



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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DEVLIN: So today is July 14, 2009, and I'm here in Jakarta, Indonesia with Muhammad Hikam. Thank you for joining me today. If we could start—would you mind perhaps giving us a brief overview of your involvement in politics or public affairs here in Indonesia over the years?

HIKAM: *Yes, let me begin by saying that now I am a member of a political party called Hanura; it stands for Hati Nurani Rakyat or the People's Conscience Party. The party was established before the general election in 2006 and became one of the participants of the last general election in 2009. The party is led by former General Wiranto, who is also former commander in chief of Indonesian military during Suharto era and also coordinating minister for Politics and Security during Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid), and he's one of the vice presidential candidates, together with Mr. Jusuf Kalla, the current vice president of SBY (Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono) in the last presidential election.*

Prior to my involvement with Hanura Party, I was a member of PKB, Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa or the National Awakening Party, established by former President Abdurrahman Wahid in 2000, no I'm sorry, in 1999. I joined the party in 2001, right after my resignation from the government office as the state minister for Research and Technology under Gus Dur. When Gus Dur resigned, obviously, I was also resigning from the post. And prior to my involvement with PKB or the National Awakening Party, I was a researcher at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, a government-owned research institution, in its Center for Economic and Development Studies (PEP-LIPI). I was there from 1983 until 2001. I was appointed as a cabinet minister in 1999. So that is basically my involvement in the academic life and also, after 2001, my involvement with political party.

DEVLIN: So if I could ask you to look back on these various positions, minister for research and technology, part of the PKB, former President Abdurrahman Wahid's party and now again in the Hanura party—when you looked back over your involvement in political affairs, are there one or two or perhaps even more reform efforts that stand out in your mind? Reforms that either you were involved in or advising on, they may have, they may have succeeded. Again, this was a very challenging time in Indonesia's history, so they may not have succeeded in which case be very keen to hear why. So looking back are there, are there issues that stand out in your mind?

HIKAM: *Yes, I would like to begin with my intellectual concern with Indonesian democratic reform. Ever since I was in my graduate school at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in the United States, I was very concerned with the way in which Indonesian politics has been shaped by authoritarianism. And I would like to see Indonesia changing from that kind of political setup, toward political arrangement that is much more democratic and where you have a vibrant civil society.*

So since the 1990s, when you had all kind of democratic reforms going on in Latin America and East Europe, especially in the former Soviet camp, the idea of generating a democratic reform through civil society has become my political and intellectual "obsession." That's why even when I wrote my dissertation in 1995 (I was graduated in '95), it's the idea of civil society that's always become my sort of intellectual fervor. So when I returned to Indonesia, was in the middle of the beginning of reform and the idea of civil society and civil society movement as a backbone of reform became very popular in Indonesia. Because at that time, the

idea of strengthening civil society was probably the only avenue to challenge the overwhelming strength of state's power. By civil society, I mean we need to have the kind of social organizations which are independent from the state (control), but at the same time, it is not just trying to overthrow the state, but complementing the struggle (for democracy) because we don't really have the kind of political alternative, namely political party system as an alternative to the existing government-dominated political system.

So civil society at that time, in my mind actually, coming not only from say labor union or something like that, but mostly from the intellectuals and also from the social organizations such as the religious-based organization the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, the Islamic Scholars Awakening), which until 1999 can be considered one the most independent social organizations and having a very strong grassroots support. Of course, at that time, NU was under the leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid himself. The Nahdlatul Ulama was among very few civil society organizations in Indonesia at that time that was capable of actually challenging the power of the state. Probably the only organization that's not being co-opted by the state was the Nahdlatul Ulama and other religious organizations like Muhammadiyah and some NGOs (non-governmental organizations). The rest of organizations in Indonesia, has seemed to be incorporated by the state.

You name it. The labor union, teacher's union, student union, whatever. That's why the Indonesian state under the New Order was what you call a corporate state, because everything, you know, has been channeled through organizations controlled by the state. Even the Ulema (Islamic scholars) organizations outside the Nahdlatul Ulama like MUI (the Indonesian Ulema Council, Majelis Ulama Indonesia), which is now probably independent, but at that time it's also part and parcel of the state apparatus. So to me at that time, you know, working with alternative political forces from civil society, for instance, intellectual grouping or NGOs or social organizations based on religions, was the only alternative avenue and vehicle for challenging the domination of the state.

And I was quite relieved that my idea actually was widely accepted and, up until now, people have been talking about civil society empowerment in Indonesia. Although of course, with the gain of hindsight, I see that now Indonesian civil society's development is rather disappointing, not in terms of its quantitative factor, because quantitatively, Indonesia probably is having one of the most vibrant civil societies in the world. I don't know how many civil organizations right now in Indonesia, it might be more than, I don't know, 100,000 or more. But unfortunately, civil society in Indonesia to me right now is also having internal problems.

First of all, many within the civil society itself are becoming place or a vehicle for the identity politics, you know. So you see many, many civil societies, especially with those having label 'Islamic organizations,' have somehow become the model for identity politics, using Islam as an ideology, and some also ethnic-based civil society organizations are excessively trying to protect their interests and somehow become at odds with the idea of basic human rights. Because they really want to secure the rights of the indigenous people, of ethnicity, of language and somehow become very closed organizations.

And secondly, civil society in Indonesia now is dominated by non-governmental organizations and social organizations who mostly are at odds with the existing political society, meaning political party or parliament or political institutions. There is some distrust going on between civil society and political society. If you are in political society, you will see NGOs and other people who really want to question the authority are working with other outside power to discredit the existing political system. But from the point of view of civil society members, the existing political society is viewed negatively. They'd say that political society members are just a bunch of fools or corrupt leaders or political parties which, you know, have no real interest to empower the people.

So the gap that exists between civil and political society to me is a very saddening, and I work my heart off up until now, you know, to develop the synergy between some members of civil society and political society, especially among political parties and non-governmental organizations, because, to me, this is a very, very important. If you don't have a strong synergy between political society and civil society, then democracy will, you know, probably become very, very formal but lack of substance. If civil society doesn't believe or doesn't trust political society then it will be dangerous, because, at the end of the day, politics is always institutionalized through the political society.

So that is actually my long-term, what I call 'intellectual concern' and probably 'obsession.' I had tried to implement the idea when I was in the Ministry (of Research and Technology), when I was a member of Parliament, and when I was out of them and become just a political party member. I've tried to implement my thinking on how to empower political society and civil society together. This is not very easy, because Indonesia is such, you know, a heterogeneous country. Probably if you see only Jakarta, maybe that's easier to talk about civil society and political society, but when you talk about Indonesia in general, the sheer differences in social development are such, probably it's mind boggling to talk about the synergy between the two. But still, this is a very interesting enterprise actually, to me at least.

DEVLIN: But this is certainly something—I've heard a lot here in Indonesia, some people actually say that reform has succeeded nearly always despite the politicians, rather than because of many politicians, that definitely civil society demand for reform is very, very strong here. But you do mention this gap between civil society and political society, so I'm wondering when you first came back to Indonesia, this was at the tail end of the new order there was this growing instability, if you want, in '97 and there was the crisis obviously. Now at that point when you were involved with civil society here and pushing for reform, was your outlook—was it direct confrontation, was it the reform that need to happen, was the fall of the new order, or at that point was it still reform needed to happen, and it could happened through the existing system?

HIKAM: *At that time, it was the end of the New Order (regime), and it's in no way that New Order can be defended through a gradual reform because, I think, if you use a Marxian political analysis (a la Claus Offee's), at that time the New Order was experiencing what they call 'the fiscal crisis of the state.' So at that time, it's only a matter of time that the New Order collapsing, you know, even though at that time the military was still quite powerful and the bureaucracy and the existing corporatist arrangement of the New Order were still quite strong. But no way that we can use the gradual reform to build up a new kind of politics, especially*

through civil society. So what you have there was a head-on collision between the so-called democratic movement, supported by many, many civil society (organizations), especially the students and intellectuals versus the state, which was almost collapsing. So when we got the so-called reform, then you don't have any preparation from the civil society itself, the kind of political format that you have in Czechoslovakia, for example. No, what you got there was the collapse of the New Order and then (Bacharuddin Jusuf) Habibie became president, so suddenly that was in the winning side. The state (under Habibie) tried, belatedly, to accommodate and maybe co-opt civil society

So you have had new elections, new political system, even the revamping or amending the Constitution four times (from 1999 to 2002). It's been an amazing process of reform. But because we don't have adequate preparation, then what we have in the process of reform is probably a kind of patchwork, you know. And maybe most of the original reformers are disappointed right now when they see that the reform that they have in mind is somehow gradually returning to the old political system that's supporting the authoritarian regime.

Say, for example, Partai Golkar (the Golkar party), which has been quite healthy up until now, and the PDIP (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle), which is part of the old political arrangement, is also still there with us. The new political parties, meanwhile, are still struggling to become a major shareholder of the reform. Even you cannot say that the new Democrat party (Partai Demokrat, PD) right now is part of the reform. Of course, the party was born from the reform movement. But many, many original members of reformist movement will consider that The Democrat party is just a party of the, you know, former Golkar members, and others. It will become a new political party simply because it has a chance right now to have SBY as the new leader.

So substantially, many people from the reform movement are probably disappointed with the ten years of reform. But that's what you got, in my opinion, for now. You cannot have otherwise, because we don't have the kind of preparation like in the former Soviet Union's case. Nevertheless, we have the reform and we have to work from that point. You know, that's why I mentioned earlier even within the civil society, you don't have the kind of civil society that is really democratic; what you have is a civil society escaping from the prison of the New Order and then came out as a vibrant organization in Indonesia. In terms of idea, they're still struggling somehow. You have identity politics based on religious, you know, fanaticism and so on and so forth. So civil society in Indonesia has had to do some reflection on itself, and the sheer magnitude of civil society in Indonesia make this process very, very difficult.

Maybe in Czechoslovakia or somewhere else, the civil society is not really having the sheer heterogeneity like in Indonesia. Maybe, to a certain extent, you can compare Indonesian civil society with that of the United States. But, even then, historically, civil society in the United States already had a long experience in dealing with democracy. So although you still have all kind of identity politics like the rightwing Christian groups and so on and so forth, but it's not been overwhelmingly popular until recently. In Indonesia what you have is an opening up, you have a glasnost, then all kind of things happen at the same time. So you have, for example, during Gus Dur era, regional conflicts based on religion and

ethnicity, and that's probably part of, you know, unintended consequences of reform.

DEVLIN: Now this point you make of heterogeneity of Indonesia—there's this fascinating question that you finally have the fall of the new order.

HIKAM: *Right.*

DEVLIN: In the wake of the financial crisis and everything else, that had been building up to this. You have a daunting diversity of demands for reform. There are a lot of different priorities inside Indonesia; it's not exactly clear. Everyone knew what they didn't want, but what the country wanted was not clear. So I am wondering at that point in time, do you have a sense of how—what was set as the reform priorities, were there certain issues that were highlighted this, you know, this must happen first and foremost or how were things sequenced in that sense. So the new order, how do we structure the progression?

HIKAM: *From the vantage point of the reformist, the first agenda to be done is amending the Constitution that we had. The Constitution, for them, had become the real problem of Indonesian democracy. Under the Constitution, it's possible, for example, to have unlimited term of presidency, although ritually you can have election in every five years, but actually the presidency term is unlimited as long as you can play in power. And also the Constitution is very executive-heavy. That makes it impossible, for example, for the legislative and also the judiciary branches to exercise the kind of checks and balances mechanism.*

So the idea of having a constitutional amendment is very, very strong, and that's why you have four times amendment of that Constitution (1999-2002). Even right now you still have a very controversial problem with that amendment; because some of the people try to go back to the original Constitution. But most of the people are already satisfied with what happened after the amendment. We need improvements in democracy and right now what we have in the amended Constitution is a real improvement.

We have now, for example, the Constitutional Court (Mahkamah Konstitusi, MK), which we never had before. The Constitutional Court functions like the Supreme Court in the United States, having authority to review all kind of state laws (Undang-Undang) that are deemed against the Constitution, for example. The existing Indonesian Supreme Court (Mahkamah Agung, MA) itself is not as strong as the (U.S.) Supreme Court because the Indonesian Supreme Court or Mahkamah Agung can only review regulations which categorically below the level of the state Laws (Undang-Undang). So this is very limited. That's why the existence of the Constitutional Court actually is a very much improving the checks and balances, especially in the judiciary branch.

And also after the amendment, you have very real separation of powers among legislative, executive and judiciary branches. Under the New Order and under the old Constitution, actually, even if the three branches of government existed, but it was the executive that controls everything. And now we have this kind of Trias Politica at work. Of course it's not perfect yet, because we still need, you know, long practices of checks and balances. But, at least, constitutionally speaking, we have much, much more strong a Constitution that provides the kind of checks and balances mechanism in Indonesia.

The second agenda, actually, is the reform of political parties, and this is the problem that we still have to face right now. We're in a dilemma whether we will maintain very small number of political parties like under the New Order, which were only three of them, or we will open up into multi-political parties. In the last election we have 38 political parties competing for legislative election. But we are working on it and it was the MK or Mahkamah Konstitusi (the Constitutional Court) that finally had a decision that although the participants of the election is 38 political parties, but we ended up having only nine political party representatives in the Parliament because we put some kind of limitation in the form of a parliamentary threshold statute. Therefore, it's ended up only nine political party that's entering into the Parliament.

Unfortunately, this regulation is only applied at the national level (DPR). At the regional level, you still have so many political parties in the regional parliaments (DPRD). It might be more than nine, it might be more than ten. There are still some small parties there, which probably will potentially create all kinds of problem later on, when there's a governor election or district head election because not only those nine national political parties that are competing, but maybe some small parties also get involved there. So, clearly, it's still imperfect reform in terms of the parallel between the central government and the regional government.

The third and the most important aspect of the reform is the reform of the TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia) or the Indonesian military. Never before has Indonesia had this kind of a very clear message to the military to get out of politics. And this is because everybody within the reformist groups will not be satisfied if the military's still having some say in politics. And when the reform happens the military must withdraw from politics. In that sense something substantial in terms of political process is changing, because if not, there's no point to have a reform. As long as the military still having some say in the real political process, then it's no point to have that. Of course this is very, very tough for the military. However, it's very strange now that, you may say, that the military is one of the most advanced in terms of internal political reform in Indonesia. I don't know whether it's by design or by default, but that's the reality. The military actually, you know, to me at least, showing their sincerity to follow the reformist idea. This is including positing the police force under the civilian control. So it's the idea of the military under the civilian control actually becomes one of the main priorities.

Of course, after the military reform, the next reform that is very important in the past is the regional autonomy, because this is what makes Indonesia capable of getting out from centralization of power, by giving more and more to the region, the capability to administer politically, economically, socially by itself. Of course it's far from perfect after ten years, because Indonesia is such that you cannot just give away the autonomy because the range of development between say Jakarta and Papua is so totally different. But at least we try to start with the notion of regional autonomy in which we try to provide regional freedom to manage their own administration.

Of course, there is still this old way of thinking in Indonesia, especially among the elite, among the military and the bureaucracy that if you give more or too much autonomy then the centrifugal forces in Indonesia will become a threat to

Indonesian national integrity. But I don't think that is going to happen if the way we manage this regional autonomy is such that we are really giving them the real say, not only in terms of administration of bureaucracy, but also in terms of politics and economic development. That's what, in my opinion, has not yet been happening because the way in which the regional autonomy is executed is to me still very uniform in its approach. Regional autonomy for Jakarta is considered the same as the autonomy for Papua, which is totally different to me. You need to give some kind of different treatment between developed area like Jakarta and less developed area like Papua. You still need some kind of an affirmative action policy for some regions in Indonesia. You cannot make a similar competition between Papua and Aceh, for example. Such a competition couldn't have happened just like under the New Order the policy of centralization has created underdevelopment in the outer islands of Java, for example.

So we need a long-term process of regional development and in my opinion, you need some kind of overhaul the current regional autonomy policy. It's not going to succeed if you continue with the existing concept of regional autonomy. You may give a special autonomy to Papua, but at the end of the day, the money that you give to Papua will come back to Jakarta, because you don't have good infrastructures in there. You don't have the kind of economic development that's needed to absorb all kind of aids and subsidies from the central government and so on and so forth.

So following the amendment of the Constitution, the political party reform, the TNI reform, and regional reform, probably the next most important agenda is the legal reform in Indonesia. When I talk about legal reform, it means that the strengthening of the Parliament is a must, because even though constitutionally speaking we already had checks and balances mechanism, in reality it's still the government that have a lot of say because the DPR or the House of Representatives especially at the central level is quite weak in terms of infrastructure, human resource development, and what in the United States you call 'the power of the purse.' The Parliament is very, very weak in Indonesia.

So maybe if you only see the arrangement in the Constitution or in the state Laws regarding the executive and legislative branches then everything looks fine. But if you go into it deeply then you will be wondering how can the Parliament compete with or capable of checking the executive if you don't have the kind of budget allocation power for your own members in order to really doing their job. How can you legislate a Law if you don't have the kind of support system like the legal drafters that can compete with the government office? Every government office has their so-called legal bureaus, but in the Parliament, you don't have that kind of people. of the DPR. When I was there in the DPR from 2004 to 2007, we only have seventeen drafters. They were hired not from the University campuses, but "borrowed" from the office of Secretariat General of the DPR.

Can you compare it with the Congress in the United States, where you have all kind of human resource supports. When I was there (Washington, DC) in 2005, I heard that they have like 700 legal drafters. They are coming from the best minds of the university. Not only that, they also have the CBO, Congressional Budget Office, whose products can compete with those of the Treasury Department or whatever financial institution in the country. In the DPR there's none; you don't have this kind of thing. So even though we may have all of those functions, namely: budget function, oversight function, and legislation function, but at the

end of the day, it's still the government (executive) that determines everything. So to me, unless we are overhauling the Parliament in terms of empowering the Parliament, then the reform is only in the name; that is very, very obvious. Those are five priorities to me which are necessity for reform. It's a must if you want to have, in the future, a real reform and a real democracy.

DEVLIN: Now the constitutional reform and to some degree the political party reform you mentioned, they're clearly absolutely central to Indonesia's experience. But perhaps they had one advantage in that there was a fairly universal agreement that a constitutional reform is a must. The executive had to be checked?

HIKAM: Yes, yes.

DEVLIN: But I'm really interesting when you mentioned the reform of the TNI, the armed forces and decentralization. These at least to me on first glance would seem to be much more contentious issues. The decentralization is more divisive, more competitive, and the TNI is kind of vague, it must have been very hard to get to grips with the armed forces, hold them accountable, find out even on an informational basis what is going on. I'm wondering if you think back to your time in the cabinet.

HIKAM: *Right.*

DEVLIN: With Gus Dur, 1999, both these, both these issues are still very much—

HIKAM: *New.*

DEVLIN: New?

HIKAM: *Right.*

DEVLIN: Can maybe if we start with the army, can you maybe give me a sense what the challenge seemed like at that time back in 1999, how was the TNI going to be reformed, or how were you going to attempt to begin that?

HIKAM: *Well, if my memory serves me right, I think the first challenge of Gus Dur is exactly the reform of the military without so much resistance from the military itself. And that's probably one of the success stories of Gus Dur presidency where you have a reform of the military without any bloodshed, without any strong resistance from that. It's because at that time, the pressure from civil society and probably from democratic reformist groups was so strong. Also the international community wanted to see the Indonesian military leaving politics, you know, not to mix up with politics again. It is so strong that outside and inside pressures made it possible for the military elite to come up with the idea of withdrawing from politics.*

So at that time General Wiranto and SBY, two famous military leaders, who're really pushing toward the reform within the military, withdrawing its members from the DPR and then accelerating the pulling out of the military from the political stage. And, fortunately, within the military there is no strong resistance, and it just like it happens right away, they just dismantling their political presence there. That's probably is a blessing in disguise. At that time, although Gus Dur had a hard time in terms of managing it's presidency, but in terms of political

reform, I think he got overwhelming support from all kind of Indonesian group, especially from the democratic reformists, and also because the favorable impression from the international community is such that made the military reform possible. The Indonesian military cannot avoid that reform and the delegitimization of the military in Indonesia at that time was at its peak, so that if you tried to resist to the demand from the public, then you will disintegrate anyway. So Wiranto and SBY's idea of withdrawing the military from politics has been accepted by rank and file of the military up until right now.

DEVLIN: So now was that the major benchmark that military reform was to be judged by how they withdrew from the DPR, that was—

HIKAM: *Not only that, but also all of political involvements. And remember in the Constitution it's very clear cut, the regulation that the military is no longer a part of the political force and the idea of "dual function" (both security and political function) of the military is dropped from the political discourse and practice in Indonesia. So it was clear and that's why the military has now been concentrating on managing its internal organization as a defense force and no longer having dual function as both a political and security force.*

DEVLIN: So in terms of the coalition that came together behind this idea of military reform...

HIKAM: Yes.

DEVLIN: Who, who were the main constituents there. It sounds like the president at the time, Gus Dur, took a lead on this and inside the army, there was SBY and Wiranto?

HIKAM: *And Wiranto, right.*

DEVLIN: Were there other, were there other major players in that coalition pushing reform?

HIKAM: *Yes, certainly within the police group as well. I think because the reform would benefit the police force. Before, under the old regime, the police force was under the military. So when you have this dismantling of military power from politics, then the police is also benefited and it becomes a civilian organization that is independent from the military. So obviously, there was an overwhelmingly support from the police force. And actually, the police has, up until now, had a very high respect for Gus Dur because of what he did.*

DEVLIN: And so one thing that's interesting is that, SBY and Wiranto, both military figures—if you look at it from a realistic perspective, they stood to lose. It was a complete loss of power from the institution they were part of. So I'm wondering aside from whatever convictions they might have had in the morality of this step, what was the bargain there. I mean it couldn't have been presented to the military as just an outright loss; it must have been a process of negotiation a process of finding a middle ground. Do you have a sense of how that was, of maybe how that was made more acceptable to the military, how that was negotiated?

HIKAM: *Well probably at that time, you didn't have this kind of luxury as the military to resist the reform. As I said, the military had been discredited in East Timor, discredited in terms of handling the students' movement, especially with the disappearance of some activists, and as I mentioned, the international community was in disfavor of the military empowerment in Indonesia. You know, so you didn't have too much room for maneuver and bargain or something like that.*

Of course, you do have many military people who were very disappointed with this kind of thing, but at that time, you didn't have many choices, ultimately. So when you accept this reform, then you find that the military, actually, has an advantage to reform itself to be a more professional group, united, no longer politically controlled and manipulated like before. And what the military knows right now is that after they become more independent they realize that it has actually been quite weak as a professional group, for instance in terms of its weapon system and things like that.

As you know, when we were boycotted by the United States after 1999, then the weapon system of the military in Indonesia has been in a very, very weak situation up until now. If the military continues to do that, I mean, inserting itself into politics, that will be very disadvantageous. And right now, they can concentrate on, you know, the improvement of the internal organization. Of course, the military still demands that while they are now withdrawing from politics they need to be improved in terms of its budget. And that is the problem that up until now the new government under Reformasi is not capable of delivering it. I mean, there's been an ongoing debate as to how to create a military force in Indonesia that in terms of budget is good enough under the present economic situation and so on and so forth.

But from the military perspective, probably it's much better-off to be left alone by politicians, rather than getting in the way of political situation again because, it could be worse if they get into political problems like in the past. You know, because it's going to be discredited and it'd create all kind of division within the military itself. Now after the reform, I think there's been a strong sense of unity among the forces like the army, the navy and also the air force, in the sense that the feeling as a united Indonesian armed forces is quiet strong.

As you know, there is no such thing as the domination of the army or ground forces right now; anybody from the three services can become a commander in chief of the Indonesian military. So probably, in the longer term, the military sees the benefit of the reform compared to the previous era. Of course, this is probably just my hypotheses, because obviously there are still some military people who think like in the past, but the new generation of the military seems to be quite comfortable with idea of distancing itself from politics and let the politicians doing the job. Obviously among the politicians sometimes there are also those who try to manipulate the military, but so far I don't think that they are successful in this enterprise.

DEVLIN: One thing that is very interesting is that the Indonesian military has played a role in Indonesia's history that is very unique; there are a few other countries that come to mind somewhat differently, but the case in Turkey, maybe Pakistan, where armed forces is so closely identified with the national liberation struggle or nation building. What was the role of building a public constituency for reform of

the armed forces because there certainly is a constituency in Indonesia that is passionately supportive of the military. So when you talk about reforming an institution that can make claim to a wide swath public opinion or public loyalty, how is that managed do you recall in terms of—I mean the media campaign behind army reform?

HIKAM: Well my recollection is that—of course, it's not very easy for the government to make the people quickly accept the idea of military out of politics entirely, but after ten years, I think the idea of military getting out of politics has made people much, much more comfortable in joining, you know, political process. And the restraining of the military from getting into politics is amazing also in Indonesian political context right now. Because there was a time when the military could manipulate regional conflicts such as in Aceh and Papua, which then open some loopholes to make it legitimate to enter into politics. But so far such a temptation is not galvanized within the military.

In its development, the post-reform government and the people also not entirely putting the military outside politics. For example, the so-called territorial system of the ground forces (TNI Angkatan Darat) has remained in place, which is not without its political ramifications. The keeping of territorialism is probably some kind of political bargaining for the Indonesian military, especially for the ground forces. Their personnel's presence is still there; they are still needed by the public when it comes to, say, disaster mitigation or when you have flood and something like that. But in terms of domestic security measure, I don't think the military is trying to interfere with the police.

So now I think except in the very remote areas, say in the border regions, the military is actually concentrating on the national defense issues, and if the government somehow can provide much more budget for their welfare, for their family, I think the military will even be much more content with the reforms. Anyway, the military historical role is still there. What I mean is the Indonesian people actually give a lot of respect to the military as evidenced that the enrollment to the military academy is still quite high, similar to that of the police force.

It seems to me that it depends on how the government really balancing between the demand of the military in term of budgeting on one hand, and the fact that people still need some kind of protection and the presence of the military around them on the other

DEVLIN: So one thing you mentioned, the issue of welfare and providing for those in the military?

HIKAM: Yes, right.

DEVLIN: So that kind of comes to this questions that at times has been controversial, the military's involvement in business practices?

HIKAM: Business practices, right.

DEVLIN: So that's something that's evolved over the years, how political society wants to address that question. When you think back to the administration of Gus Dur, was that seen as something that was important but could wait? I mean, that you

can take the military out of politics is one thing, but removing them from the links to businesses and the structure of, as you say, of welfare or support that provided for them is probably an even greater challenge.

HIKAM: *Right.*

DEVLIN: So I was wondering if you could—back then what was the conception of that, what the military's relationship with business should be?

HIKAM: *At that time even, the notion of military business involvement had become a contending issue, and I don't think even right now it's been solved completely. Some people who want to see military get out of business entirely are not really satisfied with the idea of allowing the military getting involved in co-operatives-based enterprises (Koperasi), for example, because it means business activity. They want that the only source of the military budget is coming solely from the government, from the state; not from business involvements. But there is probably another political bargaining again. So far the government are pushing toward reforming military business by taking those that really considered as real (large) business entities from the military, but allowing the latter in those things that are regarded as small, sort of safety valve, economic activities like the co-op enterprises. This is probably going to be a long-term solution.*

I myself am not sure, because if you ask me, I am one of those who consider even cooperatives-based enterprises are economic activities. I am aware that the majority of my colleagues when I was in the Commission one in the Parliament, that deals with the military affairs, argued that the cooperatives-based enterprises are not the same with so-called real economic activity. To me, I still push the reform entirely that, you know, would not allow the military to get into the cooperatives-based business activities. But this is a long term process, probably if you want to say as a bargaining or long-term or gradual process of dissolving economic interest of the military, then maybe you have it. But so far, I think the military is quite content with the idea of pulling them out of those real, big businesses and letting them having access to cooperatives-based activities..

I don't know, in terms of money, how much the magnitude those so-called cooperatives-based enterprises. To me it could be high, but maybe this is the political process that we need to address in the future. Probably in Indonesian politics you cannot do it radically. But at some point you really, really need to take the business outside the military, I mean, dismantling all over. You have to be very, very careful in terms of managing this kind of interest. I don't know, maybe the next DPR will have a different say, but it definitely is one of the contending issues: how to make military get out of business entirely.

DEVLIN: The other, the other issue so contentious is decentralization and mutual autonomy. And obviously, a centralized state was very conducive to the system that President Suharto wanted to be running. It maybe somewhat of a straightforward question, but could you maybe talk a little bit about the motivation for decentralization, why did people actually want regional autonomy with the end new order?

HIKAM: *Well, this is actually very old historical background. Indonesia since 1950 has experienced this kind of contention between the regions versus the center*

(Daerah vs Pusat), especially in those outer islands of Java. You have several regional conflicts, even separatist movements, you know, because of the criticism to the overwhelming centralization of the central government.

And also in our Constitution itself, if I'm remembering correctly, there is an Article Number 18. In it, it's clear that the Indonesian state must respect the uniqueness of regions. Therefore, the regional autonomy, especially in terms of culture, is very considered essential in the whole process of nation building. When the New Order came to power, you did have economic development and its problems, mainly the distribution of wealth. The New Order exploited regional natural resources, for example, in Aceh, Papua and Sumatra and so on and so forth. However, the people felt that the distribution of wealth is limited only on Java, for example, that it's getting really developed. The demand for regional development was growing.

And after the collapse of the New Order, this issue of regional development has become really contentious, especially when you have separatist movements in Aceh and Papua. The central government realized that if you don't address this, then probably it's not only concentrated in these two hot spots, but we'd have in other areas as well. So suddenly—no, not suddenly—the reform movement opens up the whole idea of strengthening Indonesia by giving much, much more autonomy to the regions. Not only in terms of culture, but also of economic distribution and political expressions. And that's why in 1999, Gus Dur established the state ministry for regional autonomy, and prior to that, President Habibie already introduced the regional autonomy Law, which then applied under the next governments.

Of course, in the process then you have all kind of things that might be positive, but might also be negative. One of the negative things for regional development is the euphoria of creating new districts and new provinces (pemekaran provinsi dan kabupaten) without considering the capabilities of those areas to develop themselves. Like I said, probably they want to develop the regions through the regional autonomy, but the mindset is still using centralization paradigm. When you established a new region or new district or new province, then somehow the money from the central government will be given there and new political positions will be there. So it's the regional autonomy for them. What happens in fact, it only makes distribution of poverty and the distribution of corruption, because that is not the idea of regional autonomy in the first place. It's just sheer poverty in my opinion, just like what Clifford Geertz says about agriculture economy on Java which resulted in "shared poverty." And that's why right now there's a very strong idea to stop this kind of giving up or developing new regions and try to evaluate whether or not the new regions, the new districts, the new provinces are capable enough to really do something that is actually becoming the intention of the framers of the Constitution and the demand of regional autonomy.

Because what we have right now, the more new districts are created, the lower the level of their economic development. There's been no growth. What you have is poverty, because the intention of people to have the new district has nothing to do with economic development. They just want to have the new budget from the central government and that's it. You know, this is totally reversing the idea of autonomy. Instead of strengthening the nation, the regional economy has become the vehicle of weakening the nation, because what you have is not the shared welfare but shared poverty.

DEVLIN: So on that point when you think of the initial motivation for regional autonomy, and I guess this is the seeds of this problem that you are talking about now, is that decentralization was viewed as a way to counter separatism primarily. It was a way to secure the territorial integrity of the whole Indonesia?

HIKAM: *One of the reasons.*

DEVLIN: One of the things?

HIKAM: *But there's also a constitutional requirement due to the fact that Indonesia is so heterogeneous. But the implementation of regional autonomy is a mess because there's an idea that holds that the leaders of the region (regents, governors, etc) must be originated from that area, the so-called putra daerah (the region's indigenous people). This is a bad idea because, you know, most of the time there's only very bad or very low quality of human resources available in the regions, especially in remote areas. That creates another problem, namely that the new autonomous regions no longer become new hopes, but new source of poverty.*

DEVLIN: So it's nearly, its kind clearly like a trap: the exact parts, the exact regions that need the most help are constricted by this regulation that they have to draw on the weakest human resources pool in terms of this leadership? So the weakest—

HIKAM: *Yes, because the idea is a very, very strange. Many people in the regions think that by way of regional autonomy they would have the opportunity to become members of a new elite in both executive and legislative institutions. So this is totally a different idea, say, from the United States experience. In the states, if you develop a new area people from outside will come there because they are interested in new opportunity, new investment and so on and so forth. But in Indonesia, so far, when you have new region, new regency or Kabupaten, or new city or municipalities, that means budget from the central government. It has nothing to do with new opportunity or to new investment or something like that. It's just a new office and new budget. Sometimes if you have a budget, it's mostly for managing the office administration, not for creating investment or infrastructure or so on.*

So the new regions will be competing with each other for budget, not for development. That's why it's very remarkable in Indonesia that there's a provision in the law that after three years of the new regency being set up, you have to evaluate it. If this particular new region cannot, you know, meet the requirement then they have to return to the previous or original regency from which the new regency was created. But this is the dilemma: if you are considered incapable of meeting the requirement, the old regency will not—they don't want to accept you back again. It means you will be left alone and become miserable (as a new regency). And who will help you out of that situation? The central government again, see? So to me, the constitutional requirement is one thing, but the implementation is totally a different thing. This is what I mean by saying that regional autonomy in practice has been weakening the idea of Indonesian unity simply because the practice is totally different from the idea in the first place.

DEVLIN: I'm wondering, when you think of regional autonomy, are there specific regions or even general areas of Indonesia that to your mind stand out as—

HIKAM: *Exemplary?*

DEVLIN: Either, well both action-range exemplary where the process has worked very well, or persistent challenges where the process has gone wrong?

HIKAM: *There're some success stories. For example in Bali, there is a successful new district, Jembrana, because the leadership in this particular regency really cares about improving the quality of economic development in the region and capable of garnering or mobilizing people to make that happens. So Jembrana and probably on Java you have Sragen—they really tried to come up with a model that's strengthening the economic development in these particular areas. So they are no longer receiving, for example, all kind of subsidies and, instead, creating economic opportunities and bureaucratic reforms that are capable of elevating the status of the new district.*

And this is what I said that regional autonomy wouldn't happen if the quality of leadership is so low that they don't have any idea what-so-ever about the new regency.

DEVLIN: So the Java region was Sragen?

HIKAM: *Sragen, near Solo, and in Sumatra you have like Payakumbuh in Sumatera Barat or West Sumatra.*

DEVLIN: Payakumbuh?

HIKAM: *Yes. I don't know about (the island of) Kalimantan, but they said that Balikpapan is one of the examples of success. But you have only a couple or three success regions in each province. Mostly, new regencies are in a very, very dire situation after they become separated or becoming a new regency, especially in Papua, because the quality of human resources are very, very low. So my idea is that it's okay to have regional autonomy, but be careful not to uniform-ize the whole thing, because every area in Indonesia has its specificity.*

Maybe it's not a bad idea to follow the Israelites way of kibbutzim. You really create a settlement for whatever reason, but they built infrastructures that are needed to develop the new economy. But in Indonesia, you just create new regencies, give them new offices and things like that without any planning whatsoever. So if you give an autonomy status to a poor area to become more independent and you don't give them the capacity to develop, then instead of having one poor region, now you would have two poor regions or maybe three poor regions, and that's what I call shared poverty in the first place.

DEVLIN: One thing I'm wondering about, and it ties into this question of regional autonomy, is sometimes you have to in a lot of the political reforms, you have to bring people—you have to accommodate people.

HIKAM: *Sure.*

DEVLIN: Whether they might not be the most desirable people, but they bring a crucial constituency around and just on the very basic level of Indonesia's geographic realities, there are a lot of, a lot of potential troublemakers that need to be incorporated.

HIKAM: Yes.

DEVLIN: When you think about, about the process of reform in Indonesia how has that been managed, how have people's interests been accommodated while reform itself has still managed to go forward?

HIKAM: *So far, the demand for economic development, especially in the outer islands of Java is still the number one challenge. I think so because the way in which the government is actually conducting economic development policy is such that it's not really deviating from the New Order's way, which is too centralized, mainly on Java and in some natural resource-rich areas. But without creating the kind of infrastructures that will develop those areas themselves. It's very hard for you to imagine if you happen to visit Papua to see such a rich region but without the very basic infrastructures. Of course, people go everywhere in Papua by using small airplanes, but to me that doesn't explain that the Papuans are prosperous because of that. No, that's because no available roads and trains. It's very expensive and also very rare for people to have mobility because Papua is only having patches of development; it's not very well distributed.*

So to me the existing concept of development remains like that: centralized. You only focus on Java or outer islands of Java, which already developed, say in Sumatra. But you have no development like that in Kalimantan, in Papua, in Maluku. It doesn't mean anything. You can have any kind of new regions, but still people will come to Java all the time. Rarely people go to other islands or have some kind of qualitative difference prior to and after the autonomy. So Java will always become the center of economy. Not only that, but Jakarta is still the center of national economy. Can you imagine that? Eighty percent of money in Indonesia concentrates in this city, so 20% is all over Indonesia. To me, that is really, really a colonization here. This has occurred because the failure of the government so far to have an even development, due to of the failure of infrastructure development throughout Indonesia.

And under the New Order regime, that was because the mindset at that time was the fear of development in outer islands of Java. As if when you have developed outside Java, the probability of threat of separatism will be higher. Consequently, only on Java or some islands close to Java that you have real development. This mindset should be changed, that instead of having trouble if you are developing outer Java islands, you will have benefit of strengthening Indonesian defense and security precisely because the people outside the islands of Java will have prosperity, and, you know, they won't destroy the environment because of natural resources exploitation.

Of course you have to be very careful when you are talking about migration, because if you develop the kind of infrastructure I have in mind in Papua, then obviously it will attract people from outside of Papua, and you have to really take care of the local people in Papua. But even now the discrepancy is already there even in the situation of lacking the infrastructure. Indigenous Papuans are only a minority in Papua; two thirds of the population are coming from all over

Indonesia, especially from Sulawesi Selatan and maybe some from Java. And they are economically more prosperous. You cannot just let the economic discrepancy happen like that, because it's part of the job of the state to avoid this kind of migration problem.

DEVLIN: Now one thing that a lot of people we meet with talk about is that in order or an important part of reform is having a leader who can articulate a vision, who can bring a narrative to the story of reform. And when we were talking earlier, we touched on this idea of leadership to a degree. Can you talk a bit about your perception of the importance of that in Indonesia having a reform leader who can provide the story for reform, provide a kind of theatrical element to the process? Because a lot of people say that's very important to motivating the public.

HIKAM: *Definitely, I believe in that, too. In the final analysis, leadership is the most important component of reform in this country. Probably because like it or not, Indonesian society is still in transition, that a charismatic leader is still having some kind of influence although maybe not the kind of Weberian model of charismatic leadership. But still you need very good visionary leaders to do that. And in the absence of that, people will consider or perceive that they will try to select those leaders who don't want to rock the boat too much.*

Indonesian story has all kind of exemplary figures that although they're probably charismatic and very, very articulate, but at the end of the day people will judge with what kind of thing that they bring to the people in actuality. Sukarno was very well-known as a very, very energetic and very internationally well-known, very progressive. But when he failed to deliver economic development to the nation, people changed their support to Suharto who was not known either as someone who was very open minded or having progressive thinking. However, Suharto delivered the economic development to the people until his family and cronies were becoming so corrupt and people wanted to have change again.

And now after the reform, actually people are back to be more pragmatic again because the leadership from Habibie, Gus Dur, Megawati and SBY. They thought that all of those leaders actually are very good in terms of their articulations of their ideas. But in terms of delivering their promises, probably people now say that, well, we were not so good but not that bad either, particularly under the present President SBY. Of course, people realize that even SBY has no vision that would really make Indonesia greater than what it is now. Probably Indonesia would remain the same and not even become the leader of ASEAN. But I think maybe people now tend to be very conservative when it comes to change, because they don't see any opposition leader that really offers something new that hasn't been brought by SBY so far. Of course, SBY cannot be judged as very successful in economic development, but at least, you know, in the perception of the majority the country is having more stability. But when you ask Indonesians about whether you need much more prosperous country, of course the answer is yes.

Leadership is very, very important, but in the end, people will judge not only the progressiveness of the leadership, but the capability of delivering the promises. Although it's not so much, yes. It's very interesting to see that everybody mocking and criticizing SBY when natural disasters hit the country. Everybody from Sumatra to Papua will mock that these occurred because of SBY, blah, blah, blah. But in the end when the general election occurs, people go to the polling

stations and still vote for SBY; because in the end, what they see is that there's no light at the end of the tunnel in terms of economic prosperities, so why don't we just maintain this situation and hope for the best? So I think the next leadership in Indonesia should work very hard to prove that they have an idea that works. Yes, people like Dr. Rizal Ramli is probably one of such leaders. Unfortunately, he has no political party to support him. Because he all ready showed, when he become a minister, that he was really capable of proving that he could work and resulting in something, and we need this kind of leadership.
[End of Tape 1]

DEVLIN: So maybe if I could ask one last question. One issue that has come up is information or support. You mentioned your time in the DPR, there was not exactly a staff that was there on hand for your—

HIKAM: *Sufficient staff.*

DEVLIN: Sufficient staff. That made your responsibilities a lot harder to carry out. I'm wondering where have you turned to in the past for information, advice, ideas, if you find a lot of people in the day-to-day responsibilities that you're charged—few people have the time to usually step back and really kind of try and build new ideas so where there particular people, were there actually people on your staff, local think tanks maybe, that you drew on for some of your ideas, for some of your work?

HIKAM: *Well actually, it depends on your own creativities to find other kind of sources of information that you need. Obviously, media is one of them, internet and all kind of things that can probably give you fresh ideas or probably solutions, advice. In my experience in the DPR, in the Parliament, I tried to invite the non-governmental organizations that have a similar concern with my commissions or job in the DPR. For example, when we needed to come up with a bill on information, there are several very good non-governmental organizations that deal with such a particular issue, namely freedom of information or public access to information. And then we collaborated with them through hearing or through discussions or creating some kind of caucus in the society that concerned with that particular issue.*

So that really helps, because if you are dependent on all your political party, you will end up frustrated. The political party usually has very minimum or non-existent fresh ideas, especially when it comes to this very, very sensitive or very, very important issues like that. So it depends on personality and your creativity.

Probably my background in academia helps a lot, because I had then extensive networks in Indonesia or outside Indonesia that I can solicit their ideas or their help when it comes to legislation or probably even when we come up with the question from the society. So in the tradition of Indonesian Parliament, we have field-work visit every three months, and you have to go to your constituents, then you talk with people if they really want to have an aspiration to direct to the DPR. Otherwise, if you're just remaining in Jakarta, you can do that and ask your staffer to go around, but it's not enough.

So information, obviously it's not like when you're in the government because the government has all kinds of networks and capacity to gather or to muster information, but then you don't give up with the situation and try using all kind of

resources like what I said, the media and the non-governmental organizations and also some university people who are very keen to help the DPR.

And so it really depends on the personality of the personnel or members of the House of Representatives, and that is the problem probably in Indonesian Parliament. Why people are so disappointed by the performance of the Parliament? Because most of the Parliament members have a limited capability in terms of listening or finding out the information that benefits their constituencies. Yes, mostly they just follow orders from their political parties and that's enough. So when it comes to, say, writing bills or formulating legislations, the executive is always having more information and more capabilities compared to the Parliament members. This is what makes DPR or Parliament still lagging behind in terms of capability to become oversight partner of the government because the lack of ability to gather information and expertise that they should have had.

DEVLIN: Well thank you so much for taking the time, greatly appreciated and hopefully if we're back here—

HIKAM: *Thanks, and if you still have any questions, just call me and we can have another conversation, maybe if I can add in writing or something like that.*

DEVLIN: Fantastic, thank you so much.