

Indonesia Threatened By U.S. War Adventure

by Michael Billington

Most of the nations of Southeast Asia have never recovered from the speculative looting of the 1997-98 "Asian Crisis"—the global financial crisis which broke out in Asia. Now, they are facing a far more severe crisis, in the wake of the onrushing collapse of the dollar-based international financial system. No Asian nation suffered more over the past four years than Indonesia, which, under the gun of hedge-fund speculators and International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditionalities, saw the cumulative efforts of 50 years of post-colonial development nearly wiped out, and relatively stable social relations replaced by ethnic and religious strife in several parts of the archipelago. Now, this country of more than 200 million, the largest Islamic nation in the world, is faced with a combination of the global financial collapse, and a possible social explosion in response to a U.S. "flight forward" military assault in Afghanistan, and perhaps other Islamic nations, supposedly in retribution for the attacks of Sept. 11 on New York and Washington.

International news services have completely distorted the real situation in Indonesia. In the weeks preceding the first U.S. air raids in Afghanistan on Oct. 7, there were several small demonstrations against any U.S. invasion, and some isolated calls for the expulsion of Americans and attacks on American government assets, if such an invasion were to take place. These events were prominently broadcast worldwide by the international media, feeding fear and capital flight from the country. The belligerent U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia, Robert Gelbard, who has repeatedly played the "Ugly American" role in broaching Indonesian sovereignty, publicly reprimanded the police for failing to protect U.S. interests (although there have been no personal injuries or property damage), and even encouraged U.S. citizens and businesses to leave the country. As one government official pointed out to *EIR*, the demonstrations had been peaceful, and numbered no more than 3,000 people. "In Indonesia," he said, "anyone, any group, can easily call out 10-20,000 demonstrators for any cause you can imagine. These demonstrations are puny by comparison, but when they become the breaking news story everyday on CNN and in the *Washington Post*, they create an appearance which has real effects on our country."

Indonesian Foreign Minister Nur Hassan Wirayuda publicly rejected Gelbard's call for Americans to leave as "ex-

treme," assured foreigners they would be protected, and pointed out that there had been no victims of any physical violence. Even a leading American business consultant in Jakarta, Todd Callahan of the Castle Group, told the Singapore *Straits Times*, "A lot of this is overblown. Has anybody been beaten or attacked yet? This is just a lot of bluster and rhetoric." The question is raised: Who is interested in destabilizing Indonesia?

When the U.S. commenced the bombing in Afghanistan, opposition to the war was broad-based, but the demonstrations and anti-American protests remained small. A few hundred demonstrators at the U.S. Embassy were dispersed with water cannons and tear gas when they tried to charge the protective perimeter. The government released an official response, expressing "deep concern" about the attack and calling on the United States to stick to its word that the bombing campaign would be "strictly limited," while also appealing to the population not to "overreact." The situation is tense, but remains under control.

Throwing fuel on the fire, the Oct. 10 *New York Times* printed a front-page report that "terrorists tied to Osama bin Laden's network and based in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia are among the likely targets of future covert and overt American actions." While highly unlikely in fact, the report can only serve as a provocation to further destabilize these nations.

The Spirit Of Bandung

The newly elected President of Indonesia, Megawati Sukarnoputri, in the tradition of her father, the Founding Father of the Republic, President Sukarno, began her term in office with a whirlwind tour of the fellow member-nations of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), during which she revived the memory of the Spirit of Bandung from the 1950s, which had promoted the idea of Third World unity and non-alignment with either of the Cold War powers. She then insisted on carrying through on scheduled visits to the United States and Japan, despite efforts in both nations to postpone or cancel the trips following the Sept. 11 attacks.

Upon returning home, Megawati has stood her ground against the pressure from some of the Islamic parties. On the one hand, she has denied Indonesian support for any U.S. military actions. On the other hand, she is cracking down on the terrorist threat internally. When some radical groups began signing up volunteers to travel to Afghanistan in the case of a U.S. invasion, the government announced that exit permits would be denied, and that citizenship could be revoked to anyone who went abroad to fight in a foreign war without government approval. While the numbers are very small, there is a history of Afghansi-linked forces within Indonesia organizing for *jihād*. Over the past two years, thousands of men were recruited in Jakarta to an organization called Laskar Jihad, which then deployed to Indonesia's Maluku



Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri meets with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at the Prime Minister's official residence, Sept. 27, 2001.

islands, joining in violent religious warfare between formerly peaceful Christian and Muslim communities. This violence had been sparked by the economic breakdown, but was fed on both sides by foreign fundamentalist networks (including the London-based subversion apparatus, Christian Solidarity International), leaving thousands dead and social chaos in its wake. Although the situation appears to have stabilized in the Maluku, any repeat of such a process, either foreign or domestic, will certainly be strongly opposed under Megawati's Presidency.

Megawati is a Muslim, but, like her father, is a nationalist first, and wants to conjoin the religious and political needs of the nation. The Islamic parties were responsible for the compromise selection of President Abdurrahman Wahid in 1999 (with Megawati as Vice President), even though Megawati's party had won the largest number of votes in the election. Some Islamists objected to a female President, in addition to opposing her nationalist outlook. In July, when President Wahid was impeached and voted out of office by the legislature, these Islamic parties agreed to drop their opposition to Megawati as President, and to sustain their support for her at least until the next election in 2004. However, the cataclysmic events shaking the world today could easily shatter that pledge, if Megawati is unable to steer the nation through the economic and strategic crises ahead.

On Sept. 29, in response to some voices calling for *jihad* against the United States, the two mass-based Islamic organizations, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), formerly headed by

Wahid, and the Muhammadiyah, both with memberships in the tens of millions, rejected these provocations, saying that "the terrorist attacks in the U.S. were a tragedy of humanity, not a tragedy of religion."

The Economic Reality

But the economic collapse is the overriding reality driving history today. For Indonesia to survive the collapse depends on the capacity of its leaders to revive the historic role of the nation as a leader in forging unity in the region and in the world. Since the 1997 financial breakdown across Asia, Indonesia has been embroiled in internal political turmoil, playing little role in the historic efforts among the ASEAN nations and their "Plus Three" allies of China, Japan, and South Korea, to forge a new alliance and a new economic system for Asia. Now, Megawati has moved to correct that, both with her tour of ASEAN, and in her late-September trip to Japan. Japan, the largest investor in and lender

to Indonesia, is itself in a severe breakdown crisis, made worse by its capitulation to U.S. demands to print yen to prop up the falling value of the dollar as the U.S. economy tanks out. Megawati appealed to Japan to see its own self-interest in reviving its former dedication to developing the real economies of its Asian neighbors. The results of the trip are not clear, but the trip itself is an important step.

Other developments in the region during the first week of October indicate a renewed effort to act together to counter the global collapse. A few examples: The severe chill in relations among China, Japan, and South Korea following Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to a shrine honoring the Japanese war dead from World War II, appears to be abating. China agreed to a visit by Koizumi on Oct. 7, where Koizumi expressed Japan's remorse for World War II crimes against China, while Koizumi and South Korean President Kim Dae-jung will meet the following week, with similar intentions. Also, the "Sunshine Policy" between North and South Korea, moving toward reunification, which had broken down, is back on track, if still very tentative. China, meanwhile, is working with Myanmar and Laos to make the Mekong River navigable by clearing 180 miles of rapids, while also expanding collaboration with the Mekong nations in cleaning out the Golden Triangle drug production. And, most important, as *EIR* has repeatedly documented, the Eurasian collaboration, driven especially by Russia and China, for the development of the vast Eurasian landmass through the Eurasian Land-Bridge project, is mov-

ing forward, and has taken on a new urgency with the current crisis of civilization.

‘The American Dream’

Megawati, in her speech to the diplomatic community in Washington on Sept. 19, made several references (as her father often did) to America’s greatest nation builder, Abraham Lincoln, who defended the nation’s territorial integrity and launched the cross-continental development projects that made the U.S. economy the strongest in the world. It is precisely this precedent which can guide the development of Eurasia today.

Megawati concluded with a reference to another great American, without need of mentioning his name—Dr. Martin Luther King. Here, too, the precedent is crucial for the future of Asia and the world, as her father would have agreed. She said: “Although our history and cultures are different, there is an important similarity between the Indonesian dream and the American dream. I am not talking about the American dream of ‘a family, a house, and two cars in the garage.’ I am talking about the dream of creating a great nation where all men and women are treated equal, where people of all races, ethnicity, and religion live side by side in peace and prosperity as one. America’s Founding Fathers dreamt this, and ours did too. The dream remains dear in my heart and in the hearts of millions of Indonesians.”

Australia Moves Toward A Fascist Police State

by Allen Douglas

In the context of the accelerating collapse of the global financial system, Australia is rapidly moving toward a Nazi-style dictatorial regime. Such a statement, about the famously “laid-back” nation of Crocodile Dundee, sports stars, and exotic vacations, with its outgoing, pro-American population, might seem outrageous, even preposterous, including to many Australians themselves. However, the evidence for such a conclusion is all in plain sight, and only one who is in acute denial that the world has now entered into a depression, which will soon become far, far worse, can deny the accompanying political reality of planned police-state repression.

As U.S. 2004 Democratic Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche has repeatedly warned, the Anglo-American establishment is attempting to maintain its power in a collapsing system through dictatorial, crisis-management methods, some of which would make Hitler green with envy, such as the Reichstag fire-style Sept. 11 attacks in New York and Washington. And Australia, which has invoked the ANZUS treaty with the United States and is now on its highest security alert since World War II, is one of the “filthy financier five” (U.K., United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) through which the British monarchy and its Wall Street-centered sympathizers in the United States have dominated the world for most of the past 35 years.

For Australia, perhaps the major difference with the Nazi precedent, is that the not-yet-consolidated dictatorship there has not been sprung all at once, as in the emergency laws rammed through the German parliament in the wake of the Nazi-rigged Reichstag fire, but has been enacted piece by piece over a longer period of time, although the pace of this legislation has dramatically intensified this year and last. All of the new legislation has ostensibly been proposed to deal with a string of “crises,” beginning with the infamous 1996 Port Arthur massacre of 35 people by a “lone nut”; to the Y2K hysteria; to the danger that Osama bin Laden might target the 2000 Sydney Olympics; to the mass anti-globalization riots in Melbourne in September 2000; to the “anti-terrorist” measures adopted for the Oct. 3-6 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Brisbane (since cancelled); to the hysterical actions taken to keep undocumented “boat people” from landing in Australia; to the present witch-hunt for the “associates of Osama bin Laden” involving the Sept. 11 attacks, who are alleged to be running all over Australia.



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