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Indonesian Political Developments, 1989-1990

Robert Cribb

The terrain of Indonesian politics during the last twelve months has been surprisingly free of historical landmarks. We are, almost everyone is now willing to admit, in the final years of the Soeharto era. Whether or not the president decides to accept another term in office from 1993, we are no closer than we were two years or even five years ago to distinguishing the likely post-Soeharto flow of events amongst the swirls and eddies of day-to-day politics. Jakarta politics is increasingly politics-in-waiting in which most players are attempting a double game: seeking to ensure their positions in the present order but at the same time attempting to position themselves for a possibly new and different order in the future. Indonesia-watchers are in something of the same position, attempting to build analyses of the current order in such a way as to allow both for its continuation of strong institutions and for the possibility of significant political change in the future. The example of Eastern Europe has been a warning to us all. My own view, however, is that President Soeharto will seek a further term in 1993 and the atmosphere of politics-in-waiting will continue for some years to come.

The succession issue has been very much a topic of public and private discussion in Indonesia over the past year or more. In early 1989 in his own memoirs, Soeharto sparked an extensive debate on the matter by hinting that his 1988 inauguration would be his last. No less a figure than Admiral Sudomo, Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security and one of the New Order’s long-time political fixers, then commented publicly on the possibility of there being more than one candidate for the presidency in 1993, while Kharis Suhud, chair of the MPR and thus the person directly in charge of the process of choosing a president, declared that a parliamentary vote to select the president was not haram, although current practice is that the members of the MPR endorse a single candidate previously chosen by means of consultation and consensus. Soeharto hosed this speculation down in early May, time. He used the technical argument that the president would be chosen by the next MPR and only the MPR was empowered to discuss the issue. The succession question, however, bubbled on and in September Soeharto issued his now-notorious warning that he would ‘clamber’ (gebuk) anyone who tried to depose him unconstitutionally.1 The expression ‘unconstitutionally’ seems to have been meant to encompass any attempt to pre-empt Soeharto’s own decision whether or not to stand for re-election. Since then we have seen the start of the familiar process in which prominent public groups make pledges of support for Soeharto’s re-election in 1993.2 A complex web of calculations and considerations underpins this kind of declaration, ranging from genuine affection for the president through sycophancy to a careful staking of the right to be consulted on presidential nominations. The clear purpose of these actions is to create the impression of a groundswell of popular support for Soeharto’s re-election. Most recently, moreover, the President’s Independence Day speech on 16 August 1990 told the country that the so-called Generation of ’45—the generation which brought the country to independence and to which Soeharto himself belongs—should ask itself what it can continue to do ‘during the remaining period of its dedication as the liberating generation of our nation’s history’.3 Whatever intentions the president may have, therefore, nothing he has done stands in the way of his seeking another term in 1993, and a petition published on 14 August 1990 over the signatures of fifty-eight dissidents calling on Soeharto not to stand for re-election reflects the fact that his renomination now looks increasingly likely.

Just what Soeharto’s own thoughts on the matter may be, however, is entirely a matter of speculation. Most observers agree that concern for the political and economic security of his family after his departure is an important preoccupation. It has always been possible to imagine that Soeharto might be happy to let his half-brother Probosutejo or his banker Liem Sioe Liong sink or swim after his departure—partly because both are accomplished swimmers—but it is hard to imagine that he is not deeply worried about the fate of his children. The extent of their economic

3 FEER 30 August 1990, p.10.
interests has become a matter for widespread resentment, not necessarily because people believe that they should not have profited at all from their father’s position but because they are seen to have benefited excessively and at the direct expense of others. Retribution against the presidential children, whether through withdrawal of licences or wholesale confiscation of property, would be an immensely popular act with few political or economic disadvantages for any successor to Soeharto; the President, one assumes, is aware of this. If this indeed is a major worry, then he seems to have two options. First is simply to hang on long enough for his children’s economic interests to become an accepted part of the political landscape, as those of Probo and Lien have become. Even Jucrien and the Yayasan Harapan Kita, which were the target of a great deal of antagonism in the early 1970s, are now much less often mentioned in a hostile context. If and when the children become major capitalists in their own right, the sharp resentment which springs from what is seen as their special privilege may weaken. The second option is to ensure a dynastic succession. Talk of this possibility has begun to circulate only recently, and its neatness and audacity give it instant appeal to the Indonesia-watcher. Speculation has centred on the President’s son-in-law Prabowo, currently a lieutenant-colonel in Kopasus. He is tainted somewhat by the perceived treason of his father, economist Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, in the PRRI rebellion in the late 1950s, but he balances this with solid military credentials, which none of the President’s sons possesses. Opinions appear to vary over the quality of his performance in Timor, but it is unlikely that military field experience will do Prabowo’s long-term career any harm. On the other hand, the recent appointment of the president’s brother-in-law, Major-General Wismoyo Arismunandar, as commander of Kostrad, the same power base from which Soeharto leapt to power, gives scope for another set of speculations.

Some presidential speculation has also focussed on Soeharto’s daughter Tutut, an even more audacious idea. It is hard to think of any particular qualifications she has for the job, except for her family connection and the fact that she seems to take a greater interest in public affairs than do her brothers. It is perhaps worth bearing in mind that many pre-colonial states in Indonesia underwent long periods of female rule, and that women rulers were often praised for their fairness in the administration of justice and for their sponsorship of commerce. (Reid 1988:169-172). A succession by Tutut, improbable though it now seems, could have the backing of business groups keen to install a sympathetic president and anxious to avoid a destabilising round of widespread government hostility to established business interests. Each of these options demands time to develop and herein lies a further reason for suspecting that Soeharto will renominate in 1993.

Conventional wisdom, on the other hand, suggests that the best chance of a smooth transition will come with a planned retirement by Soeharto and an orderly, constitutional process for the selection of his successor. This would also, of course, allow Soeharto himself greatest influence over his successor, though it is inconvenient that Indonesia has no honorific post of head of state to which the president might retire gracefully and with a residue of formal constitutional power. When he departs, Soeharto will be ex-president and nothing more, at least in formal terms. Nonetheless, as retiring and then retired president, Soeharto could expect to wield enough influence to strengthen the prospects for a smooth transition. If he dies in office or is incapacitated, that transition would be fraught with many more uncertainties.

Many observers have pointed out that Soeharto’s reluctance to designate a successor may stem from an unwillingness to weaken his authority by creating an alternative source of power, but he may have more altruistic motives. First, a long period of transition would merely prolong uncertainty, which would be disturbing to the political and the economic environment. Indeed, if Soeharto is contemplating an earlier rather than a later departure from power, he would have good reason to keep that decision secret until the last possible moment before the crucial MPR session in 1993, reserving all his remaining political strength to ensure that his preferred successor is elected for the five year term 1993-1998. Second, he may well believe that his own path to power is the best test of true leadership, that is, that the new president should be the person in the right place at the right time, with the guile to seize the opportunity of the moment. If we scan the field at the moment, a list of potential candidates might include State Secretary Moerdiono, Internal Affairs Minister Rudini and ABRI commander Try Sutrisno, with perhaps the Energy Minister Ginanjur Kartasasmita and the Army commander Edi Sudrajat as outside possibilities. I am not sure, however, that a list like this has much meaning. Under constitutional provisions, following the death or incapacity of the president today, the vice-president, Sudharmono would automatically succeed him until 1993. There would be no particular reason to suppose that an heir apparent such as Moerdiono would survive until then. Similarly, if the president, against the odds, were to announce definitively and unambiguously tomorrow that he would not accept another term but would remain in office until 1993, there is still no reason to suppose that current
configurations of power and eminence would persist until the election. Try Sutrisno, for instance, reaches the official retirement age of 55 at the end of 1990, and will be dependent for an extension on the favour of whoever is president.

There is one further reason for expecting Soeharto to stay on. He has been at the heart of Indonesian politics for almost 25 years. His time in office has seen a far-reaching transformation of Indonesia's political and economic order. Although there has always been much to criticize, both in the specific vision of the New Order and in its day-to-day practice, there is not much doubt that Soeharto looks back on these years with a good deal of satisfaction. He has done, in broad terms, what he set out to do. There is a study in its own right, however, to be made of the minds of long-reigning rulers close to the ends of their careers. Typically, they look both backwards and forwards: backwards to polish up what they see as the correct version of their place in history, forwards to ensure that their work survives them. Soeharto has clearly been concerned for some time for his place in history. His family mausoleum near Solo, apparent ambivalence towards direct criticism of Indonesia's only other president, Sukarno, and more recently his memoirs and his cooperation in the hagiographical biography by Donald Wilson, are all the actions of a man with an eye to history. Departing leaders also commonly attempt to carry out one or two acts of politically difficult or potentially unpopular statesmanship as a kind of political gift to their successors. The normalization of relations with China, completed recently, may fall into this category; another may be the celebrated Tapos initiative on 4 March 1990, in which the president assembled the owners of thirty-one major business conglomerates at his cattle station outside Bogor and announced that he expected them to hand over 25 per cent of their businesses to the 'people' by devolving shares to cooperatives.

This eye to history, however, can also work in peculiar ways. Louis XIV was not the last monarch to murmur 'Apres moi la deluge'—after me the flood. Will history be kinder to Soeharto if he is succeeded by politically milder presidents and a less authoritarian order, thereby highlighting Soeharto's own shortcomings, or if the New Order dissolves into chaos and uncertainty, thereby showing for once and for all that it was Soeharto who held the show together? It would be wildly unrealistic to suggest that Soeharto wants to see the destruction of all he has worked for, but as we watch him over the next few years, we should bear in mind the peculiar recklessness that often afflicts leaders in his position. And we have to remember how little we know of Soeharto as an individual. His memoirs, the occasional public outburst, snippets of televised speeches, and stories remembered by people who knew him long ago—this is not the material for an analysis of the deepest thoughts of the man.

Even more intriguing than the question of succession is the question of what form the New Order will take after Soeharto's departure. One of the paradoxes of Indonesian politics is that after twenty-three years of political stability unparalleled since the colonial era, there is still a high degree of doubt about the extent to which the New Order's political structures have been institutionalized. In particular, there is deep uncertainty about the inherent power of the presidency in relation to other institutions and forces in the Indonesian power elite. Although the 1945 Constitution gives the president a pivotal role in national government, this has been insufficient to prevent the shunting aside of an incumbent president on two occasions, in 1945 and 1965-67. Because the relationship between the army and the presidency has not been seriously tested since 1967, we do not have more than speculation to tell us who will call the shots when and if a conflict comes to a head. This can be illustrated best, perhaps, by asking what would happen if Soeharto were to die suddenly before the end of his current term, certainly not an impossibility for a man in his late 60s. As pointed out earlier, the constitution provides that the vice-president should take over and serve out the remainder of Soeharto's term. Vice-President Sudharmono, however, seems to be deeply unpopular in military circles, and open opposition to him was expressed by officers at the time of his appointment. This opposition has continued with the circulation of pamphlets calling attention to Sudharmono's alleged links during the revolution with the Socialist Youth, Pemuda, and accusations that he is a crypto-Communist; obviously a strong attack on the character of a New Order politician. There are widely expressed doubts about whether the army would tolerate Sudharmono even as acting president, and it has been reported that Defence Minister Benny Mursi, Internal Affairs Minister Rudini and Foreign Minister Ali Alatas have formed an informal crisis committee to manage the
affairs of state if the president is incapacitated. Sudharmono, pointedly, is apparently not a member of this committee.

More generally, the actual practice of presidential power in the New Order has depended not just on the president's formal constitutional position but on the consummate management of subordinates. New words like mendropkan and mengorbitkan have entered the Indonesian language to describe the process by which the president ensures that key positions are in the hands of loyalists, but Soeharto's repertoire of techniques is broader than this and includes the deft use of promotions to honourable but weak posts such as the vice-presidency, the chair of the MPR and various ambassadorships, the careful playing off of subordinates against each other and a careful strategy which permits potential troublemakers to rise within the state and political hierarchy to a point where they are implicated in the system without being able to transform it. It is of course possible that Soeharto's successor will be able to do all these things as well as the incumbent, but this is far from guaranteed.

The New Order's best chance for institutionalization has always been that Golkar might develop from being merely a government electoral vehicle to something approaching a real political party. Golkar members in the earlier to mid 1980s spoke of modelling Golkar on the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party, by which they meant establishing a system of civilian one-party dominance and close business government ties. However, although Golkar has made dramatic progress as an institution in many respects over the past decade, especially with the introduction of individual membership and the adoption of prominent and capable leaders such as Sudharmono, Wahono and Sarwono Kusumaatmadja, it still looks structurally more like a Burma Socialist Programme Party or Marcos' KBL than an LDP. There was a good deal of excitement in April 1989 when Golkar members actually protested against a government decision to raise electricity charges by 25 per cent, but on the whole Golkar seems to have lost the momentum it had suddenly picked up in the mid 1980s, and has been disrupted recently by accusations of Communist infiltration and by delays in the appointment of a new board after the national congress in October 1988.

A second reason for suspecting that the form of the New Order may change significantly after Soeharto's departure is that its distinctive and imaginative political construction seems to have reached its limits without achieving its goals. The New Order was constructed as a reaction to the extreme responsiveness of the political order under Parliamentary and Guided Democracy to the demands of social and political groups. The basic structural components of the New Order—the political mobilization of the people, a separation of formal politics from the decision-making process but with the military deeply involved in both, heavy emphasis on economic development, including foreign investment, and a willingness on the part of the state to resort to violence against its opponents but a preference for more subtle means of control—were all apparent soon after Soeharto's accession to power. For all the political stability and economic development which this system delivered, it failed to satisfy the thirst in various parts of society for real political participation, and at various times during the history of the New Order, those around Soeharto attempted to counter accusations that the government is impervious to public opinion by opening dialogue with what might very broadly be called dissident groups. The most spectacular example of this was in 1974, when Generals Ali Murtopo and Sumitro began talking to students, but we see it in a more modest form today in Emil Salim's dialogue with environmentalist NGOs and several of Rudini's initiatives such as his call in early 1989 for a special tax on the very rich or his suggestion that elections based on a district system might lead to better communication between parliamentarians and the public.  

In the past, Soeharto has been able to end this kind of dialogue partly by force majeure, but partly because he could hold out the prospect of an alternative system—the Golkar-Pancasila system—which promised to do away with the basis for dissidence. The Golkar-Pancasila format has been a ingenious formula which insulates the task of ruling from mass political pressure while attempting to preserve a sense of popular participation in national affairs. Indonesia's present system attributes wisdom to the state apparatus and largely denies Indonesian citizens any legitimate channel to challenge that wisdom. Golkar, the floating mass concept, the inter-relationship between president, MPR, elections and GBHN, together with awujudgi and the law on Mass Organizations all work to ensure that public opinion does not place any significant pressure on the process of policy making. At the same time it is an elaborate attempt, not necessarily insincere, to
ensure that the Indonesian public will feel that the government belongs to them while never having the power to force a decision on it. This promise of an alternative system was always the most distinctive feature of the New Order and its most imaginative contribution to Indonesian politics.

The New Order’s program of imaginative political construction, however, seems now to have reached its limits. In this respect, Indonesian economics and politics present strikingly different pictures. Post-Soeharto Indonesia has a clear economic vision, a glistening path to wealth and modernity along the trail blazed by South Korea and Taiwan. A coherent political vision for the future is absent; the political order is on hold. In fact, perhaps the most striking feature of Indonesian politics over the last year has been the relative absence of structural political initiative on the part of the Indonesian government. The determined social and political engineering of the early and mid 1980s, which saw such major innovations as the Law on Social Organizations and a major restructuring of the Armed Forces (ABRI), has had no recent parallel. This absence of initiative, I suspect, has more to do with a shortage of ideas than with any conviction in government ranks that all is rosy. Most of the imaginative old fixers of the early New Order are gone, and the elaborate apparatus of New Order power has left little room for bold innovation.

Under these circumstances, I think, any successor to Soeharto is likely to be tempted to open and broaden the kind of dialogue which Soeharto closed off. We saw in 1989 the blossoming of the idea of keterbukaan, or openness, pointedly a close translation of glasnost, and the enthusiasm with which at least Jakarta opinion leaders greeted the idea that Indonesia might become a less restricted society. In 1990, we have seen keterbukaan rather fade from the scene and the old New Order reluctance to share its counsel with anyone has been reasserted. Any new president, however, will be aware of three things: first, that the Golkar-Pancasila formula leaves little room for innovation or development; second, that the option of repression is always close at hand; and third, that dialogue with society could bring short-term, and possibly long-term, political advantages, particularly if the president needs allies outside the military establishment. In early 1990, we have seen a new Indonesian Front for the Defence of Human Rights (Inlight), incorporating various activist groups, prepare a platform for opposition to the present order. I don’t believe that they represent a significant challenge to the New Order, but they do represent a standing challenge to the government to begin dialogue. A new president, struggling to assert authority within the state bureaucracy and looking for allies where he, or she, can find them, may find the temptation irresistible to reach out to the masses in some form of populist dialogue. If this were to happen, we would face a political situation perhaps reminiscent of the early New Order but fundamentally different from it in that the Golkar-Pancasila option would have been exhausted. Since the system can no longer be fine-tuned, the temptation will be to bypass the system, probably with the kind of populist communication Generals Sumitro and Ali Murtopo used during the Malari affair of 1974.

To make this point clearer, it is worth considering a few recent issues where a populist strategy would be immediately appealing. In 1985, the World Bank approved a major loan to the Indonesian government for construction of an irrigation and hydroelectric project at Kodung Ombo on the Serang river in Central Java. Thirty-seven villages were to be inundated and 5390 families displaced, of whom about 65 per cent were landowners and therefore entitled to compensation. Compensation offered, however, was far below the market value of the land and when the peasants protested they were labelled as Communist sympathizers by government officials. When the dam began to fill in January 1989, 1500 families still refused to leave the area and a student activist group called Kelompok Solidaritas Korban Pembangunan Kodung Ombo, or Solidarity Group for the Victims of Development at Kodung Ombo, began campaigning on their behalf. The matter was taken up by Indonesian and Western NGOs at the April 1989 meeting of INGI in Brussels, and the Indonesian NGOs in turn were severely rebuked by the Internal Affairs minister Rudini in August for allegedly blackening Indonesia’s name abroad. Finally, in late 1989, many of the farmers who had refused to move were allocated new land in forest reserves in the vicinity of the dam.10

Another case: in 1987, a company called Bandung Asri Mulia (BAM) offered to take over the lease of an area in the village of Cinacan, near the Cibodas Botanical Gardens, for construction of a golf course. The land had been leased and cultivated since 1943 by about 300 farmers who had tried on various occasions, but without success, to convert their leasehold to freehold. In 1988, the governor of West Java allocated the land to the golf course on the grounds

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that it was not being cultivated, and offered the farmers Rp 30 per square metre in compensation. When they objected the farmers were intimidated and harassed; their crops were destroyed, they were threatened with dismissal from other jobs, and some were sued by the company for illegal occupation of land. In July 1989, Rudini, as minister for Internal Affairs, stepped in—apparently another populist foray—and ordered that construction of the golf course cease. Fairly quickly, however, he was apparently persuaded by the local authorities that the lease to BAM was entirely legal and that almost all the farmers had accepted the new, higher level of compensation. In both these cases, the dispute was not conducted as an issue of legal principle but of fairness, and it is here that I see considerable temptation for any successor to set his mark on the government by populist intervention. In justices of this kind, common though they are, offend the officially paternalistic ethos of the New Order government, making them a logical point for a new broom to begin sweeping. Whereas Soeharto could put the genie of popular dialogue back in the bottle while he worked on an alternative, his successor will not have that option.

In various other respects, too, we see the New Order relying not on its elaborate political apparatus, but on much cruder techniques. The arrest and trial of three students in Yogyakarta who had helped distribute banned publications by Pramoedya Ananta Toer is only the latest episode in a long tradition of persecution of dissent. It is both distressing and depressing to report that the prosecution of these students has been accompanied by torture and a disregard for due legal process. Such lack of political or social imagination does not mean structural weakness on the part of the New Order, but it does suggest three things. First, that power holders at a wide range of levels within the New Order see it as fragile—otherwise why bother with petty brutality over minor issues; second, that the existing legal structure is incapable of dealing with this kind of challenge, so that the government feels forced to resort to crude repressive institutions to deal with them; and third, that the careful construction of Golkar, plus years of inculcating Pancasila into the nation’s youth, have failed to create

11 Injustice, persecution, eviction, pp. 68-71; Indonesia Reports Log 25, 29 July 1989 (October 1989); Inside Indonesia 21 (December 1989), pp.6-8.
12 Injustice, persecution, eviction, pp. 68-71; Indonesia Reports Log 25, 29 July 1989 (October 1989); Inside Indonesia 21 (December 1989), pp. 6-8.

the kind of society in which this sort of political challenge is seen as unnecessary.

Perhaps the strongest sign that ideas are in short supply in the current regime is the government’s revival of an alleged Communist threat. In itself, perhaps, this is hardly new. Throughout the 1980s, government figures repeatedly warned against the ‘latent danger’ of the PKI and launched actions to remind the public of the dangers of Communism, ranging from the dismissal of allegedly left-wing oil industry workers and the commissioning of the film Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI to the execution of PKI members detained since the late 1960s. Early in 1990, the terror tactics continued with the execution of four former members of the Presidential Guard under Sukarno who had been implicated in the coup. The form taken by the campaign in 1990, however, has been somewhat more comprehensive. In July 1990 the government introduced a major reformulation of its criteria for suspecting communist sympathies. It was once necessary for Indonesian citizens working in sensitive areas or undertaking various actions to account for their activities on the evening of 30th September 1965 and to obtain a certificate confirming that they were not ‘involved’ (terlibat) in the GESTAPU coup. In 1988, this term terlibat was displaced by the term bersih lingkungan and bersih diri (roughly ‘environmentally clean’ and ‘personally clean’), the former particularly implying that holders of government posts should not only be free of personal involvement in the PKI but should come from a family environment totally free of PKI influence. This was a sweeping requirement, implicating many millions of Indonesians who had previously been considered politically safe and ignoring circumstances such as political divisions within families. Earlier this year, on 17 April, a new presidential decision (Kepres) seemed to resolve this anomaly by establishing a formal screening process for all government employees to establish that they were not involved in the PKI or in any banned organization. The July measure is formally known as a juklak, or petunjuk pelaksanaan of BAKORSTANAS, defining the implementation of the earlier
presidential decision. It modifies, however, the earlier decision by introducing a new term, keterpengaruh, or 'state of being influenced'. Try Sutrisno has defined keterpengaruh as 'acting, speaking, writing or showing an attitude in a way which resembles or assists PKI strategy'; in other words the narrow direct nexus between the events of 1965 and political crime has been formally broken.

It is tempting to see this new arrangement as simply a rather unsubtle tool for enforcing discipline in the public sector; the vagueness of the term keterpengaruh gives the upper levels of the bureaucracy and government a Sword of Damocles to suspend over the heads of their subordinates, while the screening process is an administrative procedure not subject to the rules of legal process, where accusations of communist affiliation can turn out to be risky for the accuser. (There have been two cases in recent years of courts imposing severe penalties on individuals who incorrectly accused others of PKI connections.) Given the existing executive authority of the government, however, this is an unnecessarily heavy tool for administrative discipline. Much more plausible is to see it as a reaffirmation of the significance of the Communist threat, despite the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. This is an old formula: from very early on, the New Order has presented itself as a moderate, restraining force between left and right, between Communism and radical Islam. But it is a formula that looks increasingly unrealistic in 1990, both because time has dimmed the sharpness of memories of the Old Order and its violent demise, and because the proposition that the only alternatives to the New Order are Islam and Communism is hardly as plausible as it once seemed.

It is hard, however, not to concede that organized Islam does present a challenge, if not an immediate threat, to the New Order's authority. The targeting of Communism, I suspect, has more to do with the strength of Islam than with Communism's own prospects. Since about 1976, the Indonesian government has reported a series of incidents in which radical Islamic groups have launched violent action against the state. Some of these, such as the bombing of Borobudur in January 1985, have seemed so provocative that some people at least have speculated on the possibility of their having been carried out by pro-government agents provocateur; in other cases, the government appears to have been rather quick to brand simple economic discontent, for instance over land, as fundamentalist Islam. There is, however, no doubt that radical Islam is a significant element in opposition to the New Order. Most recently, in particular, there have been incidents involving alleged Islamic radicals both in Lampung and in Aceh. The Lampung affair is similar in its outlines to the Tanjung Priok riots of September 1984. A local Muslim teacher, Anwar alias Warsidi, was said to have begun preaching a radical Islamic message, including accusations that the national government was kafir or infidel, and calling for the abolition of Pancasila. Rumours of plots began to circulate and the local military commander arrested a group of young Muslims as a part of his investigation of alleged plotting. The following day, he was attacked and killed by angry villagers. One or two other soldiers were also killed, before the army counter-attacked, killing reportedly 27 people, including Warsidi himself.

Just what led to the incident, however, and what its broader political significance may have been is rather more obscure. Initial reports identified the so-called extremists as the Komando Mujaheddin Fisabilillah, or Warriors of Allah, making the affair appear to be one of a long series of Muslim uprisings against supposedly irreligious rulers. State authorities, however, quickly attempted to discount this possibility and implied that land disputes between older and newer settlers in Lampung were the cause; other observers pointed out that the sharpest land issues in the province are between established transmigrant settlers and government departments and private businesses who claim land occupied by the settlers. The Forestry Department has been attempting to move settlers from upland areas where forest clearing is said to be causing erosion and disrupting rainfall patterns, while various private Jakarta interests are said to be muscling in on the local coffee industry. Try Sutrisno expanded on this theme during the week after the incident by suggesting that those involved had been 'from left-wing or right-wing extremists or a combination of both'; two weeks later, he was describing the movement as an effort by Communists to use Islam as a cover to make a comeback, while official accounts of the incident dropped all reference to those words 'Mujaheddin Fisabilillah', using instead the term 'Movement to Subvert Order'. More recently, however, the trials of alleged surviving participants in the uprising have indicated that there was indeed a strong Islamic element in the affair, and that

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16 Tempo 28 July 1990, p.22.
17 Tempo 24 March 1990, pp.33-34.
Warsidi preached not only against Pancasila, but also against family planning and taxation. This confusion of evidence makes it difficult to say just how the different elements of the Lampung affair relate to each other, but one thing is certainly clear, and that is that the government is uncertain about how to handle this kind of challenge. It is aware that simple repression is probably not enough, but it is uncertain about what path to take.

Something similar seems to apply in Aceh. In particular, Aceh has once again become a centre of major regional unrest. The province appeared to be a problem solved during the last elections, when Golkar for the first time pulled ahead of the PPP in the provincial vote, but the government's election victory is now clearly pyrrhic. After February, 1990 there was a series of armed clashes in the province, including ambushes, raids and counter-raids. At least five civilians were killed more or less by accident at military checkpoints and the rebels are said to have captured significant quantities of arms from the army. Just what is happening, let alone why, is uncertain. The rebels did not clearly identify themselves or issue demands. Here too, conflicting hints have dropped from official circles. On the one hand there have been reports of 150 Indonesians trained in Libya who have allegedly re-entered the country and in preparation for an Islamic revolution. On the other hand the unrest is claimed to have started because of a crackdown on powerful local marijuana (ganja) lords.19

In central politics, the New Order has achieved something of a remarkable coup in prising the Nahdatul Ulama away from the PPP and giving it a respectable place in political councils, even to the extent of appointing Slamet Effendi Yusuf, the head of Ansor, NU's youth wing, as head of Golkar's own youth wing.20 Away from elite politics, however, the government's hand with Islam is much less sure. The government vacillates uneasily between appeasement, attack and disregard. The government's dithering over the football pools (formally porks) has hardly been edifying, while last year an incident in which bags of poison were accidentally used in place of baking powder by biscuit factories, leading to the death of dozens of people, especially children, led to a rumour campaign that women dressed in Muslim head shawls were going about the country poisoning supplies.