

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D)

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ACTION EAP-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	AID-00	ACQ-01	CIAE-00	SMEC-00
	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	FBIE-00	H-01
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	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00
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P 131325Z MAY 98
 FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1516
 INFO ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
 AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
 USMISSION GENEVA
 USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI
 AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 JAKARTA 002675

USCINCPAC FOR AMB TEARE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/13/06
 TAGS: PGOV, PINR, ID
 SUBJECT: POLITICAL REFORM - LOTS OF GOVERNMENT TALK, WILL
 THERE BE ACTION?

REF: A) JAKARTA 2632; B) JAKARTA 2564

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY POL COUNSELOR ED MCWILLIAMS; REASON
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: CHARLES E LAHIGUERA
 CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)
 DECLASSIFY AFTER: 12 MAY 2023
 DATE/CASE ID: 19 JUN 2006 200502473

1.5(D)

2. (C) SUMMARY: AS STUDENT PROTESTERS AND OPPOSITION FIGURES BECOME BOLDER AND INCREASINGLY FOCUS ON THE NEED FOR IMMEDIATE TRANSITION, DISCUSSION OF THE MORE LIMITED, YET CRITICAL, AGENDA OF POLITICAL REFORM HAS PERSISTED, EVEN IN GOVERNMENT CIRCLES. IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS, THE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE (DPR) AND THE DEFENSE MINISTER/CINC, HAS EMITTED A STEADY STREAM OF STATEMENTS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF POLITICAL REFORM. ON MAY 12, A PROMINENT GOVERNMENT CRITIC, EMIL SALIM, AND A GROUP OF ACADEMICS ISSUED A PETITION CALLING ON THE PARLIAMENT TO CARRY OUT QUICKLY THE REFORMS IT IS PROMISING. [REDACTED] TOLD THE AMBASSADOR MAY 13, HOWEVER, THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE MAY 12 KILLING OF STUDENT PROTESTERS AT TRISAKTI UNIVERSITY MEANT THAT MODERATE REFORM PROPOSALS WOULD NO LONGER BE FOUND CREDIBLE BY STUDENTS. IN OUR PRIVATE CONTACTS WITH SEVERAL OF THE HANDFUL OF RELATIVELY INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT, WE SENSE A HOPE THAT THE REFORM PROPOSALS ARE GENUINE. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE HEARD THAT WORK ON REFORM IS BEGINNING IN VARIOUS DPR COMMISSIONS OR IN SPECIAL TEAMS, WE HAVE NOT YET DETECTED ANY GREAT SENSE OF URGENCY IN MOVING FORWARD ON FLESHING OUT REFORM PROPOSALS. IN FACT, PUBLIC STATEMENTS FROM GOVERNMENT LEADERS HAVE TENDED TO REFLECT THEIR BELIEF THAT ANY REFORM PERMITTED WILL NOT COME QUICKLY, WHICH WILL NOT SATISFY THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATORS, ESPECIALLY IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TRISAKTI KILLINGS. END SUMMARY

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MIDDLE OF THE ROAD PRESSURE FOR SWIFT REFORM CONTINUES

3. (U) AS STUDENT PROTESTERS AND OPPOSITION FIGURES BECOME BOLDER AND FOCUS MORE ON THE NEED FOR IMMEDIATE TRANSITION, THERE IS STILL DISCUSSION OF THE MORE LIMITED, YET CRITICAL, AGENDA OF POLITICAL REFORM. FOR EXAMPLE, FORMER GOVERNMENT MINISTER AND RECENT VICE PRESIDENTIAL PROTEST CANDIDATE EMIL SALIM ON MAY 12 LED A GROUP OF 50 UNIVERSITY OF INDONESIA PROFESSORS TO THE HOUSE OF

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REPRESENTATIVES (DPR) TO PRESENT A PETITION TO THE ARMED FORCES (ABRI) FACTION. THE PETITION DEMANDED URGENT AND THOROUGH REFORM OF THE ELECTION SYSTEM, AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DPR, POLITICAL PARTIES, AND SUPREME COURT. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, HE SAID THAT "THE HOUSE IS NOW RACING WITH TIME TO DECIDE NECESSARY MEASURES FOR REFORM...THE LONGER THE HOUSE TAKES TO DECIDE, THE WORSE THE ECONOMIC CRISIS WILL BECOME."

4. (C) [REDACTED] TOLD THE AMBASSADOR MAY 13, HOWEVER, THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE MAY 12 KILLING OF STUDENT PROTESTERS AT TRISAKTI UNIVERSITY MEANT THAT MODERATE REFORM PROPOSALS WOULD NO LONGER BE FOUND CREDIBLE BY STUDENTS.

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GOVERNMENT TALK ABOUT POLITICAL REFORM

5. (U) IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS, THE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE (DPR) AND THE DEFENSE MINISTER/CINC, HAS EMITTED A STEADY STREAM OF STATEMENTS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF POLITICAL REFORM. AS HE WAS LEAVING JAKARTA FOR CAIRO ON MAY 9, SOEHARTO AGAIN SIGNALLED THAT HE WAS PREPARED TO CONSIDER SOME KIND OF
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REFORM, SAYING THAT HE ENDORSED THE DPR'S REFORM INITIATIVES. (REFTEL B. SOEHARTO EARLIER HAD SIGNALLED THAT PREPARATION FOR REFORMS, TO BE CARRIED OUT POST 2003, COULD BEGIN NOW. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE (DPR) HARMOKO ANNOUNCED ON MAY 4 THAT THE HOUSE WOULD REVISE OR INITIATE TEN LAWS COVERING POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND LEGAL MATTERS.) DEFENSE MINISTER AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF WIRANTO ON MAY 7 CALLED ON STUDENTS TO STOP THEIR PROTESTS AS THE ARMED FORCES UNDERSTOOD THEIR DEMANDS FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC AND HAD INCORPORATED THEM INTO THE NATIONAL AGENDA. HE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT REFORM WOULD TAKE TIME.

ARMED FORCES FACTION: DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS ON REFORM

6. (U) THE MILITARY'S VICE SPEAKER OF THE DPR, LT. GEN (RET.) SYARWAN HAMID, TOLD A MEETING OF EDITORS ON MAY 8 THAT THE NATION COULD COLLAPSE WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL REFORM. (COMMENT: POLITICAL REFORM IS A NEW

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SUBJECT FOR HAMID. END COMMENT). HE ECHOED WIRANTO'S CALL FOR THE STUDENTS TO STOP THEIR DEMONSTRATIONS BECAUSE THEIR CONCERNS HAD BEEN HEARD. HE ALSO STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT THE DPR COULD NOT BE RUSHED IN CARRYING OUT ITS EFFORTS.

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P 131325Z MAY 98
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1517
INFO ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 JAKARTA 002675

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7. (C) [REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF B1

MAY 6 THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE DPR'S ANNOUNCED REFORM EFFORT WAS SIGNIFICANT. HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO RESPOND TO THE DEMANDS THAT THE PEOPLE, SPECIFICALLY THE STUDENTS, WERE MAKING. HARMOKO'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE DPR WOULD REVIEW OR INITIATE TEN PIECES OF MAJOR LEGISLATION, INCLUDING THE LAWS ON ELECTIONS, POLITICAL PARTIES AND GOLKAR, AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE DPR AND PEOPLE'S CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY (MPR), HAD BEEN AGREED UPON BY ALL FACTIONS IN THE PARLIAMENT (ABRI, GOLKAR, UNITED DEVELOPMENT PARTY, INDONESIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY).

8. (C) DISCUSSION WITH [REDACTED] ABOUT THE DETAILS OF REFORMS UNDER DISCUSSION RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW SIGNIFICANT HE ENVISAGED THE CHANGES WOULD BE. ONE OF THE PROPOSALS HAS BEEN TO ESTABLISH A NEW ELECTORAL SYSTEM THAT WOULD GIVE MORE DIRECT REPRESENTATION IN THE DPR TO EACH AREA OF THE COUNTRY. [REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF THAT THIS MIGHT WORK IN BETTER-EDUCATED JAKARTA, BUT WOULD NOT BE WORKABLE IN OUTLYING AREAS SUCH AS IRIAN JAYA. [REDACTED] WAS UNCERTAIN AS TO WHETHER THE PROPOSAL TO STOP ALLOCATING SEATS IN THE DPR TO THE MILITARY WOULD BE WORKABLE. HE WAS ALSO DOUBTFUL ABOUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PARLIAMENT COULD EXERCISE ITS RIGHT TO INITIATE LEGISLATION IN CARRYING OUT THESE REFORMS. HE SAID THAT B1 B1 B1

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THE HOUSE WAS AT WORK ON AT LEAST TWO BILLS, COVERING
CORRUPTION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION. AS FOR THE OTHER LAWS
THAT HARMOKO ANNOUNCED WOULD BE REVIEWED OR INITIATED, HE
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THOUGHT THAT THE DPR WOULD HAVE TO WORK WITH THE
GOVERNMENT IN DRAFTING THESE AS IT DID NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT
INSTITUTIONAL EXPERTISE TO DO THE WORK ITSELF.

RULING PARTY GOLKAR FACTION: MIXED VIEWS ON SERIOUSNESS OF
REFORM EFFORT

9. (C) [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF ON MAY
7 THAT SOEHARTO WAS NOT SERIOUS ABOUT REFORM AND WAS JUST
ATTEMPTING TO BUY TIME AS HE FACED STUDENT PROTESTS.
MOREOVER, [REDACTED] DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE DPR WOULD BE ABLE
TO CARRY OUT REFORM AS IT WAS "FULL OF SOEHARTO CRONIES."
HE DID OFFER, HOWEVER, THAT IT WAS SIGNIFICANT THAT
SOEHARTO HAD PUT THE ISSUE OF REFORM ON THE TABLE.

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10. (C) [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] POINTED OUT TO POLOFF ON MAY 8 THAT THE
EXISTING POLITICAL SYSTEM "BELONGED TO SOEHARTO." FOR
EXAMPLE, THE GOLKAR DPR FACTION ANSWERED TO THE GOLKAR
CENTRAL BOARD, WHICH IN TURN ANSWERED TO SOEHARTO. IT WAS
THE SAME FOR THE ABRI FACTION, [REDACTED] SAID. [REDACTED] CONTENDED,
HOWEVER, THAT PRESSURE FROM STUDENT PROTESTS AND SOCIETY
HAD FORCED SOEHARTO TO GIVE THE DPR SOME NEW "SPACE" IN
WHICH TO WORK.

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11. (C) [REDACTED] EXPLAINED THAT SPEAKER HARMOKO "WOULD NOT
HAVE DARED" TO ANNOUNCE A REFORM AGENDA WITHOUT A GO AHEAD
FROM SOEHARTO. GOLKAR MEMBERS WOULD NOT EVEN UTTER THE
WORD REFORM ("REFORMASI") UNTIL SOEHARTO SAID IT. WHEN

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THE INITIAL PRESS REPORTS EMERGED ON SOEHARTO'S REFORM POSITION, EMPHASIZING THAT THEY COULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL AFTER 2003, [REDACTED] WAS SO FRUSTRATED THAT [REDACTED] WAS READY TO GO TO THE STREET. HOWEVER, IT HAD THEN BEEN CLARIFIED THAT THE PARLIAMENT COULD PREPARE THESE PROPOSALS NOW, WHICH [REDACTED] INTERPRETED TO MEAN WITHIN THE NEXT ONE OR TWO YEARS.

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[REDACTED]

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13. (C) [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] EMPHASIZED TO POLOFF ON MAY 12 THAT THE STUDENT PROTESTS WERE LEADING TO NEW DISCUSSIONS IN GOVERNMENT CIRCLES ABOUT REFORM. [REDACTED]

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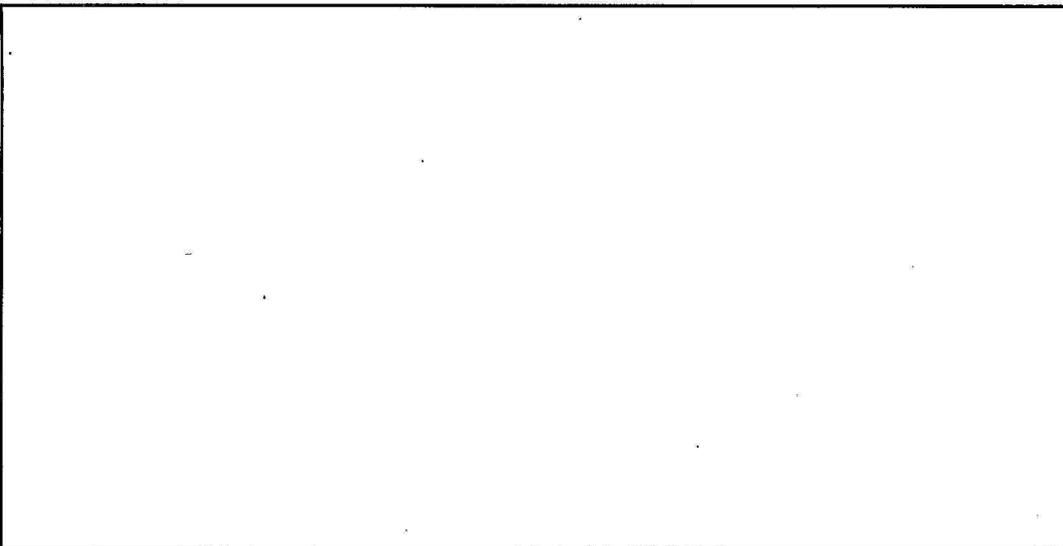
P 131325Z MAY 98
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14. (C)

[REDACTED] EMPHASIZED TO POLOFF ON MAY 7 THAT, GIVEN SOEHARTO'S HISTORIC CONTROL OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, ONLY THE GOVERNMENT COULD DRIVE REFORM, NOT POLITICAL PARTIES SUCH AS PPP. NEVERTHELESS, PPP WAS TAKING THE REFORM EFFORT SERIOUSLY IN PARLIAMENT AND HAD FORMED ITS OWN TEAMS TO WORK ON EACH OF THE TEN IMPORTANT PIECES OF LEGISLATION THAT WOULD BE UNDER REVIEW OR INITIATED.

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15. (C)

[REDACTED] (PROTECT), EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF TO POLOFF ON APRIL 27 THAT THE DPR HAD TO RESPOND TO THE STUDENTS DEMANDS OR ELSE THEY WOULD FIND ANOTHER CHANNEL. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SOME PEOPLE THOUGHT THAT POLITICAL REFORM WAS ONLY POSSIBLE IF SOEHARTO WAS REMOVED, BUT SAID THAT OTHERS BELIEVED THAT HE COULD BEGIN THE PROCESS IF HE SHOWED SUFFICIENT POLITICAL WILL.

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COMMENT

16. (C) THE GOVERNMENT'S TALK ABOUT POLITICAL REFORM IS UNPRECEDENTED IN RECENT MEMORY. IT IS CLEARLY MEANT TO BE A RESPONSE TO THE MASSIVE STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS. WHETHER THIS OFFICIAL DISCUSSION OF REFORM IS GENUINE, HOWEVER, IS THE BIG QUESTION, AND THE EFFORT SO FAR HAS NOT BEEN

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INFUSED WITH ANY GREAT SENSE OF URGENCY. NEVERTHELESS, IMPORTANT POLITICAL ISSUES THAT INDONESIA MUST GRAPPLE WITH HAVE OFFICIALLY BEEN BROACHED, AND FIGURES SUCH AS EMIL SALIM APPEAR TO BE TRYING TO HOLD THE GOVERNMENT TO ITS PROMISES.
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