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## **“Indonesia’s Political Outlook: Towards GE2014– Some Trends and Observations”**

### **SELECTED TOPICS:**

- I. Troubled Voters’ List
- II. Potential Presidential Candidates: All Eyes on Jokowi

### **Executive Summary**

With the Indonesian general elections of 2014 just around the corner, two contentious issues revisit the archipelago: a disputed voters list and potential presidential candidates in the upcoming elections. The former is a perennial source of contention and infighting among rival political parties that threatens to undermine the democratic voting process. The latter injects a familiar melodramatic element in the political theatre in the form of an epic battle as Indonesia transits to a post-SBY landscape. This policy paper appraises the interlude before campaigning commences in late January 2014, delineating the political permutations that would take shape and the potential conflicts that may arise in the course of the electioneering. In particular, the presence of Jakarta Governor Jokowi as a “rising star” in Indonesian politics deserves special mention, as his potential participation in both the legislative and presidential races will have a ripple effect on how future politics will play out.

## I. Troubled Voters List: Old Wine in New Bottle

The perennial issue of the delayed voters list looks to strike again for the 2014 election. This issue receives less attention than it deserves compared with others such as the potential list of presidential candidates, the manoeuvrings of political parties and corruption scandals tainting the image of political parties. In the past three

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Post-*Reformasi* elections, only the 1999 general election can be considered truly trouble-free with regards to the issue of the voters' list. In the last election, Adam Schmidt of the International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES) noted that the issue of the voter registry was "the single most contentious issue during the 2009 elections in Indonesia" (Schmidt, 2010). Similarly, voter registration remains a heady problem for the management of the 2014 elections.

The accuracy of the voters list is a crucial prerequisite for any democratic election. A valid voters list means that all eligible voters exercise their constitutional rights. A reliable and genuine voters list in turn will ensure legitimacy of the elections itself. How can the accuracy of the voters list be ensured this time round? Indeed, ascertaining the accuracy of the voters list in a country as large as Indonesia remains a conundrum. The Elections Commission (KPU) has to deal with 186 million potential voters who live across the archipelago. They also have to deal with insufficient basic infrastructure and a limited number of staff in covering all duties in the course of compiling an accurate list. Additionally, they also have to deal with a troubled population database from the Ministry of Home Affairs – one that is compounded by the ministry's inability to meet the deadline in implementing the new electronic identification card (e-KTP).

In the context of the 2014 Elections, the KPU is still struggling to overcome such a conundrum. The accuracy of the voters list for the 2014 elections is still suspect although an announcement has been made in early November this year. According to the KPU, there are 186,612,255 eligible voters for the next elections. However, this number is still highly debatable. The opposition party, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), claims that there are 10.4 million ineligible voters on the KPU's list. Recently, the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra) sent a subpoena to the KPU. Gerindra's investigations suggest a much smaller number, namely around 3.7 million troubled voter registrations. If this problem persists up to the eve of elections, then what happened in 2009 will recur in the

2014 elections. To recall, just a few days before the 2009 presidential election, two pairs of presidential candidates (the Jusuf Kalla-Wiranto and Megawati-Prabowo pair) came to the KPU Office in Jakarta to protest against the accuracy of the voters list. The accusation was that the KPU was unfairly partisan, giving an advantage to the Yudhoyono-Boediono pair.

The inaccuracy of the voter list has its origins in data inconsistencies between the KPU and the Ministry of Home Affairs' database. Law No. 8/2012 on the Elections of National and Local Parliaments states that a valid voter data comprises a person's name, date of birth, gender, residency address, and civil registration number. Those five elements must be fulfilled, otherwise the data is considered invalid, resulting in a voter losing his/her rights to vote.

Among the five requirements, implementing a standardised civil registration number is the most vexing problem when it comes to the KPU's Final Voters List (DPT). This problem occurs due to two classic problems of the Indonesian bureaucratic working mechanism – that of implementation and coordination. On the implementation side, the failure of the Ministry of Home Affairs to fulfil their obligations in implementing the e-KTP project on schedule is the main source of the problem. If the Ministry can keep to its deadline, the basic database would not be imprecise since all it requires is to undertake an actual verification on the field during voting day. The e-KTP provides each Indonesian citizen with a Single Identity Number (NIK). The Ministry includes the Single Identity Number in the Potential Voters List (DP4). This Potential Voters List will eventually be the basis for the KPU to manage the final voters list. However (here the lack of coordination tends to occur), the KPU uses its own methodologies to create its own voters list. The Commission verifies the voters list based on the Local Elections (*Pemilukada*) database that is collected from local KPUs across Indonesia. In the KPU's database, the Single Identity Number is not included in the list. Therefore, data between the Ministry and the KPU is not synchronised. Further complicating the problem, the KPU's information system on the voters' data is not fully integrated with the Information System of Population Administration (SIAP) that belongs to the Ministry of Home Affairs. This makes the synchronisation process between the potential and actual voters list even more arduous.

The implication is, as mentioned above, that there are 10.4 million voters' data that the KPU needs to verify within a month. Although not impossible, many are doubtful that it will meet such an ambitious target.

The picture looks even gloomier because there is an on-going blame game between the KPU and the Ministry. Both claimed that they have done their own due diligence, thus deserving of a vindication from all responsibilities for possible lapses at coordination. To make matters worse, the Election Supervisory Committee (Bawaslu) states that over 1.2 million instances of inaccurate data in 20 districts/municipalities spreading over six provinces were discovered. Of the 1.2 million, 531,413 are without Single Identity Number, 1,953 are without a standardised Single Identity Number, 29,317 had a double Single Identity Number and 17,470 “voters” were actually deceased. The number might be higher if Bawaslu were to include other provinces and districts.

With this issue in mind, we can anticipate that a few problems will arise before and after the elections this year. Firstly, many parties would use this issue as a crutch to question the legitimacy and validity of the election results. Secondly, this issue can also be utilised to delegitimise the KPU, the Yudhoyono administration and the electoral performance of Yudhoyono’s party, the Democratic Party. Finally, there is a possibility that the losing parties would not accept the election result.

The key in resolving such a problem is to intensify the coordination between the KPU, the Ministry and other related parties such as the Bawaslu and the political parties. What the Gerindra Party did recently can be seen as a move in the right direction. They have actively participated in monitoring and providing information and feedback to the KPU. Other parties and civil societies should do the same by assisting the KPU in verifying the data rather than being passive observers, protesting only when elections have been concluded.

## **II. Potential Presidential Candidates: All Eyes on Jokowi**

Among all potential presidential candidates, the Governor of Jakarta Mr Joko Widodo (Jokowi as he often called) is the most popular candidate to date. According to recent surveys, Jokowi leads the polls, leaving other contenders, like Prabowo Subianto (Chairman of the Great Indonesia Movement Party/ Gerindra), Megawati Sukarnoputri (Chairwoman of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle/ PDIP), or Aburizal Bakrie (Chairman of the Golkar Party) trailing in his wake. According to a survey from the United Data Center (PDB), Jokowi is currently in the lead with a 36 per cent electability rate, followed by Prabowo Subianto at 6.6 per cent as his closest contender. Another survey by the Indikator, a Jakarta-based polling agency, also suggests Mr Widodo leaving his contenders behind with

an 18 per cent electability rate followed by Prabowo Subianto (6.9 per cent), Aburizal Bakrie (5.7 per cent) and Wiranto (4.2 per cent). Consequently, there is a growing perception among Indonesian analysts that if Jokowi were to contest in the next presidential election, the result will almost certainly be his beating the other candidates, regardless of who is his running mate.

Undeniably, Jokowi is a rising star in Indonesia's politics. He comes from a wholly different background as compared with other top political figures. He is not a party chairman and does not hold a ministerial position. His family is not of a "political" pedigree unlike figures such as Megawati, Pramono Edhie Wibowo (President Yudhoyono's brother-in-law), or Hatta Rajasa (Chairman of the National Mandate Party/PAN). Although he used to be a furniture businessman before being elected the Mayor of Surakarta, Jokowi is not a super-rich business tycoon compared with Aburizal Bakrie, Jusuf Kalla (former VP) or the media mogul Hary Tanoesudibjo (Vice-presidential candidate from the People's Conscience Party/Hanura). Though Jokowi came to the Jakarta governor race with a modest profile nonetheless, his humble profile was effective in catching the eye of the Jakartan electorate disenchanted with the same old faces and the same old policies. His governorship of Jakarta has presented Indonesia with a new kind of leadership and politics – one that is willing to listen to people's grievances as well as taking firm and resolute steps towards resolving their problems. For instance, he successfully relocated the street vendors in Tanah Abang Market, the largest textile market in Southeast Asia, to a proper building after having listened to the grievances and concerns of the vendors. Most Jakartans are pleased with his governorship. Traffic jams in the Tanah Abang area, once caused by street vendors who occupied the sidewalk, are a thing of the past.

If Prabowo was seen as the anti-thesis of Yudhoyono as an indecisive leader a year ago, people are now looking at Jokowi with new lenses. Jokowi has a better comparative advantage over Prabowo because he holds a strategic public position as the Governor of Jakarta. His speeches and actions are always noteworthy and he is quite media-savvy. According to Politicawave, a social media survey company, Jokowi dominates 60 per cent of the total conversation on various outlets such as Twitter, Facebook, blogs and YouTube. In addition, Jokowi also won the Social Media Award in 2013. Almost any conversation on Twitter presenting Jokowi in a negative light will immediately face a counter-attack from Jokowi's supporters. In short, Jokowi dominates all media platforms, whether traditional or

new social media. With this invaluable capital it is very easy for Jokowi to beat the other candidates in the next presidential election.

### **Jokowi, Megawati and PDIP**

Nevertheless, one must understand, under Indonesia's presidential elections law, only political parties or coalitions of parties with 25 per cent of popular votes in the legislative elections or 20 per cent of the total national parliamentary seats, can nominate a presidential candidate. Within this context, Jokowi must get support from various political parties that will be contesting the

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presidential elections. The most plausible scenario will be that of Jokowi running on the PDIP's ticket. The possibilities for Jokowi running on another party's ticket are slim. This is because almost all the big parties have already decided on their presidential candidates. Golkar has nominated Chairman Aburizal Bakrie, while the Democratic Party will nominate the winner of the party's convention in March. Gerindra will most definitely nominate Prabowo Subianto, while the National Mandate Party (PAN) and the United Development Party (PPP) will nominate Hatta Rajasa and Suryadharma Ali. Hanura has announced Wiranto and Hary Tanoesoedibjo as their president and vice presidential candidates. Other smaller parties, such as the Justice and Prosperous Party (PKS), the National Democrat Party (Nasdem), the Moon and Crescent Party (PBB), and the Indonesian Justice and United Party (PKPI) have no other recourse but to wait for the outcome of the legislative elections and hope for a possible coalition with a majority party. If Jokowi were to decide to run on another party's ticket, he may receive a token vice-presidential position. In addition, the electorate may question his loyalty to Megawati and the PDIP. In Javanese political culture, crossing over to the other side abruptly for the sake of a presidential position at the behest of political ambition is seen as "*kasar* (discourteous/unruly)" and will only be counter-productive to Jokowi's current popularity and electability rate. Given this context, the most plausible scenario is for Jokowi to run on the PDIP ticket.

This scenario is not without obstacles. The Chairwoman of PDIP Megawati Sukarnoputri has not announced a presidential candidate from her party. Many analysts believe that Megawati still has ambitions to be in the presidential race as *de jure* candidate of PDIP, despite the fact

that she has lost in the last two. Megawati also realises that Jokowi is a strong magnet in attracting the electorate to support PDIP. In a personalistic political culture like that of Indonesia, a strong figure can be a game-changer within the constellation of political parties in the legislative and presidential elections. A recent survey by Indikator, showed that the presence of Jokowi will make a marked difference for PDIP's electability in the legislative elections. Based on the survey, if PDIP nominates Jokowi as its party's presidential candidate, the party could possibly win up to 37.8 per cent of the vote in the legislative elections. This is in contrast to having a much lesser 21.6 per cent if the PDIP opts for its current strategy without Jokowi in the picture.

Two plausible scenarios will ultimately emerge from these series of events. Firstly, Megawati will probably wait until the very last minute before making an announcement of her preferred choice for PDIP's presidential candidate. If the PDIP looked like it will achieve a significant win at the legislative elections (said to be around 27 per cent), Megawati would run as PDIP's presidential candidate and possibly take Mr Widodo as her vice-presidential choice. If this is the case, then the narrative would be Jokowi lacks experience to manage at the national level and will have difficulties to rein dissenting voices from his own party and attacks from other parties; therefore, Megawati will act as Jokowi's "mentor" and "guardian" until he is ready to take full responsibility to manage the nation in 2019. However, at the last minute before legislative elections end, if the possibility for PDIP gaining significant votes is very slim, Megawati could concede and announce Jokowi's nomination.

### **Jokowi vs. Yudhoyono: A Familiar Story of Victimisation**

Another interesting discourse surrounding the possibility of Jokowi's presidential nomination is the comparison between Jokowi and President Yudhoyono found in the popular press. The Indonesian media like to portray Jokowi as a strong contender and an alternative to the current president, regardless of the fact that Yudhoyono

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is unable to run for another term. Similar to the epic rivalry between David and Goliath, Yudhoyono along with his ministers and his party, are being viewed as symbols of the status quo. Jokowi, on the other hand, is perceived as a simple, humble, vulnerable but brave

candidate – the right man to challenge the status quo. This tendency is clearly observable by those trying to comprehend trends in typical media portrayals of Jokowi.

There are now clearly two observable lines of an emerging political “battle” and feud: (i) a “direct battle” between Yudhoyono and Jokowi, and (ii) a battle that pits Yudhoyono’s ministers and Democrat Party elites against Jokowi and his circle. The first can be gleaned from comments made by Nurhayati Ali Assegaf, the Head of the Democrat Party (PD) Faction in Indonesia’s House of Representatives (DPR), on Jokowi’s inability to prevent fire breakouts in Jakarta. The second kind of battle had already ensued when the Minister of Home Affairs Gamawan Fauzi commented on the issue of the appointment of Ms Susan as the Sub-district Head (*lurah*) of Lenteng Agung (one of the sub-districts in Jakarta). Ms Susan was selected from an “auction” of public positions – a new initiative – introduced by the new Jakarta Governor. However Ms Susan is a non-Muslim and soon after she was assigned as a Sub-district head, some local residents of Lenteng Agung protested against her appointment over her religious background. The issue of a non-Muslim holding a leadership position in a Muslim dominated regency and the perceived implications for local security led Mr Fauzi to urge the Jokowi administration to review its policies and consider replacing Ms Susan. But Jokowi and his Deputy Mr Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) refused to comply.

The traffic congestion issue in Jakarta turned out to be a third political battleground. It took place when Yudhoyono responded to a question posed to him on the traffic congestion situation in Jakarta at a meeting with members of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN). Yudhoyono stated: “If you have issues with Jakarta’s traffic woes, you go to Jokowi. If it is in Bandung, go to Ahmad Heryawan (West Java Governor) or the mayor of Bandung,” (*The Jakarta Post*, 6 November 2013). However, despite the lack of clarification from the president against accusations that he was blaming Jokowi for Jakarta’s traffic woes, the media perceived Yudhoyono’s comments as a personal attack on Jokowi. Some media outlets even said that Yudhoyono did so precisely because he is jealous of Jokowi’s immense popularity.

The fourth and what could be termed a “proxy battle” can be surmised from an incident when, out of the blue, the Provincial Government of Jakarta removed a tree in the area around the National Monument (Monas) in Jakarta on account of a letter sent by the Palace stating that “the tree obstructs the president’s view.” Apart from these instances, there are many more examples where the Indonesian media have tried to depict Jokowi as being



victimised by President Yudhoyono. While diminishing the public perception of Yudhoyono, the media has sought to build up Jokowi's profile and credibility by providing him with positive coverage. Clearly, these kinds of battles will inevitably bring more harm than good to Yudhoyono and his party.

This phenomenon however is not new. Such politicking at the presidential level was also seen in the 2004 election between rivals Megawati Sukarnoputri and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Yudhoyono's defining political moment was when the Megawati camp, through the late Taufik Kiemas, accused Yudhoyono of being childish, his conduct unbecoming of a minister. Playing the role of the victim, Yudhoyono then chose to resign from Megawati's cabinet. From then on, Yudhoyono was seen as the "David" who was trying very hard to defend his stance and principles against "Goliath" in the form of Megawati. Consequently, Yudhoyono became a media darling, receiving great support from the electorate, and he eventually won the first direct presidential elections.

The situation has now come full circle for Yudhoyono. He is seen as the present "Goliath", while Jokowi is looked upon by the public as a "David" figure. Yudhoyono is symbolic of the status quo, while Jokowi is seen as a symbol of hope and change in Indonesian politics. In a "melodramatic society" (coined by political analyst Sukardi Rinakit of Sugeng Sarjadi Syndicate), victimisation is a very effective tool in catapulting someone to the pinnacle of national politics in Indonesia. The electorate loves to sympathise with the victim. In such a peculiar political climate, it is not surprising that Jokowi's rating remains the highest among potential candidates. Nevertheless, analysing the period just before or after the legislative elections will be critical in providing us with a fuller picture so as to understand the implications of the general elections and the possible permutations among presidential candidates. More importantly, the main question of who will win the next elections and lead the country for the next five years will gradually unfold as the current political drama plays itself out.

## **About RSIS and Indonesia Programme**

The *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)* was officially inaugurated on 1 January 2007. Before that, it was known as the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), which was established ten years earlier on 30 July 1996. Like its predecessor, RSIS was established as an autonomous entity within Nanyang Technological University (NTU). RSIS' aim is to be a leading research institution and professional graduate school in the Asia-Pacific. To accomplish this mission, RSIS provides a rigorous professional graduate education in international affairs with a strong practical and area emphasis; conducts policy relevant research in national security, defence and strategic studies, international political economy, diplomacy and international relations; and collaborates with like-minded schools of international affairs to form a global network of excellence.

The *Indonesia Programme* is one of nine active research programmes under the umbrella of IDSS. The Programme studies current developments and a wide range of key issues in the archipelago, including political Islam, military and security affairs, foreign policy and regional relations, as well as national and local politics – especially in the Riau region. Through various research, networking, and teaching activities, the Programme has not only provided a platform for networking between the Singapore policy community and the emerging political elites in Indonesia, but it has also tried to further deepen mutual understanding and closer friendship between the two neighbours.