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INDONESIA PROGRAMME
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» The “Indonesia Election Watch 2009” is a weekly analysis of the key issues surrounding Indonesia’s 2009 Elections, from the parliamentary to the presidential elections.

» The analysis is produced by the Indonesia Programme of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

» The analysis would benefit leaders in the business, policy-making, media, and research community in Singapore and beyond.

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Indonesia Election Watch 2009

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Dealing or Governing?

Sketching the Next Administration

With Indonesia’s presidential election around the corner, instead of solid policy-based campaigns, the focal point now seems to have shifted to the identities of individuals who are expected to be part of the cabinet in the next administration. Pundits and party officials are debating whether announcing the candidates’ cabinet line-up before the election is a good thing for democracy, or just hubris. The debates notwithstanding, they allow us to discern, sketch and form a rough impression of the incoming administration.

The Mega-Pro cabinet: much ado about nothing?

The Megawati-Prabowo pair—dubbed ‘Mega-Pro’—said that they would announce their cabinet line-up and appear to be looking for some “vote-getters” as part of the team. In other words, they might be gunning for popular names to boost their candidacy.

A source close to Megawati’s party, PDI-P, claims that Rustriningsih, the former mayor of Kebumen and the highly popular deputy governor of Central Java, is one such candidate. Not only is she credited with securing the victory of PDI-P in the Central Java gubernatorial election last year, she is also well-known as a highly-capable female politician—not to mention the possibility of using her to make in-roads into Yudhoyono’s traditional voter base of women voters.

Another popular candidate is Barnabas Suebu, who not only “represents Eastern Indonesia” as Papua’s governor, but is also considered the darling of the environmentalists. *Time* magazine in 2007 named him as one of the ‘Heroes of the Environment.’

Aside from these “popular” figures, rumours are circulating that Mega-Pro intend to nominate both the “old guard” and the “young turks” affiliated to their respective parties, including Purnomo Yusgiantoro, Pramono Anung, Thahjo Kumolo, Fadli Zon, Gayus Lumbuun, Trimedy Panjaitan, Sonny Keraf, and Maruar Sirait. Retired military and police officers are also on the list, including Sutiyoso, Theo Syafei, Kivlan Zen, and Da’i Bachtiar.

One crucial variable here is Prabowo’s role. As part of the nomination deal with Megawati, press reports claim that Prabowo will not only have a huge role in the administration, but his party will be given key ministerial posts, including the ministries of defence, maritime affairs, finance, forestry, agriculture, state enterprises, and trade and industry—portfolios known as potential “fundraisers”.

The sketch seems to suggest that given both parties’ “marriage of convenience”, one could sense the absence of professional technocrats, except for several old hands, while the key ministerial positions crucial for governing are seceded to Prabowo—whose campaign rhetoric is strongly influenced by economic nationalism.

The JK-Win cabinet: the business team?

The Jusuf Kalla-Wiranto—dubbed JK-Win—pair meanwhile seem to focus more on building up their political support base and have been travelling the country more, as part of their “political safari” strategy, rather than thinking about the individuals who should constitute their cabinet. Recent acute factional rivalry within Golkar remains a strong disincentive for JK-Win requiring them to steer clear from a contentious issue like the subject of ministerial positions.

This does not mean, however, that Kalla is devoid of vision. Happy Bone Zulkarnaen, a member of JK-Win’s campaign team, recently stated that they are proposing new deputy posts for the ministers of finance, foreign affairs, defence, and home affairs. He claims that the proposal would lighten the load for these ministers enabling them to focus on the big issues. They also proposed to integrate and create several new ministries.

A source told the *Indonesia Programme* that several Golkar cadres could also be nominated to the cabinet, including Fahmi Idris, Syamsul Muarif, Andi Matallatta, Theo Sambuaga, Siswono Yudohusodo, and Sumarsono—although given Golkar’s fluid internal dynamics, these names could change in a heartbeat.

Meanwhile, the JK-Win political tours have led to some not insignificant endorsements from the Chinese community, the *kyais* of Nadhatul Ulama, retired officers, as well as the business community. In fact, some have speculated that prominent economists and businessmen might be part of the JK-Win cabinet, including Rachmat Gobel, Fuad Bawazier, Kwik Kian Gie, Sofjan Wanandi, and Aksa Mahmud.

The sketch seems to suggest a mixed picture. On the one hand, Golkar’s still-fluid internal dynamics might hinder the party’s performance in support of JK-Win, but their political endorsements—and perhaps financial backing—could be a deciding factor in the up-coming race, especially if they could continually present and reinforce an image of a “fast working team” that seizes initiatives better.

The SBY-Boediono cabinet: governing or legacy-shopping?

Given Yudhoyono’s coalition size—the biggest party in parliament supported by 4 middle-ranking parties and over a dozen small ones—the campaign team has relatively less leeway to set up Yudhoyono’s cabinet short-list. That said, Yudhoyono seems to be confident enough in his political decisions thus far, including his call to nominate Boediono, a non-party technocrat, as his running mate.

This suggests that he might be able to finally form a strong cabinet without giving too many concessions to political parties—possibly suggesting that the current cabinet might remain largely intact. Hayono Isman, a member of Yudhoyono’s campaign team, said in *detik.com* that Yudhoyono might allocate 17 ministerial posts for the political parties, while the rest will be allocated to “professionals”—meaning non party member—candidates.

In the former category, several parties have submitted their nominees, including from the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), such as Tifatul Sembiring, Irwan Prayitno, and Salim Al Djufiri, while the United Development Party (PPP) preferred Bachtiar Chamsyah and Lukman Hakim Saifudin, and United Awakening Party (PKB) put forward Muhaimin Iskandar and Lukman Edi. Hatta Radjasa, Yudhoyono’s current confidante from the National Mandate Party (PAN) is also on the short list. Several of the “professional” candidates include Chaerul Tandjung, Juhur Hidayat, and Sri Mulyani.

Another interesting factor is Yudhoyono’s preference for Ph.D. holders, as one source told the *Indonesia Programme* recently. A candidate with such qualifications might have extra brownie points. This list however, as always, remains under review by Yudhoyono himself.

Sources claim that aside from their capabilities, Yudhoyono also needs to consider his potential successor and the fate of his party after his departure in 2014.

For this, he needs a politically loyal leader, either from within or outside the party. Pundits speculate that Hatta Radjasa is that person. The role he played as Yudhoyono's *de facto* emissary and gate keeper of the administration in his role as State Secretary highlights the trust he has gained from the president.

Another name being touted is Sri Mulyani, who has not only proven her capability in circumnavigating Indonesia's economy, but she also has a good working chemistry with the president and with Boediono. A source told the *Indonesia Programme* that it is only a matter of time before she becomes a member of the Democrat party.

The sketch suggests that as opposed to 2004, Yudhoyono will now feel more confident in naming his ideal cabinet, although he is likely to deliberate and delay making his final decision until the very last minute. Moreover, considering his preference for "chemistry" and "stability", he might leave several individuals in their current position. Finally, the need to create landmark achievements in Yudhoyono's last term is crucial if the Democrats want to survive the 2014 general elections and find the heir to his throne. Whether all this leads to a better working cabinet remains to be seen.

A Foregone Conclusion?

The debates underline one crucial point: no presidential candidate could guarantee a fixed cabinet line-up amidst the fluid wheeling and dealing among the political actors. Two variables could further change the calculus: degree of unity within the party and among the coalition members, and whether there is a second round election.

The management of such a large coalition will prove to be a challenge for Yudhoyono, especially when several key parties remain internally divided—as most obviously seen in the case of PAN. Hence, the degree of unity within the various coalition groupings remains in flux, thereby resulting in continuously fluid cabinet lists.

Meanwhile, if the election continues to the second round within the context of a two-way race, the coalition map could change drastically. Either the losing pair in the first round will devote all their resources to defeating a particular pair—JK-Win is said to be willing to support Mega-Pro if they lost, and vice versa—or several parties could jump ship.

In the end, the political deals made between various political actors before and after the election will determine the coalition's strength and the make-up of their future cabinet. It would be useful to remember that forming a cabinet in an odd-mix of a presidential and multi-party system is never a "one round" affair.

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