
Indonesia: Out of One, Many?

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ARCHIPELAGO AS NATION

The emblem of Indonesia is the garuda, a bird that looks much like the American eagle on the Great Seal of the United States.¹ It is usually depicted clutching the motto "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*," which means, "Unity in Diversity." The motto is a hopeful one. Yet when looking at the map of Indonesia, one can hardly avoid being struck by how unlikely a nation it is. An agglomeration of over 17,000 islands, 6,000 or so of them inhabited, it is spread over an area the size of the United States. Three of the larger islands are shared with four other countries. Only the map colors give away the secret that this particular part of the world is a single nation, the world's fourth most populous at 220 million or so. Half of this large population lives on the island of Java, an area smaller than Iowa.

The ethnic diversity encompassed by the Indonesian islands is staggering. Naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace determined in the mid-1800s that the Malay Archipelago, most of which makes up Indonesia today, is divided into two halves on a line that runs between Bali and Lombok. The western part is very similar to the Asian mainland in its flora, fauna and ethnography, while the eastern part has more in common with Australia. Wallace posits that the peoples of those two halves, while not divided on such sharp lines due to their ability to travel, form two groups "with no traceable affinity to each other."² Over 580 tribal languages and dialects are spoken, and the national language, Bahasa Indonesia, is basically a trade language. Most speakers of Bahasa Indonesia rely on their tribal language to express matters of the heart.³ As a major port for traders for nearly 1,000 years, Indonesia has received technical, linguistic, genetic, and religious influences from every trading power.

The latest influence to appear is democracy. I team-teach a course with Indonesian faculty on democracy and human rights at Universitas Kristen Duta

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Wacana in Yogyakarta. It is a general education class for first- and second-year university students. One of our opening classes described the continuum between liberal democracy and dictatorship, with the guided democracy (*demokrasi terpimpin*) preferred by various Asian countries, Indonesia included, falling somewhere in the middle. My students this year decided that the U.S. defined the far edge of liberal democracy, and many were quite clear that the U.S. version was not something a nation of decent people should aspire to. There were a variety of aspects of American democracy, mostly relating to freedom of the press, which they did not like.

It was a tough sell to suggest to these students that the nature of democracy is to move toward the sort of liberal society they did not want. Free people become less and less satisfied with government interference in their personal affairs. For my Indonesian students, the idea of the government not setting limits on behavior with moral implications was too strange to contemplate. The idea that behavior falls along a continuum rather than into black and white areas was also not immediately acceptable. Watching American movies that have many odd jumps between disconnected actions—due to censorship—seems normal here. I

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am reminded of America in the 1950s and 1960s where all the married couples, if television was to be believed, slept in twin beds wearing serious pajamas.

Despite these attitudes, the inexorable movement toward democracy, which began with the fall of Soeharto, is endangering the territorial integrity of Indonesia. As people become less willing to follow government dictates that are clearly not in their

best interests—the kind that were common during the Soeharto regime—the desire to escape that government interference grows. The regions of Aceh and Irian Jaya are good examples of places where people are no longer content to see their resources extracted while the money earned for them stays in Jakarta.

While there were always people who protested such actions, their numbers have grown as the heavy censorship of the old regime has diminished. Inter-group rivalries over resources and opportunities, long suppressed by a strong authoritarian central government, cannot be so easily squelched in a more democratic environment. The newly created Timor Lorosa'e (East Timor) has demonstrated the tumult that can result when a group of people desire to secede. The government is making efforts both to show good faith by more equitably sharing the income from extraction industries and to increase regional autonomy in other ways. Such efforts will not be enough to avoid national disintegration, however. As new President, Megawati Sukarnoputri, sounding a warning on this theme, said: "Indonesia could disintegrate like the former Yugoslavia unless its people put national interests first."⁴

What holds Indonesia together? Will it be able to get back on its feet economically? Will the recent change to a democratic government hasten, slow or prevent national disintegration? Let us look at the challenges and discuss the ways Indonesia might meet them.

MAKING INDONESIA

The creation of the modern state of Indonesia began in the early seventeenth century when Dutch colonizers first visited the archipelago in 1605, ruling for most of the next several hundred years until the end of World War II. With the assistance of local Javanese forces, the Japanese drove the Dutch out, only to be driven out in turn. Fighting under independence leaders that included Sukarno, this Javanese force successfully prevented the return of Dutch control at war's end, though with significant bloodshed occurring over a four-year period.

The Javanese leaders who led the Indonesian independence movement were also successful in international diplomacy, beginning with the 1949 creation of the UN Commission on Indonesia and continuing through the 1969 "Act of Free Choice" in Papua which established the Indonesian claim to all the former Dutch territory.⁵ No one bothered to check with the indigenous people outside Java on the independence issue prior to the engineered vote in Papua in 1969, however, and it is generally acknowledged that international community at the time wanted to create a single nation in the area. Recently released Dutch diplomatic documents show just how little interest there was in discovering the will of the people regarding Indonesia's future.⁶ This was most true of the latest arrivals to the unitary state: Irian Jaya, which was incorporated into the nation in 1969, and East Timor, which was incorporated into the nation in 1975.

Anyone watching the Indonesian scene knows that all is not well regarding territorial integrity. The people of Aceh on the northern tip of the island of Sumatra did not surrender to the Dutch until 1903. They were incorporated into Indonesia through a messy process that left a low intensity war in its wake. This armed struggle, though abating from time to time, continues today with renewed vigor. Irian Jaya, the west half of the island of New Guinea, was more forcibly incorporated into the nation with the acquiescence of the international community, and both armed and political struggle for independence has continued there since. Accused separatists are currently on trial in Irian Jaya for treason. Meanwhile, the Maluku Islands, which are strung between eastern and western Indonesia, have been in a state of war off and on, with thousands killed in the last two years. A separatist movement is also operating there. The tribal people of Kalimantan also drove out settlers from the island of Madura in 2001, and refuse to allow them back. There are several other examples of strife in the country as well.

WHAT HOLDS INDONESIA TOGETHER?

One is tempted toward several easy responses to the question of what holds Indonesia together. The Indonesian military has certainly acted as a strong force for national cohesion, suppressing people or groups who suggest other possibilities.⁷ Bahasa Indonesia (referred to as "Indonesian" hereafter), is very widespread as the language of commerce and does have a strong effect on national identity. With 88 percent of Indonesians claiming Islam as their religion, shared faith is a very strong pull towards unity, particularly given the differing religious persuasions of surrounding countries. International respect for the territorial integrity of Indonesia is also an important factor, with very little international support for boundary changes other than for Timor. The national philosophy of Pancasila, created by Sukarno and taught as a required subject at all levels of education until two years ago, has had a significant unifying effect. Most ubiquitous is television, with most Indonesians receiving TV programming sanctioned by the government, though censored with a lighter hand than when it was previously controlled by the government. Let us look at these and other factors that connect the islands.

After the Javanese replaced the Dutch, they began the task of nation-building. This included creation of an entrepreneurial military that had to generate most of its own revenue (as tax revenues are unrealistic given that many Indonesians live and work outside the cash economy).⁸ Political leaders stepped into the roles previously played by Javanese feudal nobility, and the stage was set for the troubles of the present day.

The government of Soeharto, the nation's second president who was deposed after 30 years in power in 1998, laid the groundwork for the nation as it stands today. Coming to power in an anti-communist purge, Soeharto centralized the government in ways more reminiscent of Stalin than of any democratic government. Even today, the department of education in Jakarta appoints primary school teachers in the interior of Irian Jaya, and determines the curriculum they will follow. International aid for economic development flowed through Jakarta, with significant amounts of funds and loans being siphoned off by the political leadership and its cronies. Local initiative was not encouraged. The consequence today is that any discussion of economic development quickly turns to a question of how to get Jakarta to do the necessary development, revealing the assumption that no development can take place without money from Jakarta. This way of thinking does tend to increase political stability through the illusion of dependency.

Education in Indonesia adopted what is referred to as the banking method. Teachers were expected to make a deposit of information in students' heads, to be withdrawn during the exam. The asking of probing questions, let alone the use of critical thinking, was not encouraged. Books are expensive, so schools rely on lectures rather than independent reading. The result is a population that tends

toward concrete thinking and generally shies away from novel interpretations of facts. I asked a group of graduate students, for example, whether an author we were reading liked the character he had been describing. "He doesn't say," they responded, refusing to speculate. When even the educated elite have such rigid thought patterns, it seems rather unlikely that Indonesians would imagine a different shape for the country.

Religion has a very large effect on national cohesion, but perhaps not in the way one might expect. Javanese mysticism, a form of animism tinged with ancestor worship, developed over millennia. The fossil hominid named Java Man is dated as being some 500,000 years old, with Homo Sapiens arriving 10,000 years ago. Buddhism and Hinduism arrived about 2,000 years ago, while Islam seems to have first arrived in the twelfth century and Christianity in the fifteenth. Rather than causing the exchange of one religion for the other, these waves of religion washing across the islands added to the mysticism, spiritualism, ancestor worship or animism that was present.⁹

I live in Yogyakarta, the seat of the Sultan of Yogyakarta. As the Sultan is also the provincial governor, his moral and spiritual power is immense. Despite his Muslim identification, he annually re-enacts his marriage to the Goddess of the South Sea, and maintains a shaman on the city's volcano to handle the spirits that reside there. This syncretism is normal in Indonesia, and occurs much more openly than in other parts of the world where religions are blended.

This religious syncretism means that the primal religions of the area still have a large impact on daily life. For the Javanese in particular, this translates to a worldview in which everyone has his or her place in the cosmos, and in which being stable in that place is important for the world's smooth continuation. Not knowing your place has grave spiritual consequences, not just for the guilty party, but also for the society as a

whole.¹⁰ This worldview, then, had grafted to it a fatalistic version of Islam's understanding of the will of Allah. The result does not encourage people to distinguish themselves socially or economically. This dynamic is visible at the village level, where people tend to share resources immediately rather than accumulate them as capital. While not all Indonesians are affected by this tendency, the percentage is large enough to affect the nation's cohesion.

This spiritual worldview also affects the understanding of the role of the ruler. The ruler sits at the pinnacle of the religio-social pyramid. To defy the ruler is to defy the natural order. No good can come to the one who does such a thing, and defiance also harms everyone else. These spiritual understandings may be the

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most powerful forces for national cohesion of all, particularly since they are held by the most numerous and important tribe in the archipelago, the Javanese. Their fight to maintain the status quo is much more understandable because of it.

All these forces for national cohesion are strong, and while none of them applies to everyone in the country, there are few people unaffected by them. Nevertheless, there is a power in the country that is working against the forces holding Indonesia together. That power is democratization. As many leaders have learned, one cannot allow just a little liberalization to occur. Democracy, like the proverbial camel with its nose in the tent, wants to come all the way in.

To highlight Indonesia's forces of unity and disunity, it may be useful to focus on a single region. The events and trends in the easternmost province, Irian Jaya (known also as Papua) help focus the question: what will it take to keep Papua in Indonesia?¹¹

LOOKING AT PAPUA

The island of New Guinea is the world's largest tropical island. Larger than any western European country, it is about the same as Spain and Italy together.¹² The western half, more or less, forms the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya, while the east half is the country of Papua New Guinea (PNG), which was freed by Australia after a long period of colonial rule. The native inhabitants refer to it as Papua and those native people are called Papuans. The native inhabitants of the island are Melanesians, who have a darker skin color and tightly curled hair more closely aligned to the people of Africa than of Asia. Due to migration from western Indonesia, the current population mix of the Indonesian side is approximately two-thirds indigenous and one-third settlers from western Indonesia.

The island has no history of unity.¹³ Its geography is dramatic, with high mountains in the center and swamps in the south, which resulted in tribes being relatively isolated from each other. The island is home to one-sixth of the world's ethnicities, with 1,000 languages spoken. Around 267 of these languages are found on the west side. The PNG side has English as its official language. The west side uses Indonesian. It is possible to drive from Jayapura, the Irian Jaya capital, to nearby Vanimo on the PNG side. The interior of Papua is not much troubled by roads, and travel is usually by light plane or foot. The PNG side has more roads into the interior, servicing various extraction industries, but they are still few. Only on the coast and among the many smaller islands nearby was there much trade and social connection between tribes.

One-hundred-and-fifty years ago missionaries brought the Gospel to Papua. The consequence is that most native Papuans are Christian today. In this aspect they contrast greatly to the settler population, which is largely Muslim. The European missionaries apparently decided that what was good for Holland was

good for Papua, and they divided their efforts with Protestants in the north and Catholics in the south. While this hegemony is no longer official policy, the Catholic Church continues to be stronger in the south, with the Protestants remaining numerous in the north. The largest protestant synod on the Indonesian side has over 1,000 congregations, and church buildings can be found in the most remote locations. While there is often still significant rivalry among Christian groups, as there has been in the past, Christianity in general has had the effect of drawing people together in a helpful way. I have visited Papuan churches where the members were as diverse as the total population of the province, and other churches where everyone in attendance was probably a blood relative of the others. Based on my observations while doing conflict resolution work, these very different congregations work together quite well.

In a way, the province's religious unity has worked against independence. It is not difficult to see that a province that is visibly different ethnically and religiously from the rest of the country might think of itself differently. Now place that province on the east edge of the nation, have it share an island with another nation whose people are like its own inhabitants, and one can see that the likely result is separation from the western provinces. Why hasn't such an obvious thing happened?

Having spoken personally with hundreds of ministers and other church leaders in Irian Jaya, I know that their personal preferences range all over the political map. However, two things in particular prevent church-sponsored separatism. One is the inherent conservatism of all church bodies, and the other is the diversity of the specific churches in Irian Jaya.

Hierarchical churches, which are the most common type in Papua, tend to be slower to suggest changes in the civil order as an extension of their desire to maintain their own internal order. Religious institutions tend to be conservative everywhere. Tending and guarding the deposit of faith is a big responsibility, and is usually taken seriously. It is also relatively common for religious institutions to see the established civil order as being fixed by the higher power they worship.

As to diversity, while it is true that native Papuans tend to be Christian while western Indonesians tend to be Muslim, there are a lot of Christians native to western Indonesia in Papuan churches. This is most true in the coastal cities, of course. Further, since western Indonesians tend to hold the positions of power and influence in Papua, not to mention the jobs providing steady income, they have a disproportionate effect on their churches.

The net result is a church that is not leading the charge for political change. As the church is the only social organization outside the government capable of leading such a movement, the church becomes, by default, a force for maintaining the territorial integrity of Indonesia. Whether this is good or bad is for Papuans to decide.

RACISM AND GREED IN INDONESIA

While the church is a force for national stability in Papua, some of the most powerful forces working for the independence of Papua are racism and greed. As evidenced by the Indonesian word for racism, *rasialisme*, the concept of racism is foreign to the culture. While there are a few voices raising the issue of gender bias in Indonesia, racism is simply not discussed. When I ask people about the issue they respond that it is a very sad aspect of America that such a thing exists there. Using the definition of racism as "prejudice coupled with power," it is easy to see that racism is alive and well in Indonesia, however, and particularly noticeable in Papua where racial distinctions are most obvious. If one travels around Papua going into offices and stores not associated with the church, one cannot avoid being struck by the fact that the darker a person's skin, the curlier the hair, and the less Caucasian his or her features, the less likely they are to have a position of responsibility and a salary. The current provincial governor, appointed by the central government, is an exception to this rule.

At a basic level it is fair to say that any tribal group, in general, tends to prefer its own members to people from other groups. The issue is what form that preference takes, and whether someone who has power to give or withhold a public benefit denies people what is rightfully theirs due to this prejudice. On one occasion I was taking the inter-island ferry and met a man I knew from one of the rural areas of Papua. He was on his way to Jakarta, six days away, to ask the central government for justice to avoid violence. He reported that in his area a civil service exam had been given. To be hired by the government one must pass this test. All those who passed the test were western Indonesians; no Melanesian passed the test. The community was outraged. Such occurrences are indicative of the blatant racism at work in Papua, and it is a force for separation.

Many people are working to ameliorate discrimination against native Papuans in their own land, and these efforts may bear fruit. While the subject is not categorized as racism, there is certainly a sense that human rights are being systematically violated. It is ironic that the Javanese, who were discriminated against by the Dutch who preferred Chinese immigrants to the native population, have not been quicker to recognize the divisive forces at work in their own discrimination against Papuans.

Beyond Papua, the forces of discrimination are at work in many other places in Indonesia. As regions achieve greater autonomy they are also free to prefer their own native population to others in employment, in some cases rectifying prior patterns of discrimination.¹⁴ The current movement seems to be one of expelling settlers, even those who have lived in the same location for generations.

I have already mentioned Kalimantan's Dyaks and their expulsion of the Madurese. This event made world news due to the horrifying nature of the treatment the Madurese received. The crime the Madurese had committed, from the

Dyak perspective, was to come and take land and business opportunities—severely interfering with the Dyaks' preferred lifestyle—and then keep to themselves rather than becoming more a part of the community they had invaded. Their exclusivity became a life-threatening issue. In a recent statement in response to government efforts to mediate the return of the Madurese, Dyak leaders said the Madurese could not come back unless they joined the Dyak community.¹⁵

When does tribalism become racism? In the end it does not matter what one calls the issue. Where a group has the power to deny rights to another group based on its group identification, we have divisions that are damaging to national unity. The fact that the government did not have the ability to

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prevent the expulsion of the Madurese calls into question the existence of a unitary state. What exactly is it that the government governs? It would appear that Indonesia is actually well down the path of disintegration in fact, if not in name.

GREED

The discussion of the Madurese expulsions naturally leads to one of the most divisive forces of disintegration in Indonesia. Why is it that Madurese can be expelled from an island where they have lived for 30 years and more? Why is it that the government allows native Papuans to be systematically excluded from receiving the benefits to which they are entitled? The answer is greed.

The history of Indonesia is one of the ruling elite controlling economic life for their personal benefit. This fact is no longer debated; only the extent of the theft during different periods is at issue. Still, Indonesia has been more fortunate than some countries where the rulers stole too much for the country to remain a functioning economic entity. While Indonesia's economic condition is bad, it is not hopeless. One feature of Indonesian life that is different from other similarly situated countries is the connection of the Indonesian military with economic and political life. This creates a unique situation as we look at the chances for continuing unity.

In the nation's beginning there was a revolutionary army, but no tax base. Threatened from within and without, the fledgling state needed an army, but could not pay for one. As has happened in other countries where this was the case, the military went into business, generating a large part of its own revenue. As the government became more centralized, business opportunities needed the political imprimatur of a member of the elite to function. That this approval should require payment was not remarkable.

Since businesses could not function without the stability the military could provide, and since the military had a continuing need for business opportunities, it became common for business to be done by consortiums that included members of the ruling elite, the military, or both. These connections were sometimes obvious and other times not. Soeharto was one of the successful military officers who managed to do well in business. At the end of his rule large percentages of the income from businesses in Indonesia passed to his cronies or the military, effectively raising the prices of products and preventing the benefits of competition from being enjoyed by consumers.¹⁶

The basic necessities have been kept inexpensive by government subsidies or regulations of other kinds. An example is that much of the rice Indonesians eat is 25 percent broken rice. Broken rice is cheap on the world market, and Indonesia is a net importer, even in good harvest years. The government distributes rice to the poor at less than half price. Many Indonesians cook on kerosene burners. State-produced kerosene is sold very cheaply, about \$0.20 per gallon. Gasoline has also been heavily subsidized, and even though there have been recent price increases, it is still about \$0.50 per gallon. Whenever the government

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tries to raise the price to satisfy the World Bank or another external financial entity, there are violent demonstrations.

What do such facts have to do with greedy elites? Successful theft by elites requires invisibility and turning the populace at large into accomplices. If the elite walked into banks and took handfuls of money, people would not accept it. If instead they inflate public works contracts paid for by loans, no one sees it. That satisfies the first requirement. People will talk, however, and so being discreet about dipping into the public purse isn't

enough. The way to prevent objection is to let everyone in on the act.

To assuage the populace, the Indonesian government artificially sets prices of basic commodities at less than the cost of production, and makes sure people know it. Once everyone becomes used to the low prices, the elite is able to respond to criticism of its own practices by saying that the international financial community has demanded that the prices of the commodities be increased to at least recover the cost of production. There is a strategy here: people who want the government to defy the international economic community on the pricing of commodities are unlikely to suggest that its demands be respected in other areas. The practice safeguards the elites, as the threat of raised commodity prices acts as a distraction that is guaranteed to cause demonstrations.

Besides the destructiveness of such obvious economic foolishness, the greed that drives it is a divisive force in its own right. Generally speaking, the further people are from the country's geographic center, which in Indonesia means Jakarta, the easier it is for the government to keep the central economic house of cards erect by withholding benefits. In the case of Papua this has resulted in a province with one percent of the national population providing 10 percent of the government's revenue, mostly through extraction industries, while receiving a much smaller return in terms of government spending. The result is some of the poorest people in Indonesia subsidizing Java.

The way Jakarta shares wealth with Papuans also contributes to this division. I visited a church in the interior of Papua one Sunday morning. It was in the village of the area's airstrip. The building was bamboo with a dirt floor. A new cement building was in process and will be completed some day. The people lived in rough wood houses that had been built in a straight line in the open near the airstrip by the government as part of its process of moving people to places easier to govern. There was an elementary school with teachers. The people had gardens in the forest and hunted for their food. There was a government clinic with a health worker, but very little in the way of supplies. The village also had a working water system with several faucets through the village. Since it was located beside the airstrip, all the local government functionaries, including police, lived nearby. The only cash in the village came from the government workers' salaries and the sale of peanuts grown in the forest gardens.

The local government official, a Muslim, attended the church service. At the end of the service he announced that because the village's pigs had been tearing up the airstrip, all pigs had to be fenced in or shot. There was great grumbling, since a fenced in pig must be fed, and pigs require as much food as a person, effectively doubling the effort people would have to put into gathering food. The official heard this grumbling get worse and worse, then stood and made a speech, announcing at the end a \$500 gift to the church. The congregation then cheered this generosity. Afterwards I asked people about their pigs and they said they would not fence them in the village, but rather at their garden spots so the pigs could feed themselves. I also learned that this process was typical of the manner in which the government conferred benefits on the Papuan people: in dribs and drabs aimed at no purpose but the stifling of dissent. But it is doubtful the central government's technique will be effective in the long run. As I walked around I saw a young boy drawing in the dirt. When I looked closer I saw it was the Bintang Kejora, the Papuan nationalist flag.

The inability of the elite to share the wealth of Indonesia is one of the strongest divisive factors in the country. A large percentage of the population lives on \$1 a day, and 57 percent of rural households do not have the half hectare of land that is needed to survive.¹⁷

CAN THIS COUNTRY BE SAVED?

We have just come through eighteen months of rule by the first democratically elected President of Indonesia. The political elite spent the entirety of his tenure trying to prevent Abdurrahman Wahid from succeeding in reforming the government. With the possible exceptions of weakening the military's hold on political power and beginning to decentralize state power in favor of the provinces, no significant work was done to remedy any of the problems mentioned above. Now we are in the next president's honeymoon period. What must Megawati do if the unitary state of Indonesia is to survive?

Whatever she does, continued fiddling with economic policies and political machinations will not do the job. Throughout the *Orde Baru*, Soeharto's 30 years

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of New Order, the people of Indonesia were set against one another to prevent them from joining together in opposition to the central government's well-oiled kleptocracy. The result has been a mind-boggling plethora of injustices between and among groups, which must be dealt with as a precondition to political and economic reform. For most of Indonesia's history, distrust has been sown. Distrust must transform into trust if Indonesia is to take its rightful place in the

family of nations. The United States went through a terrible civil war before it began building trust among its people. How can Indonesia avoid the same process?

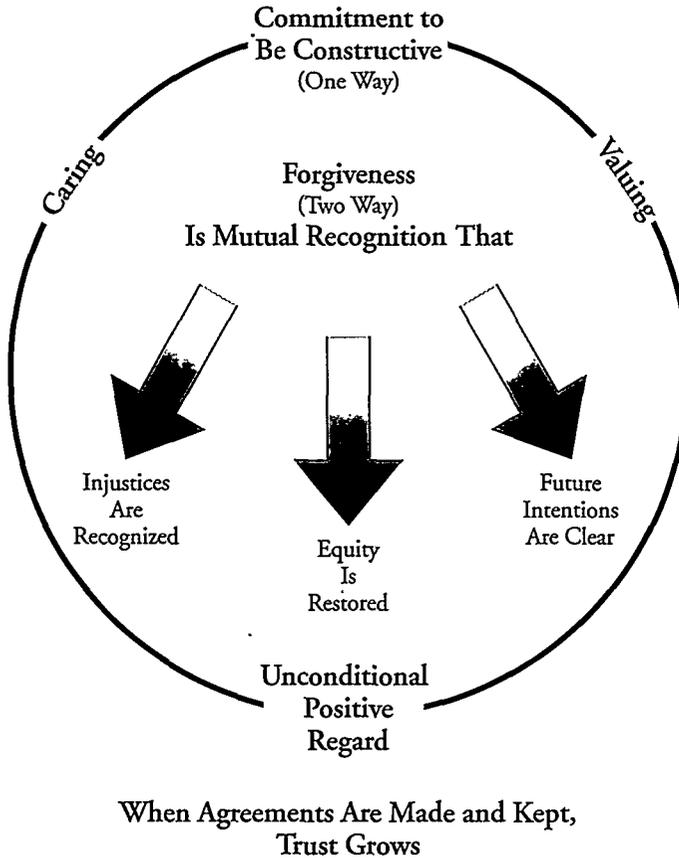
Obviously, Megawati will have to show strong leadership and balance opposing interests. She will have a considerably easier time, however, if an atmosphere of forgiveness and reconciliation can prevail in the country as a whole. As long as different groups are nursing grievances against one another, Megawati's efforts at reforming the economic and political system will be thwarted. Therefore, change in Indonesia must begin at the grassroots level. It is at that grassroots level that my colleagues and I have been working to develop a model for a reconciliation process.

A RECONCILIATION PROCESS FOR INDONESIA

If there is a problem between groups of people where one or both feel that the other has been unjust, what does it take to restore that relationship? In the role-play I conduct in training groups, I borrow a colleague's camera, drop it, and then return the broken camera with profuse apologies. I turn to the group and ask if I have adequately accounted for my actions. Of course not, the participants

always reply. You have to fix or replace the camera, they say. The following diagram, developed by my Fresno Pacific University colleague Ron Claassen, describes the necessary process:

PEACEMAKING MODEL¹



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The circle is the “Commitment to be Constructive.” People outside the circle cannot do reconciliation work. In other words, for reconciliation work to begin, the parties must be committed to acting constructively towards the others in the process, no matter what happens. As might be imagined, preparing people for that commitment is a process in itself. Our trainings in Indonesia are named “Empowering for Reconciliation” (*Pemberdayaan untuk Rekonsiliasi*).¹⁸ The process of helping people make the commitment to be constructive is the process of empowering for reconciliation. For people who are not yet ready, encouragement in the form of either lowering the cost of cooperation or raising the cost of being uncooperative must be applied by those trying to help. This is the old carrot-and-stick approach, but the goal is cooperation between the parties, not punishment or victory in any usual sense.

The three steps inside the circle are so simple that we can train people to lead meetings of this kind between individual victims and offenders in nine hours.¹⁹ When the parties are groups of people, the complexities are greater, but the principles are the same.²⁰ Three things need to happen. First, the parties must acknowledge the injustices felt by the other parties. Such acknowledgement does

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not mean agreeing with the other parties; it only means acknowledging that they experienced those events as injustice. The only trick at this stage is for the other parties listening to the description of these injustices not to speak out defensively or to try to justify themselves. The goal is to understand the facts and feelings and to acknowledge them. Second, once the injustices have been acknowledged, the question becomes, "What must we do now to make things as right as possible between us?" The parties have to work out an answer to this question to their mutual satisfaction, something

easier to achieve than it sounds. Finally, there needs to be clarity about future intentions toward one another.²¹

This model was developed through work with victims and offenders. Many thousands of cases all over the world have been handled using it. We have found that once this process results in agreements that are kept, trust begins to grow. Since, by definition, the parties have a commitment to be constructive, figuring out how to make things right and monitor compliance is not usually difficult. The process works most quickly face to face, but also works using the indirect method preferred in most places outside Europe and North America. The one time I used the model between states, in a case regarding the handling of unexploded ordinance left behind long after an armed conflict had ended, we used the indirect method. The negotiation required only two passes to complete and broke a 25-year deadlock with a result that is still in place years later.²²

When I present the model here in Indonesia the parties' initial response is usually acceptance as a good idea for use between individuals, but more reluctance to see the process as useful for large groups of people. Were this model of reconciliation used widely between contending groups in Indonesia, it would allow people to deal with the feelings of injustice that are blocking the development of the nation and fueling separatist tensions. We have found that groups that do not work through these feelings of injustice do not cooperate in the ways that are necessary today in Indonesia.²³ Trying to agree to forget the past does not work in the long term. Knowing from experience how well the model works, my group has

been training Indonesians in its use. I have been personally involved in teaching it to over 1,000 Indonesians throughout the country, and preparing various groups to lead major processes in their home areas. One of these large projects is underway in Papua.

The Papua project aims to bring together representatives from as many stakeholder groups as possible to identify the underlying interests of the Papuan people that lead to aspirations for independence or autonomy, thus shifting the discussion away from non-negotiable political demands. A group of facilitators has been trained to hold regional meetings for this purpose, and the first took place very recently.

When we have used the reconciling-interests-and-injustices process in Papua it has worked well. The hope is that the identification of underlying needs, which will probably include the need for reconciling injustices, will assist those who are working on the regional autonomy laws, as well as identify areas of commonality between those who strongly favor and object to independence. We have found that this movement towards negotiating interests is possible in Papua, though difficult. The key to success is to work patiently to develop the commitment to be constructive among the participants before beginning the three steps inside the circle. In the Papua project this process of including all groups in the slow development of a commitment to be constructive has been the hardest part, and may be what prevents a successful conclusion.

It is usually not acceptable in issues as large as Papuan independence to move directly into a "reconciling injustices process." We begin with the reconciling interests process, as described in Fisher and Ury's landmark book, *Getting To Yes*,²⁴ and use it to identify the need for further addressing injustices. Then we are able to agree to begin that more important process. The end result cannot be known in the beginning, since an honest process has to leave such things open. The willingness to begin the process with a commitment to be constructive is what matters.

Trying to build a nation from the competing groups that make up Indonesia is an awesome task. I am hopeful that the task can become more possible through the process of reconciling injustices described here. In the absence of such a process I see continued economic difficulty, continued fragmentation of people groups, and eventual dissolution of the unitary state shown on today's maps as the forces holding it together lose their grip. Whatever the geography of the country in years to come, I am hopeful that its people can come to new understandings of one another, do the work necessary to build trust, and find a better path to unity than the one the nation is following today. ■

NOTES

1 Garuda is the mythical bird mounted by the god Vishnu in Hindu sacred writings.

2 Alfred Russel Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago* (London, 1858; reprint, London: Periplus, 2000), 15.

3 Hera Diani, "Indonesian: Speaking the same lingo?" *Jakarta Post*, October 28, 2001.

4 "Megawati again warns of nation's disintegration," *Jakarta Post*, October 30, 2001.

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- 5 U.S. Department of State Background Note: Indonesia, October 2000.
<<http://www.state.gov/t/pa/bgn/index.cfm?docid=2748>>
- 6 John Saltford, "United Nations Involvement With The Act Of Self- Determination In West Irian (Indonesian West New Guinea) 1968 To 1969" (paper distributed on the World Wide Web, 2001)
<http://www.westpapua.org.uk/books/book0/un_wp.pdf>
- 7 "Indonesia," 1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor U.S. Department of State, February 25, 2000
<http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1999_hrp_report/indonesi.html>
- 8 Editor, "Survey: Indonesia," *The Economist*, July 8-14, 2000.
<http://www.economist.com/editorial/freforall/8-7-00/index_su6004.html>
- 9 Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Javanese Ethics and Worldview*. Gramedia, Jakarta.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Deciding what to call the Indonesian side of the island of New Guinea is complicated. It was West Irian for a time, then renamed Irian Jaya by Soeharto. On January 1, 2000, then-President Abdurrahman Wahid said in a speech that the province should be renamed Papua, only to have the legislature refuse to pass legislation to that effect. On October 23, 2001 the legislature passed a bill renaming the province Papua.
- 12 It is also the size of Texas with half of Oklahoma thrown in.
- 13 Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999).
- 14 Panca Nugraha, "Regions accused of ethnic discrimination in the workplace," *Jakarta Post*, October 24, 2001.
- 15 "Dayaks reject return of Madurese," *Jakarta Post*, April 29, 2001.
- 16 Adam Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, 2d edition (Singapore: Westview Press, 1997).
- 17 Daniel Bachriadi, "Land for the landless: Why are democrats in Jakarta not interested in land reform?" *Inside Indonesia*, No. 64, October-December 2000. <<http://www.insideindonesia.org>>
- 18 Duane Ruth-Heffelbower, ed., *Pemberdayaan untuk Rekonsiliasi, Edisi ke-2 direvisi dan diperluas* (Empowering for Reconciliation, 2d edition revised and expanded, in the Indonesian language). Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Duta Wacana University Press, 2000.
- 19 Ron Claassen, *How to Start a Victim Offender Reconciliation Program* (Fresno, CA: Fresno Pacific University, 2001).
- 20 Duane Ruth-Heffelbower, "Reconciling Injustices: A Process for Indonesia." *Islamic Millennium Journal*, vol. 1 no. 1, 2001.
- 21 Duane Ruth-Heffelbower, *Conflict and Peacemaking Across Cultures: Training for Trainers* (Fresno, CA: Fresno Pacific University, 1999).
- 22 I don't have permission to discuss this case in print, unfortunately. There was commitment to be constructive on both sides. Cooperation by the parties on the project continues today.
- 23 Duane Ruth-Heffelbower, "Indonesia: Restorative Justice for Healing a Divided Society." Paper presented to conference entitled, "Just Peace?" Auckland, New Zealand, April 26, 2000.
- 24 Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983). The recent translation of this book into Indonesian has been a big help to us.
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