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## THE INDONESIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: How the five candidates measure up

Irman G. Lanti\*

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### Introduction

The first ever direct presidential election in Indonesia slated for 5 July will be interesting, not only because it will decide who will be the chief executive of Southeast Asia's largest and world's largest Muslim nation, but also because the outcome cannot be easily predicted at this point. This also means that Indonesia's orientation for the next five years is still unclear.

The General Elections Commission (KPU) has approved five presidential – vice presidential candidate pairs. They are (according to the sequence number drawn by the KPU) Wiranto – Salahuddin Wahid nominated by Golkar and the traditionalist Muslim party of *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* (PKB - National Awakening Party); Megawati Soekarnoputri – Hasyim Muzadi nominated by the nationalist *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia - Perjuangan* (PDI-P - Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle); Amien Rais – Siswono Yudo Husodo nominated by the modernist Muslim *Partai Amanat Nasional* (PAN – National Mandate Party) and supported by a number of small nationalist and Islamic parties; Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono – Jusuf Kalla nominated by the nationalist *Partai Demokrat* (PD - Democratic Party) and supported by the smaller nationalist *Partai Kesatuan dan Persatuan Indonesia* (PKPI – Indonesian Integration and Unity Party) and the Islamist *Partai Bulan Bintang* (PBB – Crescent Star Party); and Hamzah Haz – Agum Gumelar nominated by the Islamist *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (PPP – United Development Party).

The election will probably be carried out in two rounds. According to the election law, if the result of the first round on 5 July shows that no candidate acquires more than half of the votes distributed in at least one fifth of Indonesia's 32 provinces, then a second round of election has to be held (scheduled for 5 September on this year's election). The two candidate pairs that receive the highest votes will compete in the second round. Many analysts have commented that a second round voting is very likely given the result of the 5 April parliamentary election, in which no parties have gained more than 25 percent of the votes and the result of some opinion polls.

This analysis will highlight the strength and weaknesses of the candidates, as well as attempt to measure their level of electability. It will then project the possible outcome of the first round of the presidential election, albeit in a very preliminary form.

### Wiranto – Salahuddin Wahid

General Wiranto was a former chief commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI, now called the TNI). He was also former Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security during the Habibie and early Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) presidencies. Wiranto was the chief architect of early reform of the military. Under his tutelage, ABRI/TNI abandoned the doctrine of *Dwifungsi* (dual function), which had served as the basis of the military's involvement in the nation's socio-political and economic spheres. But during his years in office, Wiranto was plagued by various accusations of human rights violations. He was criticized for failure to handle Jakarta's security during the May 1998 riot. General Wiranto was also considered as one of the masterminds behind the

rampage in East Timor after the 1999 referendum, in which the East Timorese voted overwhelmingly for independence.

Wiranto's running mate, Salahuddin Wahid (Gus Dur's younger brother, also known by his nickname Gus Solah) is a professional and businessman with traditionalist Muslim background. He was one of the deputy chairmen of the Nahdatul Ulama (NU), the largest Muslim organization in the country. Gus Solah has been known as a human rights advocate. He was a deputy chairman of the National Commission of Human Rights (Komnas HAM). The strength of Gus Solah's human rights track record will hopefully compensate for Wiranto's lack of credibility in this area. But he does not actually command a large number of followers in NU. His involvement in NU's organization is quite recent. He only seems to rely on his "blue blood" as Gus Dur's younger brother and the grandson of NU's founding father.

The strength of this candidate pairing lies in the political machinery of the two supporting parties, Golkar and the PKB. Based on the result of the last election, in which Golkar came out as the largest party with 21.58 percent of votes and the PKB with 10.57 percent, this pair should possess potent political machinery. Wiranto is also a figure most closely associated with the New Order from among the candidates. Like Golkar during the parliamentary election campaigning, he runs on a stability-based platform. For some of the public who have grown tired of the uncertainty of *Reformasi*, Wiranto offers an enticing option. Endorsed by the PKB, this pair also hopes to attract the votes from a large voting bloc of traditionalist Muslims in Central and East Java.

But some analysts argue that credible political machinery does not automatically translate into large support for Wiranto – Gus Solah. The problem is that the political endorsement may have been made only by the parties' elite, and a divided one for that matter. Akbar Tanjung's supporters in Golkar may not like to vote for Wiranto, even though their patron has supported Wiranto's candidacy. Many of Golkar's voters will probably vote for Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) – Jusuf Kalla, who is running on a similar platform. The call by the PKB's elite to vote for the Wiranto-Gus Solah ticket may not be heeded by many of the party's supporters, especially because they see their primary patron Gus Dur as being ambivalent. This pair's appeal to the modernist and Islamist community is also limited, because his image as an Islamic leader cannot compete with that of Amien Rais or even Hamzah Haz.

### **Megawati Soekarnoputri – Hasyim Muzadi**

Megawati is the current president of Indonesia. She is also the chairwoman of the PDI-P, the largest party after the 1999 election and the second largest party after the last parliamentary election. She became president in August 2001 after President Abdurrahman Wahid was impeached by the parliament.

Among the most important sources of Megawati's strength is the legacy of her father, Indonesia's first president Sukarno. Until now, Sukarno's name is always associated with Indonesia's nationalism and the sometime utopian vision of Indonesia's greatness. The core of Indonesian nationalist voters lies in the densely populated East and Central Java. Running a campaign on Sukarno's legacy is therefore particularly beneficial for Megawati given that 70 percent of the voters reside in Java, and more than 40 percent in the heartland of Java. Megawati also used the image of martyrdom as a political platform. In 1996, she was ousted as the chairwoman of the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (PDI - Indonesian Democratic Party), which has created an image as the champion of democracy in the face of Suharto's authoritarianism.

But many view her presidency as a failed one. Many view Megawati as slow, incompetent, uncaring and even a bit autocratic. Foremost of her problematic policies was the lifting of subsidies that created a dramatic increase in living cost. Her administration is also seen as unable to fight corruption. Corrupt practices are even considered more widespread than during the New Order. As a result, Megawati has suffered from "incumbent disadvantage".

Her running mate Hasyim Muzadi is a traditionalist Muslim cleric, chairman of NU. His

track record is quite unknown, except for the occasional views on Islam as an inclusive, moderate and progressive religion that he espouses. On a number of occasions on the campaign trail, Hasyim reiterated this position, which makes religious harmony and national unity the theme of his campaign. But Hasyim's position in the traditionalist Muslim community is not as widely accepted as that of Gus Dur's. Although Hasyim is a respected *kyai* (Islamic teacher) and considered quite successful in managing NU, he does not have "blue blood," which is important for the traditionalist constituent.

The strength of this candidate pairing lies in their financial resources. Many analysts perceive that after three and a half years in the executive branch, Megawati and the PDI-P has been able to muster sufficient financial resources to support an effective campaign.

Having said that, it is quite difficult to gauge the actual political machinery that supports this pair of candidate, but certainly it has the full support of the PDI-P. The result of the parliamentary election, which showed a dramatic decline of PDI-P's votes from 33.74 percent in 1999 to 18.53 percent in 2004, certainly will hurt the chance of Megawati. And whether or not NU's organization has campaigned effectively for this pair is unclear.

### **Amien Rais – Siswono Yudo Husodo**

Professor Amien Rais is the current chairman of the *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* (MPR – People's Consultative Assembly, Indonesia's highest state body). He is also the chairman of PAN. His background is academic, hailing from the University of Gajah Mada in Yogyakarta. Prior to entering politics, Amien was the chief of Muhammadiyah, a modernist Muslim organization and the second largest Islamic organization after NU.

In mid-1990s, Amien became known as the most prominent figure openly calling for succession of Suharto. In 1998, he became known as the "locomotive of *Reformasi*." His star was dimmed a bit when his party, PAN did not perform well in the 1999 election, getting only of 7.12 percent the votes. Consequently, he dropped his bid for presidency in 1999.

PAN did not perform well again in the last parliamentary election. Its share of votes dropped to 6.44 percent (even though its seats in the parliament actually increased from 34 to 53, due to changes in the election law). But Amien did get a full endorsement from Muhammadiyah and other Islamic organizations (mostly with modernist background), which means that the support base from the largest modernist organization has been secured, which is viewed as larger than the support level shown for his party.

Amien's running mate, Siswono Yudo Husodo is a successful businessman, and former minister in housing and transmigration portfolios during the Suharto era. Siswono has a nationalist background. During his student years in the 1960s in Bandung, he was one of the leaders of the nationalist student movement. While he was one of the officials during Suharto era Siswono did not have as heavy a New Order image as the former military officers running in this election.

While like the others, this pair also combines Muslim and nationalist figures, Amien and Siswono show a surprisingly similar outlook on issues of governance. They have run the campaign on populist economic platform. Both figures also have a relatively clean track record, and they make fight against corruption as their most potent selling point in this campaign.

The political machinery and financial resources of this pair are the weakest among the other candidates. Even with the help of Muhammadiyah, it still cannot compete with NU or even PDI-P organizations. Both candidates seem to be trying to offset this by appearing in talk shows, televised debates, and other public events, hoping to attract the swaying voters.

On the other hand, this candidate is supported by a number of medium and small Islamic and nationalist parties. The most significant of which are the *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (PKS - Justice Welfare Party) and the *Partai Bintang Reformasi* (PBR – Reform Star Party).

## **Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono – Jusuf Kalla**

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) is one of the three military generals running as candidates in this election. Compared with the others, he is perhaps the one that has the greatest appeal to the electorate. His last post in ABRI was the Chief of Staff for Territorial Affairs. His appeal beyond the military is probably due to his intelligence. SBY graduated from the Military Academy with the highest distinction and has pursued graduate education later in his career.

SBY served as Coordinating Minister for Social, Political, and Security Affairs during the Gus Dur administration, from which he later resigned. Megawati also appointed him in the same position. During his time as minister, he was involved with the effort to solve the conflicts in Ambon and Poso. But his record on this issue has been a mixed one. SBY has been known as hesitant and spending too much time on deliberation. He was also overshadowed in the Ambon and Poso initiative by the Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare, Jusuf Kalla, who had taken a more active and expeditious steps. Ironically Kalla has become his running mate.

Kalla is a successful businessman hailing from South Sulawesi. His business empire covers much of eastern Indonesia. Kalla is a functionary of Golkar, and was a contender in the Golkar convention to elect this party's presidential candidate. Kalla withdrew from the convention a few days before he and SBY announced their candidacy. Kalla is the only candidate that came from eastern Indonesia, but his appeal here is rivaled by Wiranto, who has had a tour of duty in some parts of this region and whose wife is from Gorontalo, in northern Sulawesi.

Many analysts view that the combination of this pair is quite ideal: military-civilian businessman, Javanese-outer islander. Both also have quite extensive experience in the government. But owing to Kalla's involvement in Megawati's government, their critics perceive them as integral parts of the failures of the current administration.

As shown by many surveys the appeal of this pair goes beyond the confine of the party that nominates them. From the last parliamentary election, it was clear that the image of SBY played the most significant role in attracting the support, mainly from the urban areas, for his party, the PD. Various surveys have thus far shown that SBY – Kalla is the most popular candidate by a significant margin.

However, while the PD made an excellent surprise showing - seemingly coming out of nowhere and gaining 57 seats in its first election – it is still a relatively small party with 7.45 percent votes. The other parties that support this candidate, PKPI and PBB are smaller parties that made poorer showing in this election compared to 1999.

## **Hamzah Haz – Agum Gumelar**

Hamzah Haz is the current vice president. He is also the chairman of the Islamic party PPP, a party set up in 1973 by the New Order regime to accommodate the existing Islamic parties at that time. In the recent parliamentary election, it retains its status as the third largest party.

Hamzah had been a long time member of parliament. But Hamzah's credibility has been questioned on many occasions. He had been known to reject women president vehemently during the 1999 presidential bid in the MPR, quoting some religious grounds. But when he was asked to become Megawati's deputy, he agreed enthusiastically. The fact that he has three wives also made him particularly unpopular among women, despite Indonesia being the largest Muslim country.

Hamzah's partner, Agum Gumelar is another former army general. He used to serve as commander of Kopassus (Indonesian army elite force) and governor of Lemhannas (National Defense Institute). In the bureaucracy, he served as minister of transportation under Abdurrahman Wahid, and survived the tumultuous Gus Dur's year. Under Megawati he was appointed to the same post. While he was not known for his reformist credential, he used to stick out his neck to defend Megawati when she was prosecuted by the Suharto regime.

Hamzah – Agum is another Islamic – nationalist combination. But compared with the others, the process of their pairing up and candidacy was the most expeditious. Hamzah was known to have eyed the post of vice-presidency under Megawati. But when it was apparent that the offer from Megawati was not forthcoming, Hamzah began toying with the idea of running for the presidency himself. At that time, Agum was also looking for an opportunity to run. The pairing up was quite instant, and this pair was the last one to register with the KPU, only one day before the deadline.

Different from the other candidates, who use additional political machinery to the nominating parties, Hamzah – Agum seems to rely mainly on the PPP. As a result, its appeal is quite limited to the 9 million PPP voters. And even in this regard, many analysts predict that some of the party's supporters would cross over to Amien Rais or other candidates that has some Islamic credentials. In all of the surveys, this candidate consistently comes last.

## **Result Outlook**

Based on the above analysis, especially the strength and weaknesses of all the candidates and the extent of their appeal, as well as the results of various opinion polls, it is very likely that the presidential election would be held in two rounds. No candidates might be able to pass the 50 percent threshold to secure their bid.

The result would probably show that SBY – Kalla comes first, while Hamzah – Agum last. SBY – Kalla would probably be able to gain around 25 to 35 percent of the votes, while Hamzah – Agum might be able to get only 5 to 10 percent. The second place position, which will qualify the candidates to go to the second round, would probably be tightly contested by the other three candidates: Wiranto – Wahid, Megawati – Hasyim, and Amien – Siswono. Megawati – Hasyim might have the better chance among the three, while Amien – Siswono might be the last of the three. But the popularity of Amien – Siswono has been on the rise lately, and might be able to stage an upset. The chance for Wiranto – Wahid is also still quite open. If they are able to handle the issue of human rights violation effectively, then they could be the ones who go to the second round.

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\* (Irman G Lanti is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies)