

ONE COUNTRY OR MANY?

Prospects for the Future of Indonesia

By Chris Drake

Like so many other multiethnic, multinational countries in the world, Indonesia struggles to maintain its national cohesion. Indeed, 95 percent of countries in the world have more than one ethnic group within their boundaries, and many are buffeted by some of the same stresses affecting Indonesia. Some have already crumbled—the USSR, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Ethiopia. Will Indonesia be next?

Indonesia has long been conscious of its need for greater national integration and has made substantial progress in nation-building, in the sociocultural and interaction dimensions especially.¹ But the conditions surrounding Indonesia's continued integration have changed significantly in recent years. Externally, the global environment has changed; internally, conditions have also changed, increasing the potential for successful secessionist movements.

The Global Environment

Externally, the world has seen the break-up of a number of states. Comparisons are often drawn between Indonesia and the state of Yugoslavia—although it can be argued that the temperament of Indonesians and conditions in the country, with its more than 300 ethnic groups, are considerably different from the situation in the former Yugoslavia with its European culture and the more limited number of players. But the precedent has been set—countries can split up—and the external pressures that helped to prevent the division of countries in the past, such as those at work in Nigeria during the Biafran war of secession, have diminished. In other words, it is more acceptable in the international community for countries to fragment—as the examples of Czechoslovakia and the USSR clearly demonstrate. Yet one should not underestimate the power of central governments to promote continued national unity in such countries, as Russia with Chechnya, Sri Lanka with its Tamil Tigers, and China with its Xijang, Uighur, and other populations seeking independence, or at least greater autonomy.

The Recent Situation in Indonesia

Within Indonesia conditions have also changed significantly from the early years of independence—politically, economically, and socially.

Politics

Until 1998 Indonesia was ruled by an authoritarian military government, experiencing just two presidents since the country's independence was first declared in 1945—Sukarno and Suharto. Given the vast diversity of ethnic, religious, and cultural characteristics among Indonesia's population, it is surprising perhaps that Indonesia has not erupted with many more separatist movements over the years. But in the past, regional movements such as the PRRI-PERESTA rebellion of 1958–61—involving North and South Sulawesi and West Sumatra—generally sought only greater autonomy or aimed to change the nature of the central government rather than to achieve independence.² In addition, the strongly authoritarian governments of Sukarno and Suharto ruthlessly quashed secessionist outbreaks.

However, beginning in the mid-1990s with the growing political tensions leading up to the national elections of May 1997 and even more with the East Asian financial crisis, political and economic national cohesion began to unravel. The seeds for the unraveling were sown, of course, long before the crisis erupted—increasing human rights abuses, rampant corruption, cronyism, nepotism, mismanagement of the economy, and so on. Experts had predicted some sort of crash for years as the government became increasingly repressive and corrupt and as the economic base of the country foundered.

Politically, tensions began to boil over in mid-1996 when supporters of ousted Indonesia Democratic Party (PDI) leader Megawati Sukarnoputri were forcibly evicted from PDI headquarters in Jakarta and her followers removed from the list of acceptable PDI candidates for the forthcoming election. The ensuing violence spread through villages in Java, taking on religious overtones in places as churches were burned and people killed in East Java. Accusations of vote rigging in the light of the government party GOLKAR's 74.5 percent win sparked further riots and revealed the government's heavy manipulation of the election.³

The Economy

Indonesia's economy has experienced profound changes since the country's independence. The country has moved from one based primarily on agriculture and the exploitation of oil, gas, and other mineral resources to one where manufacturing has become the most important sector in the economy. But Suharto's economic legacy was mixed. On the one hand the country experienced considerable economic progress: per capita GDP rose from around \$50 in 1967 to \$1,155 in 1996 and annual economic growth averaged about 5 percent annually between 1975 and 1995,⁴ an achievement obtained without high inflation. Increased agricultural productivity enabled the country to attain self-sufficiency in rice production; national savings and both domestic and foreign investment increased; and new technologies were adopted. The country's infrastructure was greatly improved with new roads, bridges, port and airport facilities, and widespread developments in communications. There was a significant decrease in the percentage of the population trapped in poverty.

But despite these considerable successes, the country's economic growth has come at a heavy environmental cost: the destruction of the rainforest; rapid exploitation of nonrenewable minerals including oil and gas, coal, and hard minerals such as copper and gold; over-fishing and destruction of coral reefs, and increased pollution.⁵

The economic crisis began in mid-1997 in Thailand with capital flight and the ensuing devaluation of the baht. It quickly spread to Indonesia, where the economy was overextended and too dependent on bad investment decisions and unsecured and inappropriate loans obtained on political, not solid economic, grounds. In addition, the gap between rich and poor in Indonesia had widened considerably over the previous couple of decades, adding to the foundation for instability. The contrasts are stark between the glitzy malls of Jakarta and many provincial capitals and the absolute poverty both of city dwellers, some 30 percent of whom are estimated to live in slums and squatter settlements, and of many rural peoples, barely eking out survival and suffering from malnutrition, ill-health, and misery.

The El Niño-induced drought in 1997 compounded the economic distress. It caused shortages in rice production and consequent price rises for basic foodstuffs. Huge fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan that burned for weeks, triggered by inappropriate land clearing methods as well as the drought, damaged people's health to an unknown extent, reduced tourism, and caused international tensions with neighboring Malaysia and Singapore. The economic crisis reduced the rupiah in July 1997 to a quarter of its 1996 value and led to many factories and other enterprises being closed. Millions became unemployed and were pushed into poverty.⁶ In the two years following the mid-1997 crash, it is estimated that per capita income plunged from \$1,155 to \$400, while the number of people living in poverty tripled to some 100 million.⁷ High inflation fueled by the sharp rise in the cost of imported goods and the fall of the rupiah led predictably to increasing social unrest in many parts of the archipelago. Protests, demonstrations, and riots occurred, often scapegoating the Chinese, who make up less than 3 percent of the population but hold a disproportionate share of Indonesia's corporate wealth, often said to be about 70 percent of the total.⁸ The May 1998 riots closed many urban business centers, severely damaging confidence in Indonesia, particularly among international investors and ethnic Chinese. Tens of thousands of Chinese fled the violence, taking huge sums of money with them. In addition to this loss of capital (estimated to be more than \$100 billion), \$90 billion worth of bad loans on the local banks' books and \$80 billion in foreign corporate debt were also recorded, leaving Indonesia with a massive banking problem.⁹

Social Change

Socially, over the years, there has been distinct progress: universal enrollment enabled school-aged children of both sexes to attend primary school; health care became more available and the percentage of children inoculated against common childhood diseases increased remarkably; infant and child mortality declined significantly; and life expectancy rose from 47.6 years in 1970 to 65.1 in 1997.¹⁰ A national family planning program introduced in 1971, together with economic development, reduced fertility rates considerably.

There has also been increased mixing of peoples from dif-

ferent parts of the archipelago with varying results. Transmigrants from overcrowded Java, Madura, and Bali have been relocated in less densely populated areas of the Outer Islands, but never fully assimilated there. When economic pressures rise, their presence is increasingly resented, especially when they appear to be doing better or receive more assistance from the central government than the indigenous inhabitants. In West Kalimantan, for example, native Dayaks turned on immigrant Madurese, who appeared to be prospering in the local economy more than the indigenous people; scores were killed and others fled. In Aceh in northwest Sumatra, 15,000 Javanese transmigrants were forced to leave the province. In addition, the increasing centralization of government that has occurred over the past thirty years has brought what is perceived to be high-handed, arrogant behavior, particularly by the Javanese, who often consider themselves superior to the peoples on the Outer Islands. One hears complaints about how people in the Outer Islands have just exchanged Dutch colonialism for Javanese colonialism. Certainly, Javanese insensitivity and lack of respect for the cultures of the different ethnic groups have bred dissatisfaction and nurtured the desire of some for greater autonomy and even independence.

These inherent social conflicts, accentuated by economic pressures, have taken on religious overtones in some areas. In Maluku, and later in Lombok, churches were burned and Christians killed; retaliation resulted in the destruction of mosques and killing of Muslims—mostly in Ambon but also in other parts of Maluku, with the tension spreading even as far as Jakarta.

Dissatisfaction with Suharto's leadership, provoked in May 1998 by a 71 percent increase in gasoline prices and the shooting of four student demonstrators, unleashed two days of devastating rioting, looting, and destruction in Jakarta: more than 500 people died, and 4,900 buildings and about 2,000 vehicles were destroyed.¹¹ Economic pressures and social unrest were so great that Suharto was forced to resign as president after thirty-two years in power. His successor was B. J. Habibie, whose selection as Vice President just four months earlier had led to the greatest fall in the value of the rupiah in history (because of Habibie's reputation as a proponent of economic nationalism and expensive technological projects that ran directly counter to the IMF's insistence on economic austerity and openness).¹²

Indonesia under President Habibie and the decision to allow East Timor to choose its future

As president, B. J. Habibie, despite his weak power base without solid support from either political groups or the military, surprised many by the astuteness of some of his actions. He reduced restrictions on the press, allowed the creation of new political parties, called for new elections (held in June 1999), and released a number of political prisoners. He agreed to focus on agribusiness and labor-intensive manufacturing in place of wasteful plans for national car programs, new petrochemical complexes, and a local aerospace industry.¹³ One bold initiative he took was to offer East Timor a choice on its future—either expanded autonomy, or, if this was not acceptable, full independence. It was later agreed that the future of the province was to be ascertained through a UN-administered referendum, with security guaranteed by the Indonesian armed forces.

This action provoked enormous reaction. Some felt that East Timor, one of the poorest parts of the country, which had not been part of the original country of Indonesia inherited from the Dutch, had already absorbed too much attention and revenue from the central government, caused unnecessary problems for Indonesia in the international community, and should be allowed to determine its own future. Most Indonesians, however, and especially the military, a very powerful presence in Indonesia, vehemently opposed the decision. They claimed that allowing one part of Indonesia to secede would lead to the irrevocable break-up of the country, as other secessionist movements would thereby be emboldened, most notably those in Aceh and Papua.¹⁴ The integrity of the whole country was at stake. In addition, the military felt that the more than 2,000 Indonesian soldiers who had lost their lives fighting in the invasion and annexation of the territory in 1975 should not be allowed to have shed their blood in vain. Further, some military officers in East Timor stood to lose their sources of revenue and even their careers.

Hence the tragic events that unfolded beginning in January, 1999. Threats and intimidation occurred before the referendum, which had to be delayed twice before finally being held on August 30, 1999. After the referendum results were announced, marauding militias, aided and abetted by some parts of the Indonesian army, terrorized and killed many of the population, and destroyed property throughout East Timor before sufficient international pressure was brought to bear on the Indonesian government to allow an international force into the country to restore peace, order, and security. It is estimated that hundreds were killed and more than half the population of East Timor displaced; an estimated 300,000 or more fled to the hills with an additional 250,000 or so forced to move to West Timor and other parts of Indonesia. Still more were left at risk from the dangers of starvation, inadequate water, and lack of health care. A tragedy of appalling proportions developed.

It may be that the way Indonesia's military responded to East Timor's overwhelming desire for independence was deliberately designed as an object lesson for other provinces or groups tempted to seek independence: brutality, torture, death, and destruction are consequences that should be anticipated should Aceh, Papua, or any other province or region try to secede.

The separatist movements in these provinces, particularly those in Aceh and Papua, present an increasingly serious security challenge and threat to the continued national integration of the country. Each has its own unique components, but each has been emboldened externally by precedents set in other countries and internally by the example of East Timor and the more flexible approach offered by former President Habibie. Will the secession of East Timor inevitably lead to other successful separatist/secessionist movements?



November 1998, outside the Santa Cruz Cemetery, East Timor. The crowd shouts "Viva" after the re-enactment of the November 12, 1991 massacre. Photo taken by James Schmid. Source: ETAN Web Site: <http://etan.org/etanphoto/photos98.htm>

The East Timor Case

It can be argued that East Timor's case was special and its independence does not necessarily presage the disintegration of the country. East Timor was the one province that was not part of the Dutch East Indies. It remained a Portuguese colony for more than 350 years, neglected and poor. Indeed, East Timor was the most remote, most rebellious, and least developed of Portugal's colonies, far poorer than Angola, Cape Verde, Macau, or

Mozambique. It was only in 1975, after the fall of the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal, that the Portuguese colonies were allowed independence—and in almost every case the situation unraveled into war. At first Indonesia seemed unconcerned by the prospect of East Timor's independence until it became clear that the winning faction declaring independence (Frente Revolucionária do Timor Leste Independente, or FRETILIN, the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) espoused radical social policies and had sought ties with the People's Republic of China. Fearing a Communist soft spot on its underbelly (a "Cuba"), Indonesia invaded and occupied East Timor, annexing it the following year, 1976, and making it Indonesia's twenty-seventh province. As a consequence of the invasion, up to one-fourth of the population died—either directly in the fighting and subsequent massacres, or by forced starvation and disease when whole village populations were rounded up and placed in "security villages," often far from their fields.

Indonesia tried to incorporate and integrate the East Timorese into the nation-state, but the residue of bitterness and alienation caused by Indonesia's invasion and subsequent army brutality proved impossible to overcome. Despite considerable investment in the infrastructure—roads, ports, and health and education facilities (government spending accounted for half of East Timor's \$113 million annual GDP)—East Timor remained less integrated than any other province in the country. In any case, it is claimed that at least half of the investment Indonesia made in East Timor was spent on the military and not for ordinary East Timorese citizens. Immigrants to East Timor from other parts of the Indonesian archipelago acquired the better jobs, causing resentment among the East Timorese. The separatist movement continued despite brutal repression and Indonesia's claim by 1991 that only 200 FRETILIN guerillas remained in the hills.¹⁵

Not only do the East Timorese not share a common historical past with the rest of Indonesia, but they do not share many of the sociocultural characteristics of the Indonesians. For example, because of their Portuguese colonial experience, the vast majority are Christian (Roman Catholic)—very different from the 87 percent of the population of Indonesia which is Muslim (indeed, Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world). Similarly, according to the 1990 Census (Indonesia's latest), only 61 percent of the population could speak the national language, Indonesian, a far lower percentage than in any other province

(although this proportion represents a large increase over the 33 percent able to speak the national language in the 1980 census), and fewer than 2 percent spoke Indonesian at home.

The lack of East Timor's true integration into Indonesia became all too apparent in the August 30 referendum: 78.5% of the East Timorese voted for independence—a result that stunned and hurt the rest of the country. (The voting participation rate was remarkably high also—more than 98 percent—despite threats and intimidation from militia groups.) Yet such a result should not seem surprising given the human rights violations and the suffering of the East Timorese over the preceding twenty-four years. In addition, it was claimed that most of East Timor's meager resources, particularly coffee (which makes up 80 percent of the province's exports), had been removed by military leaders and Suharto's business cronies for their own benefit. The East Timorese decided they would be better off independent, even though East Timor is poor in natural resources and will depend on aid for many years to come.

East Timor suffers from limited agricultural land because of its mountains and a prolonged dry season—a consequence of dry winter monsoon winds blowing out of Australia. But there are oil and gas reserves off the coast in the Timor Gap which could be exploited in cooperation with Australia—reserves that were not heretofore developed because of the unresolved status of East Timor. East Timor also has marble, a small amount of sandalwood, fisheries, and the potential for tourism and possibly even a free trade area and banking center, in addition to its coffee plantations. In any case, it can be argued that good economic policies, including those favorable to private sector development and the development of physical infrastructure and human capital (good health and education) are more critical than natural resources in development, as the countries of Japan and Singapore clearly demonstrate.¹⁶

The Prognosis for Other Secessionist Movements

Aceh

East Timor's successful bid for independence undoubtedly strengthened secessionist resolve in other parts of Indonesia, despite the high cost East Timor paid and will continue to pay. The most serious independence movement currently is in Aceh, on Sumatra's furthest northwestern tip, where separatists have been demanding independence for decades. The movement, *Aceh Merdeka* (the Free Aceh movement), was given renewed impetus in 1998 with the deportation of Acehnese activists from Malaysia back to Aceh and the withdrawal of some of Indonesia's combat troops. Pro-independence banners, flags, and weapons were displayed in a student-led movement for a referendum on Aceh's political future, which quickly gathered widespread support. Almost daily reports of civilian shootings, disappearances, and torture led Free Aceh leaders to incite tens of thousands of villagers to flee their homes for refugee camps, in order to showcase them as victims of military repression and gain international sympathy for their cause. By September 1999, an estimated 90,000 were in six refugee camps.¹⁷

Support from Acehnese businessmen in Malaysia and southern Thailand, together with increased arms supplies, financial backing, and growing popular support, have made Aceh's cause

stronger. President Abdurrahman Wahid's seeming initial acceptance in November 1999, of the idea of a referendum on Aceh's future, to include independence as an option, was quickly redefined to include only partial autonomy. The intended referendum has yet to be scheduled.

Unlike East Timor, Aceh has always been an integral part of the independent nation-state of Indonesia that emerged after World War II. It was at the forefront of the war of resistance against the Dutch colonizers. In addition, it is of major political importance to a country that has long prided itself on its unity and acceptance of ethnic diversity. Also, Aceh's abundant natural resources are economically important to Indonesia, contributing more than most provinces to overall state revenues, though (until very recently) receiving only a minuscule amount in return.

Yet many Acehnese yearn for independence. They glorify their history as an independent sultanate until the late nineteenth century and are proud that it was not until the early 1900s that the area was finally integrated effectively into the Dutch East Indies. Aceh had to be coaxed into the new independent Republic of Indonesia with promises of shared wealth—promises which were never fulfilled. Indeed, the Acehnese anticipate a wealthy future based on the province's rich timber and oil revenues, once Aceh is liberated from its "Javanese colonizers."¹⁸ The offer of greater local autonomy and a larger share of resource revenues that both Habibie and Wahid have proposed still does not adequately deal with the army's brutal repression over the past decade.¹⁹ The Acehnese say they want justice more than just compensation and development projects.²⁰

Revolts against Jakarta's authority in Aceh over the years have been put down ruthlessly. At least 5,000 people have been killed during the past decade alone, including 345 in the first four months of 2000.²¹ Promises by the Habibie government in March 1999 to investigate fully the army's past abuses and to prosecute perpetrators were not fulfilled, largely because of military leaders' fear that the investigation of abuses in Aceh could open the floodgates to similar grievances left over from Suharto's regime in other parts of the country and in turn further undermine morale in the military and impede its ability to deal with future disturbances. Under current President Wahid, attempts to confront the military's brutality have been started, but the human rights trial begun in April 2000 thus far has dealt only with ordinary soldiers who, while admitting that they killed civilians, claim they were forced to follow orders.

Prominent Indonesians believe authorities will also have to consider allowing Islamic law in the province as a basis for a lasting solution, a policy that goes against Indonesia's Pancasila philosophy of tolerance and acceptance of diversity, and is strongly opposed by both the military and nationalists. It will be interesting to see if Wahid, himself a Muslim cleric and a respected leader in Aceh, will be successful in reducing tensions in this part of Indonesia to which he has committed himself personally (while asking Vice President Megawati to take direct charge of the conflicts in Maluku and Papua).²² It also remains to be seen if the local-autonomy legislation promised in April 1999 to decentralize power and give resource-rich provinces a greater share of their revenue will be enough. Despite a three-month cease-fire agreement accepted in May, 2000, free Aceh Movement leaders continue to insist on ultimate independence, an option totally unacceptable to the present government.

Papua

Papua presents yet another set of unique circumstances. The western half of the island of New Guinea (the other half consists of the independent country of Papua New Guinea), Papua is populated by people quite different from the majority Malay peoples in the rest of Indonesia. Native Papuans are Melanesian, mostly animist or Christian, who have experienced only a short history of Indonesian rule. The Dutch refused to hand over Papua (or West New Guinea as it was known then) to Indonesia when they finally recognized Indonesian independence in 1949. Instead, they handed the province over to the United Nations in 1962, which then passed the region over to Indonesia after what was perceived by most observers to be a fraudulent vote in 1969, when 1,000 traditional leaders, assembled by Indonesia under the gaze of armed soldiers, were asked for a show of hands on whether they wanted to join Indonesia; unsurprisingly the vote for integration was unanimous.²³

At that point the *Operasi Papua Merdeka*—the Free Papua Movement—began its campaign against the Indonesian army. However, it has never received the funding, network of international lobbyists, or support of Western governments that East Timor's activists enjoyed. The military has killed hundreds, if not thousands, of native Papuans and treated them poorly for years. Already there is a rise in tensions between native Papuans and settlers from elsewhere in Indonesia. It is estimated that outside settlers, mostly Bugis and Javanese, make up 800,000 of the present two million people in the province.

Since the fall of Suharto, the greater freedom of the press, a more liberal political atmosphere, and Jakarta's willingness to negotiate on East Timor have created a sense of new possibilities. A February 1999 meeting between former President Habibie and a hundred of Papua's tribal leaders raised the hopes for independence to new heights. It was reported that independence activists felt that the central government had taken them seriously for the first time.²⁴ Political organizations have sprung up all over the province, the "Free Papua" flag is flown with increasing frequency, and growing numbers of banners proclaim independence in the provincial capital of Jayapura. However, Indonesia is extremely unlikely ever to let go of this resource-rich province. It is considered vital to Indonesia's economy, with its huge mineral deposits (especially gold and copper), timber, and oil and gas.

Proposed Solutions

With Habibie's and subsequently Abdurrahman Wahid's accession to power a number of reforms and changes have taken place to help deal with the conditions provoking secessionist movements. Three major areas deal with political, economic, and military concerns.

Legislation has been passed introducing regional autonomy down to the provincial level—a very different approach from that under Suharto, where decentralization was considered to be equal to disintegration.²⁵ A decentralization law also devolves administrative power to the *kabupaten* (district) level, and provides for the country's 306 district chiefs and mayors to be elected by local parliaments instead of being appointed from Jakarta.

The new government has also agreed to allow more of the economic gains of each province's resources to be kept by that

province (instead of almost all going to the central government in Jakarta). Certainly a lot of the unhappiness in both Aceh and Papua centers around economic issues. Both these provinces are rich in resources, yet have received little back for their exported wealth. Indeed, in 1998 Indonesia returned an average of only 17 percent of local taxes to the regions (compared to 56 percent in Malaysia and 43 percent in Australia).²⁶ In the past, the provinces received only a share of the royalties paid by hard-mineral mining companies working in their territories, while all the corporate and other taxes went directly to Jakarta. Mining companies have now been instructed to pay royalties directly to local governments. In addition, all revenue from Indonesia's oil and gas production also went to the central government. In Aceh, for example, most revenue from taxes on the province's shrimp, coffee, and cacao industries flowed directly to Jakarta, leaving barely 7 percent for Aceh's coffers.²⁷

The Law on Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations, approved in 1999, offered resource-rich provinces 15 percent of the government's share of net oil revenue, 30 percent of gas revenue, and 80 percent of income derived from forestry, mining, and fisheries.²⁸ The problem is that such a distribution may well end up exacerbating economic and social differences among the provinces. (Maluku, Bengkulu, Lampung, and East and West Nusatenggara are already among the poorest provinces in the country and would lose out on this reallocation of funds.) To address this problem, a fiscal law commits the government to establishing an equalization fund to ensure that provinces with few resources don't get left further behind.

A further solution to the threat of secessionist movements has been to reduce the power and limit the role of the military. A law passed in April 1999 ended the practice of military officers occupying positions in the civilian bureaucracy. An independent commission named 33 military leaders implicated in the East Timor human rights abuses to stand trial, and a human rights court has already begun proceedings in Aceh. The Minister of Defense is now a civilian, and the extremely powerful former General Wiranto has been removed from the cabinet of President Wahid.

Conclusions

It is still too early to know if the reforms instituted under presidents Habibie and Wahid and their calls for peace and compromise will be enough to dampen secessionist movements. It is probable that in the immediate future secessionist movements will continue, particularly in Aceh and Papua, and perhaps also in other provinces, such as Maluku, South Sulawesi, and West Kalimantan. Peace talks about Aceh's separatist insurgency began in Geneva in May 2000 and have not yet led to a resolution of the conflict.

Despite the many problems facing the current government there is much to suggest that the country will be able to weather this turbulent storm and remain a united political entity. The new Indonesian government leadership of President Abdurrahman Wahid, elected in October 1999, has committed itself to strengthening the unity of the country and is working hard to do so.

Certainly there are significant centripetal pressures to maintain the inherent unity of Indonesia. First, there are many integrating forces which bind the country together: historical, socio-cultural, interactional, and economic. The country with its

current boundaries has been one state, the Dutch East Indies and subsequently independent Indonesia, for more than 300 years. As a result, it has many shared historical experiences, including Dutch administration, Japanese occupation, the struggle for independence, rule by Sukarno, Suharto, Habibie, and now Wahid, leadership in the non-aligned movement, membership in ASEAN, etc. It has experienced one educational and one legal system, one economic policy and one currency, and a policy of tolerance and acceptance of differences. All of these facets have given the inhabitants their identity as Indonesians. National pride runs deep in most of the country.

Second, the governments of Indonesia over the years have tried hard to integrate and unify the country and promote nationalism. This has been done by stressing the national philosophy, the Pancasila, encouraging the use of the Indonesian flag, the national anthem, and the national motto (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*—Unity in Diversity). The government has developed a nationwide transportation and communication system, including Indonesian national radio and television programming. The country has stressed the importance of Indonesian, the national language, and promulgated the idea of one national identity.

Third, the overwhelming desire of most Indonesians is to preserve national unity. People recognize the nonviability of having many microstates, and the instability and problems that will occur if secession is accepted for a region that has been an integral part of the country for so long. Many Indonesians, especially in the urban areas, have intermarried. People recognize that East Timor is a special case because of its different historical experiences.

Fourth, the government needs the resources and wealth of Aceh and Papua, especially for its future prosperity. It also knows from experience the cost of dealing with a successful secessionist movement and the humiliation of what occurred in East Timor. It is determined not to repeat that event. Devolution of power, allowing the provinces to keep a larger proportion of the revenues they generate, and reducing the power and presence of the military should go a long way to meeting secessionist provinces' demands for more control over their own affairs.

Finally, it seems that the world is not ready for "secession on demand." Certainly the way ahead will be difficult. The challenge for the government is not only to devolve at least some authority and power, both political and economic, to the provinces without ceding their independence, but also to increase sensitivity to regional and ethnic needs, to bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations in the past, to reduce current military repression and power, and to develop policies that win the hearts and minds of those disaffected. Uncorrupt, transparent government that is seen to be working in the interests of the people rather than for the rich elite and the military is also essential. Environmentally responsible, sustainable development and increased investment in human resource development are also important. Essential, too, is an Indonesian economic recovery that takes the edge off ethnic differences and provides new hope. Only then can Indonesia's motto be fully realized: Unity in Diversity. ■

NOTES

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