funding it affords political parties, a source from the PPP told the *Report* that the appointment of Sugiharto to the post would not benefit the PPP because "his heart is with the PKS."

	<p><b>Name</b> : PKS  Prosperous Justice Party (<i>Partai Keadilan Sejahtera</i>)</p> <p><b>Background</b> : Originally an Islamic religious movement, it became a political party in 1998, reinventing itself again in 2002 from <i>Partai Keadilan</i> to <i>Partai Keadilan Sejahtera</i>.</p> <p><b>Percent of Vote 1999 (seats in DPR)</b> : 1.36% (1)</p> <p><b>Percent of Vote 2004 (seats in DPR)</b> : 7.34% (45)</p>
---	--

In contrast to the mechanisms used by the vast majority of Indonesian political parties to choose a leader, the PKS do things differently. All of the other parties mentioned here employ a hierarchical voting procedure, whereby ordinary party members elect the head of their local party chapters who then go on to elect a leader at the national party congress, even if this process is often subverted by informal systems of influence and bribes from those within the party who hold the most power.

In the case of the PKS, the formal process of choosing the party head is more tightly controlled by its executive. In order to be considered for the party's top spot, the candidates must have served at some time in a body within the PKS known as the expert team. Another internal body with around 100 members, known as the *Majelis Syuro*, decides both who can sit on the expert team and makes the final decision on the leader, based on input from other sections of the party that reach further down to the grassroots level. Because it is the original co-founders of the PKS who compose the powerful *Majelis Syuro*, it is they who have most authority within the party structure.

The original roots of the PKS as a non-political Islamic organisation also have an impact on its political strategies and personnel, with many of its top figures more practiced at traditional Islamic oration than political speeches. Sources told the *Report* that the PKS face problems finding suitable candidates for its executive from the ranks of its mostly campus-based supporters because they are seen as "politically naïve." Due to insecurities about the possibility of success, the PKS did not propose a presidential candidate in 1999 or 2004 even though, as a party which gained more than 5 percent of the vote in the legislative elections, it was allowed to do so.

The incumbent PKS leader, Tifatul Sembiring, was chosen in 2005 and is likely to remain in the top job until after the 2009 elections. However, there are also rumours of moves to replace Tifatul, a traditional Islamic

*SURYADHARMA AND SUGIHARTO ARE THE TWO TOP CONTENDERS.*

*THE PKS ELECT THEIR LEADER WITH A DIFFERENT MECHANISM THAN MOST PARTIES.*

*THE PROCESS IS MORE TIGHTLY CONTROLLED BY THE PARTY'S EXECUTIVE.*

*MANY SENIOR PKS MEMBERS ARE ISLAMIC PREACHERS WITHOUT A POLITICAL BACKGROUND.*

*THE CURRENT LEADER IS LIKELY TO REMAIN IN THE JOB.*

preacher, with someone with more political savvy, such as current speaker of the MPR and former leader of the PKS, Hidayat Nur Wahid, a PKS insider told the *Report*.

	<b>Name</b> : <i>Partai Demokrat</i> Democrat Party
	<b>Background</b> : Founded in 2001, this secular party became the political vehicle for President Yudhoyono.
	<b>Percent of Vote 1999 (seats in DPR)</b> : Not contested
	<b>Percent of Vote 2004 (seats in DPR)</b> : 7.45% (56)

*THE DEMOCRAT PARTY IS THE PERSONAL POLITICAL VEHICLE OF PRESIDENT YUDHOYONO.*

*YUDHOYONO'S WIFE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN DECIDING THE HEAD OF THE PARTY IN 2005.*

*EVENTUALLY YUDHOYONO'S BROTHER-IN-LAW WAS VOTED LEADER.*

*GAINING THE LEADERSHIP OF POLITICAL PARTIES DOES NOT RELY ON GRASSROOTS SUPPORT.*

The Democrat Party was formed in 2001 and later became the personal political vehicle of President Yudhoyono. The Democrat Party has a very different set of problems linked to the success of its most powerful patron.

The party's 2005 national congress to replace incumbent leader Subur Budhisantoso reportedly turned into a Yudhoyono family affair, with the deputy leader of the Democrat Party and wife of the president, Kristiani Herawati turning into somewhat of a king-maker. Reportedly blocked by Yudhoyono from fulfilling her own personal ambitions to become the party's leader, sources told the *Report* that Ani launched a campaign to prevent a leadership candidate, Soekartono, from winning the position because of his alleged close relationship with Vice President Jusuf Kalla.

Kalla had visited the compound during the party's national congress, causing rumours to circulate that he was bankrolling Soekartono's bid for the Democrat Party leadership. Despite evidence of strong support for Soekartono within the party, he later dropped out of the race when Ani backed Hadi Utomo for the post. Hadi, who is the husband of Ani's sister, went on to win the leadership in a landslide victory. There seems no doubt that President Yudhoyono will again be proposed as the Democrat Party candidate for the 2009 elections.

### Conclusion

What then can we say about the system of competition for political office in Indonesia today? Is grassroots support needed to gain political power or is it simply an elite affair?

Judging from the above accounts, the contest to become leader of a political party is very much confined to elite circles. Megawati and Yudhoyono's control over the executive of their respective parties, Kalla's lack of grassroots support in Golkar not impeding his rise to the top, and the hierarchical system of choosing a party leader at the PKS all point in this direction. That in turn has implications for the capacity of political parties to channel the interests of those they purport to represent, because if the rank-and-file party members have little impact on the leader, one can only suspect that their input into the parties' policies is even weaker.

In contrast, since the introduction of direct presidential elections, the situation

is very different when it comes to choosing a president. Megawati's name and familial ties are obviously her greatest assets with the ordinary voters, which leaves PDIP with little choice but to keep her as their leader. In contrast, the poor showing of Hamzah Haz in the 2004 presidential elections among his party's faithful has set the stage for his replacement as head of the PPP in 2007.

Party discipline, another indicator of the degree of party institutionalisation, seems to be firming up. Undoubtedly, Indonesia's political parties are beset with internal rifts which often lead to splinter groups leaving to form their own parties. As well as the PDIP, another major party, the National Awakening Party (PKB) has recently experienced a bitter struggle between two of its factions, which brought the matter to the Supreme Court. However, it is also true that control of the party executive over its senior members needs to be strong if a party is to remain cohesive. In this regard, Megawati's ability to recall those PDIP members who are not loyal to her leadership can be seen in some ways as a positive development.

But the question of in whose interests political parties serve remains the biggest obstacle to effective political representation. While the parties may seem fractious with each other in the legislature when debating laws, leading toward a low level of productivity (See *Coming Soon...* pg. 21), the reality seems to be that at the elite level there is an extraordinary conflation of interests.

Party leaders are routinely chosen for their proximity to power, regardless of party affiliation. Influence from senior members of one party on the internal power structure of another, such as Kalla's reported championing of one leadership candidate in *Partai Democrat*, is also not unusual. This leaves both observers and voters with the impression that Indonesian politics is little more than a carousel of elites alternating their time in power and serving only their interests. Such perceptions raise serious questions about the legitimacy of political parties in the eyes of Indonesian voters as the country awaits some resolution to this difficult period of party institutionalisation. □

*BUT WINNING THE PRESIDENCY REQUIRES POPULAR SUPPORT.*

*POLITICAL PARTIES ARE STILL SUFFERING FROM FACTIONAL SPLITS, PARTY DISCIPLINE IS A MAJOR ISSUE.*

*THE CONFLATION OF ELITE INTERESTS LEADS MANY VOTERS TO FEEL THEY HAVE NO REAL POLITICAL CHOICES.*