

**Roundtable Discussion:  
The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P): View from the Opposition**

**June 7, 2007  
Washington, DC**

At an afternoon roundtable, members of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) discussed the party's platform and fielded questions on a wide range of issues.

The head of the delegation, Mr. Taufiq Kiemas, began by noting the group's activities during their visit to Washington, including meetings on Capital Hill with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, as well as with Rep. Jim McDermott and others from the Indonesia Caucus. Topics under discussion at these sessions included reform of the Indonesian military, the importance of national integrity, and the prosperity and well-being of people in Papua.

Mr. Kiemas noted that PDI-P is the first opposition party since democracy started nine years ago. He acknowledged that there are still threats to pluralism in Indonesia and expressed the hope that its "sister" country, the United States, would stand with them to preserve a free and open Indonesia.

Mr. Pramono Anung Wibowo, Secretary General of PDI-P, then outlined aspects of the party's platform. First, he stated that PDI-P wants no new restrictions on U.S. assistance for the Indonesian military, as reportedly is being considered by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations. Pramono pointed to the need for a strong military to maintain pluralism and national integrity. He also stressed the importance of democracy for the country's prosperity, and said that the PDI-P adopted a

position of loyal opposition in order to protect the democratic process. He further added that his party is committed to foreign investment and the sanctity of contracts, while noting that the welfare of the Indonesian people must also be taken into account.

Mr. Pramono stated that, according to independent polling, PDI-P would win if parliamentary elections were held today. He noted that this suggested that the party is performing to the public's satisfaction, and that the party must maintain its professionalism in order to keep this support until the next elections in 2009. He pointed out that of the country's 33 governorships, 19 are held by the PDI-P, and that 43% of *bupatis* are also from the party.

Mr. Izedrik Emir Moeis, member of DPR and Chair of the Budget Committee, then discussed economic aspects of the PDI-P platform. He noted that welfare is the overriding problem in Indonesia, but that stability must first be strengthened in order to attract and protect investment. He noted that the PDI-P favors the market economy, but that they bear a responsibility to fight poverty because of the party's image as "the poor people's party." He acknowledged that Indonesia is experiencing economic growth, which is principally export and consumption driven, but he noted that high unemployment and poverty showed that growth was not adequately benefiting the poor. He also noted that investment is still low despite changes to tax laws meant to promote investment.

**Q: The reluctance to invest may be due to strict labor laws. What is the PDI-P's position on labor reform?**

A: PDI-P supports labor, but there must be a balance in order to attract investment. Labor needs to decrease its demands in order to increase investment and therefore increase jobs.

**Q: Under Suharto, there was a prevalence of "unequal contracts" in which risks were born predominantly by the government. To what extent does the PDI-P agree to absorb the risks of unequal contracts?**

A: The Government should not give guarantees to private investors. As the economy strengthens over the next five to ten years, hopefully we will reach a position where there will be no need to issue such guarantees.

**Q: Why is PDI-P not seen as a strong supporter of the freedom of information law?**

A: Public information is very expensive because of manipulation and corruption by public officials. Those who control information can use their positions to get money and power. This is why the PDI-P supports the freedom of information law. Without the freedom to obtain and use information, we can forget about clean government and good governance.

**Q: However, PDI-P was in control in 2001 when the draft law as proposed. Why was it not passed?**

A: Discussion on the draft law didn't really begin until 2005. A complicating factor and part of the reason for the hold-up was the issue of state secrets.

**Q: Smaller electoral districts are supported by Mr. Pramono. Doesn't this benefit Golkar?**

A: One issue we are trying to address is the problem of having too many parties. We need a simple multiparty system in parliament, with perhaps two large

coalitions—one governing and one in opposition. This would benefit democracy. Perhaps there is a need to raise the election participation threshold from 2% to 5%. Six or seven parties eligible for the next elections is more than enough.

**Q: What is the PDI-P's position on independent candidates?**

A: For democratic accountability, we do not advocate independent candidates unaffiliated with parties. A political party is akin to the country on a miniature scale. One must have experience leading at that level to learn democracy. Admittedly there are abuses of power by parties and leaders. However, political parties are necessary to nurture cadres for leadership.

**Q: What about women's rights? None in this visiting delegation are women. What is your position on the idea of a constitutional amendment mandating one third of parliamentary seats must be held by women?**

A: 16% of the DPR is composed of women today. In the lower levels of PDI-P, already 20% are women. We met with IFES today to promote political education for women. Our position is not against women. Rather, it is an issue of readiness of women to assume legislative and governmental positions.

**Q: What is the PDI-P's strategy to maintain popularity for the 2009 elections?**

A: Because of our commitment to unity in diversity, we have support from many ethnicities. On our agenda is the need to increase agricultural production, to make the party more open to the people, to improve communication with the public, and to reform and professionalize the military.

**Q: What is your position on UN resolution #1747 regarding Iran?**

A: This is not our [Indonesia's] problem. Iran is a sovereign country, and the PDI-P supports national sovereignty.