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Indonesian Military in Politics: Possibility for Change?*

Himawan Bayu Patriadi

One of the striking phenomenon over the past several decades was a massive regime changes. Due to the facts, in theoretical level, there were some significant reassessments of political theories regarding the linkage between modernisation, authoritarianism and democracy. In the 1960s and 1970s, it was common for post-colonial states which held development used authoritarian arrangements. So, it is not surprising if some writers assume that authoritarianism seems to be along with the process of modernisation. Since the mid-1980s, however, there have been dramatic process of democratisation in many areas, including Asia region. As Karantnicky points out that before 1970s the majority of United Nation's members were authoritarian states, but in the end of 1993, overhalf, 107 out of 186, have become democratic.

Tightly linked to this phenomenon is the replacement of the military of civilian regimes, or at least signalised by the decline of the

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political role of the military. What have happened in South Korea, Thailand, in which the civilian governments have been in function for several years, seem to represent this trend. While, in Indonesia despite there is a signal which indicates that the armed forces is trying to adjust its role by proposing a plan to reduce their representative quota in parliament, it is clear that their influence on social political life is still dominant. In this paper I intend to discuss the Indonesia military political role. The issue that will be noticed is why this role becomes strong and relatively legitimate. In particular, I will scrutinise the concept of dual-function which is the main pillar for the Indonesia armed forces political role. Several issues which will be underlined here are how the concept has lasted and legitimized, and how this has been adjusted, and finally the prospect of the concept in the immediate future, considering the growing demand of democratisation.

Historical Background
A. Struggle for Independent : Self-image Formation

One of the uniqueness of the Indonesia military is that, it was born in revolutionary situation. Its formation happened along with the struggle for independence in 1945. This is why the Indonesian military can be classified as the revolutionary army. More importantly, its special characteristic is that the Indonesian army was a self-created army, it was not formed by government. It represented a spontaneous initiative of Indonesian Dutch and Japanese trained militia in order to defend their country. It happened after the civilian government led by Soekarno wanted to get independence peacefully by avoiding confrontation with the Allies which claimed that they had a right on the ex-Japan colonies, including Indonesia. By this, the Indonesian army chose their own commander, General Sudirman, without any guidance of the government, and only later on the government confirmed the commander position.

The important point is that the kind of process had the crucial impact on the military as institution, particularly how they perceive themselves within the state. It can be seen by the emergence of the self-

image of the Indonesian army that was reflected in the General Sudirman's behaviour who saw himself as more than a mere government's soldiers.

Another factor that built the self-image of the Indonesian military was the nature of their role in the struggle for independence. This struggle itself had political as well as military dimension. Because it was born in the revolutionary situation, the militia which involved in the struggle were motivated first by the spirit to defend the independence proclaimed by politicians. In this sense, they became military not particularly intended to make career in military, but mainly was inspired by the patriotic spirit. Later on this has been legalised by the formulation "pejuang-prajurit" and "prajurit pejuang" or "fighter-soldier" and "soldier-fighter". The former seems to refer to the military from militia in the revolutionary period, while the latter constitutes the troops which enter the military through formal education such as military academy. But, they claims they are tightened by the similar spirit. This indicates the Indonesian military claim that it has two characteristic which cannot to separated. They see themself as fighters as well as soldiers. The type of the struggle for independence has blurred the demarcation between political and military sphere became.

Moreover, the environment in which the military officers got political orientation also created the awareness among them that their interest could be different from civilian politican interest. The military to and political condition at that time had forced the military to deal with national political issues, and it was not rare they had different views with civilian counterpart. The differences can be detected particularly in term of strategy they wished to implement against the Dutch. In this case, the military did not like the way done by the politicains who tended to emphasise negotiation with the Dutch, which was not beneficial for Indonesian. In fact, by the negotiations the Indonesian area became narrow. This is, apparently, the origin of the military distrust of the civilian politicians.

\[5\] ibid.
What I would like to argue here is that in observing the political role of the Indonesian army, it is important to see the role played since its inception. Unlike military in other countries which are not active in politics, or some other military that their political intervention merely do an arbitrator function, the Indonesian military never think themselves will stay out of politics, although historically, their political role also fluctuates in line with the political condition.

B. Period 1950-1965: Searching Justification

Following the recognition of Indonesian sovereignty as a result of the round-table conference between Indonesia and the Netherlands in 1949, Indonesia adopted the parliamentary system of government. The implementation the system has caused the decline in military role in politics because military had to be subordinated to the civilian government. The other important factor was the death of General Sudirman in early 1950s. This event as least had two impact on the military as institutions. First, the military lost the leader who in the previous period could express the military policy even it had to oppose the government. Second, this also meant the loss of military unifier, which resulted in the susceptible of the army from civilian intervention.

The first crucial incident in term of civil-military relation in this period was the 17th October 1952. This was triggered by the discussion in the parliament about the modernisation of the army which assumed by the army. President refused the demand and then Nasution resigned as chief of staff of the army. This abortive army movement not only showed how the president still had a charisma and great influence although he did not hold any official powerful post in the system, but it also reflected the division within themself after the death of General Sudirman. As illustrated by Pauker:

"While Colonel Nasution, Chief of Staff of the Army, was being hostile to parliament and inclining towards an authoritarian and

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7 Siad, op.cit. p. 20.
militaristic approach, Major General Simatupang, Chief Staff of the Armed Forces, was arguing against a military dictatorship\textsuperscript{8}.

By the failed movement, the army became divided into two camps, the pro-17 October movement and the anti group. Moreover, politically this also has weaken the bargaining position of the military\textsuperscript{9}. It is important to note, however, that this movement indicates that at that time, although the system implemented was parliamentary system, there were military officers who perceived military as institution not only performed military functions but also had political interests, political feeling and political thought\textsuperscript{10}.

The formation of new cabinet on July 31, 1953 which named the leftist Iwa Kusuma Sumantri, as Minister of Defense seemed to reunite the officers. There were two policies of the Minister which irritated the army\textsuperscript{11}. First, his open sympathy to the people who were involved with 1948 communist rebellion, Second, he sustained and even deepened the rift between the pro and anti-October groups. There was growing intention to restoring the unity of the army. The concrete from taken in February 1955 in which more than 250 military officers gathered on the cemetery of General Sudirman and agreed to reunite.

The decision had the important impact on the bargaining position of the army. It could be seen when on June 1955 the civilian government tried to promote Colonel Bambang Utoyo, a relatively junior officer to become Chief of Staff, most of the officers refused. This was an important indication that the military could act as a political institution and it did not obey civilian government\textsuperscript{12}. This event showed that civilian government could not control the military which could strengthen their

\textsuperscript{10} Membangun Republik (To develop Republic), (Anonymous) interview with Prof. Daniel Lev. August 2, 1995. P. 2.
\textsuperscript{11} Said, \textit{op,cit}. P. 21.
\textsuperscript{12} Membangun Republik, \textit{loc,cit}. 
position after General Nasution was renamed as Chief of staff again in the same year.

One main priority which Nasution wanted to pursue was how to make the army solid by strengthening the power of headquarters over the regional commanders. Besides the unity of military was important for their political aims, it was also pushed by the escalation of regionalism at that time. Facing the latter factor confirmed Nasution and other military officer that military was the key institution. Moreover, at the same time there was a debate in parliament about decentralisation law. The implementation of this law would weaken the central authorities and state. This was why Nasution condemned the law, and he praised the centralised state-bureaucracy. The political crisis began since 1956 finally pushed the government to declare the martial law in March 1957.

The martial law enabled the military to broaden its role in political sphere and then also in economy. Not longer after the implementation of the law, there was nationalisation of the Dutch companies as part of the campaign against the Dutch which still occupied the Irian province. So, if the martial law became "constitutional" base for the military political role, the nationalisation has given the foundation for its economic role. By the fact that military was one alternative power facing the political crisis, Nasution began to search the justification for the military political role permanently. In 1958, by utilising the surroundings that was psychologically profitable at that time because there were many coups such as in Sudan, Iraq and Thailand, Nasution then declared the concept of "Middle Way". He insisted that Indonesian military was not just "civilian tool" like in Western countries nor a 'military regime' which dominated the state power, but as one of the many forces in the society. This concept actually was just an insistence of the position of the military which de facto it has exercised political power. Regarding this, General Simatupang, former Supreme Commander of Chief, claimed:

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13 ibid. p. 3.
14 ibid. p. 4.
"The 1958 doctrine of the Middle Way did not create the expanded military role. That expansion of the military role arose simple out of a historical necessity. The doctrine was an attempt to provide a rationale for it, at the same time laying down limitations to the expanded role"\textsuperscript{16}.

Apart from his effort to build a justification for the permanent political role of the military, Nasution appealed to the constituante to readopt the 1945 constitution in order to replace the ad-hoc constitution. The main reason for this was that, the 1945 constitution allowed political representation, of political parties, functional groups and the representative of the regions. In term of political representation, Nasution perceived that military was a part of functional groups. After the constituante failed to readopt the 1945 constitution Nasution urged President Soekarno to make a decree for readopting the 1945 constitution. In this case, it seemed that President Soekarno was in a difficult situation. In a press conference, after coming back from Japan, he said angrily "I will not surrender to military"\textsuperscript{17}. On 5 July 1959, however, President Soekarno issued a decree readopting the 1945 constitution as the beginning the Guide Democracy era replacing the parliamentary system. This once again proved how the military has been a powerful political force at that time. This evidence also lessens the argument which claims that the decree of is actually the president's wish to regain power after in a long period a ceremonial position.

The Guided Democracy period marked by the "triangle politics" in which Soekarno played a balancer between the army and the Indonesian Communism Party (PKI) the only powerful political party left after Soekarno banned several parties in 1960. In this case, it seemed that president could not control the army, he wanted to use PKI as a force facing the army. This lasted until 1965 when PKI staged an abortive coup which caused party disappearance. This event left the army the only


\textsuperscript{17} Membangun Republik. \textit{op.cit}. p.5
alternative power, moreover because of facing PKI since 1960, it has developed and built the territorial command based on the practice guerilla war in revolutionary period in which its structures were parallel with civilian bureaucracy structure. Besides, in order to balance PKI movement, the army had also sponsored the establishment of a functional group, namely Golongan Karya (Golkar). Both of them then become the backbone of the New Order's political power.

C. The New Order Period: the Dominant Power and Signal for Change

The abortive coup staged by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) on 30 September 1965 has changed the political balance. The was "triangle politics" shocked. PKI as the one powerful political party was destroyed and disappeared. While, President's legitimation became less and less due to his statements which were often considered as sympathetic to PKI. This condition made the military, particularly the army, became the sole political power; after the transfer of power from president Soekarno to General Soeharto in March 1966.

Being a dominant political force, the army seemed to be aware that the new doctrine was needed to justify its new political position. This why not longer after the transfer in 1966 of power the second army seminar was held. Indeed, one year before, the first army seminar was also conducted in which the result was recognised as contaminated by leftist jargon. The second seminar aimed at purifying the army doctrine. It was clear that it mainly was intended to reaffirm the political position of the army as written in the new doctrine:

"Hope for the Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia/ABRI (The Indonesian Armed Forces) there is only one alternative. That is to realise what the people have entrusted to ABRI. And because of that ABRI compelled to construct and cultivate a respectable government, a government which is powerful and progressive".\(^{18}\)

Noticing this new formulation, it can be seen that there is a change dealing with the army perception about their position within society and the role that it must play. If Nasution in 1958 perceived that the military was one of many forces in society and would work together with other people forces, the new doctrine insisted that military must take a leading role. Clearly, the real political situation in which the military was the sole powerful force has pushed the renewal of the interpretation of dual-function.

1. Making a Firm Basis: Imperative Ideology

Although it has the new doctrine which underlines the importance for the military to play a prominent role, seemingly "ideology" that can place the role on a solid footing is considered necessary. This was why since 1965 the New Order has made efforts to institutionalise such kind of ideology.

One of the efforts is to interpretate Pancasila, the state ideology based heavily on "integralism" thinking. This concept is often expressed through a metaphor the idealised family that proposes a view of a state as an organic totality and interdependent harmony in which it is claimed in accordance with the characteristic of Indonesian society. This concept actually is rooted in the debates in the Independence Investing Committee in 1945 (BPUPKI). It was Dr. Soepomo who proposed the concept for the first time. What was commonly believed was that the 1945 constitution which was not separable with Pancasila was coloured by the such kind of thinking. But, two senior law experts argued against this belief. Dachlan Ranuwihardjo said that integralism never influenced or became reference of the constitution. After his proposal refused by most members of BPUPKI since that time, Soepomo actually ignored the concept. Professor Usep Ranawidjaja, the secretary general of former

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constituante underlines this statement. Soepomo actually talked about the concept only once in May 31, 1945; after that he never proposed anymore. The claim that UUD'45 followed the integralistic thinking was not true, he added; it meant that the unworking democracy was not because of the 1945 constitution articles were integralistic coloured, but it has been interpreted for power interest.

Nevertheless, the integralism apparently has become a pillar of the Indonesian military view. A political observer who was known to be close to many military officers said that every military officers he met only one of them who disagreed with the integralistic idea. In fact, in its official guide book for ABRI which was published at the beginning of 1980s, in the explanation of philosophy approach of dual-function Indonesian military has adopted the integralistic thinking. Therefore, it was not surprised if military officers frequently drew on the concept when they explained the permanence and Indonesia-ness of dwifungsi. For example, giving comment on the idea to decline of the ABRI's quota in People's Representative Council, the spokesman of ABRI's fraction said that the existence of ABRI in Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat/MPR (People's Consultative Assembly) and Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat/DPR (People's Representative Council) was a necessity as embodiment of the nation's integralistic idea.

22 ibid.
23 Confidential interview, 4 December 1995. This supports the Ramage's findings that senior officers often volunteer the definition of Pancasila as an integralistic ideology in which the primary emphasis is not in term of individual rights, but in term of social obligations. see Ramage, "Pancasila Discourse in Soeharto's Late New Order", in Bourchier and Legge, eds., Democracy in Indonesia : 1950s and 1990s. Centre of Southeast Asian Studies. Monash University, 1994, p. 163.
25 Ramage, loc.cit.
26 Pelita, 23 May 1995.
In a nutshell, clearly to justify its political role the Indonesian military has adopted and developed the interpretation of Pancasila in order to place dual-function on a solid footing in national political life. As Ramage points out:

The historic role of ABRI as the only national institution with both political and security functions is justified as the implementation of Pancasila as an 'integralistic' ideology in which ABRI's political role is considered an inseparable, integral element of the Pancasila state"\(^{27}\).

2. Power Structure and Paternalism

One interesting question is that why does the integralistic concept become hegemonic in Indonesian political discourse? Elsewhere, an observer insists that in order to get a better understanding of the New Order's hegemony, it is important to scrutinise the interaction of the "idea" (ideology) and "instrument" (system/policy) with the structures and the processes of power, legitimacy and accumulation\(^{28}\). Of these, the power structure established since 1965 seems to be the most influencing factor in the interaction which ultimately determines the hegemony.

Some observers believe that there are divisions within ABRI which would eventually lead to a political change\(^{29}\). In term of political ideas, differences among the divisions most likely exist, It world be misleading, however, to assume that it would direct the transformation of the system, at least in immediate future. Historically, indeed Indonesian military have been signalled by one "purge" to other "purge\(^{30}\), in which this finally has resulted in crystallisation of the military under the

\(^{27}\) Ramage, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 166.
\(^{29}\) to note some of them, Anderson, "The Last Days of Soeharto" in \textit{Southeast Asia Chronicle}, 63, 1978. This describes the generation 45 (freedom fighters) versus the academy generation. Jenkins, \textit{Soeharto and His Generals}. Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1984. This talks about the 'pragmatic' and 'principled' officer; and Crouch, \textit{op.cit.} which mentions the 'professional' and 'financial' officers.
\(^{30}\) confidential interview. 28 November 1995.
Soeharto's control. It commenced on the purge of officers who involved in the regional rebellions in the late 1950s, and then followed by the of leftist and Soekarnoist officers due to the abortive Communist coup in 1965. When he started holding power in 1966, General Soeharto began making efforts to tighten his control over the military. After success to remove the leftist and the "Old Order" sympatisers, he consolidated his power base in the military. For this he removed some generals who played key role in his rise to power but widely known as the critical and popular such as Nasution, Sarwo Edhie, Kemal Idris and HR. Dharsono\textsuperscript{31}.

General Soeharto could fully control military after he successfully unified three armed forces, the Army, Navy and Air Force in one command under the ABRI's headquarters in 1969, in which constitutionally as president he was also the Supreme Commander a very powerful position. Since this time, if there were some conflicts within the military, basically, they were not challenges to the Soeharto himself, but they rather reflected the rivalry among the president's aides. As an observer says, "now it is not relevant anymore to assume that there are many power centers within ABRI\textsuperscript{32}. In the beginning of 1970s, to be sure, there was the rivalry between Ali Moertopo and General Soemitro in which some saw it as the rift between the 'financial' and 'professional' officers, was the conflict in order to get the trust from President. While the early removal of General Murdani from the armed commander in 1987, as has been believed, was due to the fact that he had his own scenario which was not agreeable to the president\textsuperscript{33}. No longer after that the row between ABRI leaders and President was more represented as the resentment of the former dealing with the nomination Sudharmono as vice

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\textsuperscript{32} Confidential interview, 28 November 1995.

\textsuperscript{33} It is widely believed that General Murdani is one of the two powerful generals in the New Order era besides General Soemitro. His dismissal before the president election in 1988 was unusual. It was claimed that it caused by his efforts to put a distance between ABRI and the executive. For details, see Vatikiotis, \textit{ibid.} p. 82.
president rather than to challenge the president itself. What happened then proved that the senior ABRI officers could not change the president mind to continue the nomination. This is once again shows how president still holds the power confidently.

Now, it seems that president has no special 'trusted' men, or possibly he does not want them anymore, like in the previous time. "Soeharto is playing the politics himself", one observer said. And in term of the dual-function, "he directs the military interpretation about dwifungsi (dual-function) with his interpretation". And "if you want to see the real meaning of the dual-function, just look what Soeharto says about it" he added. In fact, in the late 1970s there was a view within ABRI represented in a Seskoad (the army command course) paper which recommend that ABRI must stand above all group. But, Soeharto responded by insisting that ABRI had to choose sides, and could not remain above all group. As a result, the Seskoad's view then disappeared. All of these support the fact that Soeharto is as the sole power, his view has dominated the political discourse. And seemingly, at least in the immediate future there is no alternative power which can challenge him. As one retired general, Hasnan Habib, also claimed that "ABRI is very weak, and subservient to Soeharto. We just implement what he wants us to do". Another source underlines this statement by saying that how Soeharto incredibly controls the military. While the Far Easter Economic Review also reported the same point.

"...while former Defence Chief Benny Murdani was given largely a free hand in drawing up promotions, Soeharto now signs off on almost all appointments. Even officers awarded foreign-service decorations must get his personal approval....Soeharto is kept familiar with officers down to battalion level in the Jakarta

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34 One main reason of the resentment was that Sudharmono--by using his state secretariat--was considered to reduce the ABRI's influence by undermining their financial strength and pull over the bureaucracy, ibid. p. 84.
35 Confidential interview, 28 November 1995.
36 Vatikiotis, op.cit. p. 78-79.
38 Confidential interview, 28 November 1995.
command, and down to Kodam or regional level across the rest of the country."\(^{39}\)

Despite the power structure is the important factor which enables Soeharto to dominate the Indonesian political discourse, including the interpretation of dual-function; the cultural factor—that is paternalism—should not be underrated. This value is a common feature of Indonesian society which is characterised by respect to the older, high status person or leader. In an extreme formulation this value could be embodied in term "father knows best". The value currently is also still pervasive, even within military. It can be seen, particularly, by the behaviour of the military officers toward Soeharto.

Regarding its political behavior, ABRI as an organisation has an institution called Dewan Socia-Politik (Social and Political Council) which formulates and determines the policy dealing with the political behaviour of ABRI. This council is led by the armed forced commander. But, different from the military structure which draws on command line, this council is based on collective leaderships. In this body the commander acts as a chief, and one military source says that "the position and the influence of the commander is not absolute". Thus, principally, "in term of a social and political force there is no Supreme Commander", he added\(^{40}\). In formulating its policies, the council receives many inputs from various sources, such as ABRI's personnels, the officers active in the executive and also the senior retired officers including President. What often happens is that, when the council should formulate a certain political policy, and at that time Soeharto express his view, there is no person in the council who would argue him, a military source confirms\(^{41}\).

The phenomenon not merely represents how powerful Soeharto is. To be fair, that also shows how most of military officers give respect, or at least reluctant to suggest any different or alternative views. In fact, most of military officers, even civilians, acknowledge Soeharto's

\(^{40}\) confidential interview, 26 November 1995.
\(^{41}\) confidential interview, 26 November 1995.
achievements. For them Soeharto, personally, is almost charismatic. He emerges as a leader in a special circumstances, in hazardous time, when the politics of the country was uncertain following the abortive coup in 1965. By this, he is often considered as a "hero" because he has successfully saved the country from Communism. More than that, many people also admit his attainment in improving economy, this is why he is very popular particularly in the remote areas.

Given the facts above, it is not surprisingly if Soeharto is very powerful and dominates political discourse including the direction of the military political outlook. It is hard now to imagine any possible chance of the military political view or its political involvement without considering what Soeharto wants. Some military sources say "as long as he is still in power there will be a change as long as he approves that". Neddless to say, what really mean of the concept dinamisator (dynamiser) in which ABRI claims itself concerning non-military affairs-is basically delineated to the Soeharto's explanation of that in 1969. He insisted the concept reflects ABRI wish to make society dynamic by the principle "Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodho, Ing Madyo Mbangun Karso, Tut Wuri handayani" (leading example in the front, inspiring in the midst of the people, and encouraging from behind); and the current debate about the ABRI political role, to be sure, is referring to this postulate, and in addition, this is also one of the eleven of ABRI's leadership principles.

By the relatively established thinking above, this does not mean, however, that there is no developing alternative views among military officers about is political role. As will be discussed below there are a number of interpretations, but whether it will be operated or not is still questionable.

3. Different Interpretations of Dual-function : Would this Lead to Change?

Facing the developing environment, domestic and international, ABRI's leaders seem to be aware that to adjust the nature of political role

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42 based on two confidential interview, 26 and 27 November 1995.
43 quoted from Said, op.cit. p. 28.
is something urgent. Talking about domestic factors one usually refers to the emergence of strengthening civil society, particularly middle class as a result of economic development. It is true that at present there is a growing demands for democracy mainly from unban middle class. In fact, the size of this segment becomes bigger. But, seemingly it is hard to hope that in the near future this class can play as a countervailing force or agent of change, because generally speaking the Indonesian middle class is still weak vis-avis the state. Although the absoulte number of this class is the highest comparing to other Asean countries, about 14 millions; the size is only 8% of total population, the smallest proportion among the countries\textsuperscript{44}. More than that, this class is not homegeneous. This feature of course then implies on their political orientations. From various groups, it seems that only the professionals which is considered to be most critical, despite the fact that this group is small in number. Meanwhile, the business sector mostly is dependent on the state which control large scale of economic life. The general portray of the Indonesian middle class described by Arief Budiman is as follows:

"...at present, it is difficult to hope that this class (middle class) will play a significant role in the process of democratisation of the country. The business elite, the strongest component of the class, is basically a lumpen group. They exist and expand based on state facilities. The existence of this class is still dependent on the state. The state is still powerful in determining the survival and well being of this class"\textsuperscript{45}.

Put simply, the weakness of the Indonesian middle class reflects the assertion of the state. This is why to expect any possible political change by relying on this class is almost impossible. Therefore, scrutinising the political dynamic within state, particularly among the elites, become important. As O'Donnel and Schmitter insist that "there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence--direct or indirect--

\textsuperscript{44} This is the 1988 figure of which Malaysia is 15%, Philippines 12%, Singapore 50% and Thailand 12%, quoted from Arief Budiman, \textit{Indonesian Middle Class (with Emphasis on Business elite) and Political Democracy}, (forthcoming), p. 7.

\textsuperscript{45} ibid. p. 8.
of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself\textsuperscript{46}. In the case of Indonesia, the current actual debate is about the format of political role of the military in the changing society. More importantly, some senior military officers also participated in this debate.

Generally, all military officers who are involved in the debate agree that it is the time for the Indonesian military to adapt its political role. These opinions is based on the awareness that the situation has been changing, political situation can be kept stable, economy condition is better, and socially, society has become more critical and aware about their rights. However, they have different views about the format of the military role which should be implemented. General Nasution, former army commander in chief and the architect of dual-function, sees that the current military involvement in politics is too far. For him, the army should become problem solver\textsuperscript{47}. For him their political involvement is to give character upon the development held, and to accomplish this mission military should not get involved in "days to days" politics such as holding government positions and to be appointed in DPR (People's Representative Council), Conversely they can merely sit in MPR (People's Consultative Assembly) as the representative of functional groups. If they want to be member of the DPR, they should be elected and resigned from the military. Another General has similar idea. As he points out that at present it is better for ABRI to decrease its direct political involvement, alternatively, they should only concentrate on motivation the people and giving political education\textsuperscript{48}.

On the other hand, other generals have the views which are sharply different from the idea above. General Rudini (former Army Chief of Staff), Lt. General Harsudiono Hartas (former Social and Political Chief of Staff), even President Soeharto himself disagree with


\textsuperscript{48} confidential interview, 27 November 1995.
that view. According to Soeharto, "the current interpretation (of dual function) is different from the pre-New Order's interpretation". He thinks that because ABRI has been acknowledged as one of social and political forces, its rights and obligations should be similar with other social and political forces. "That ABRI does not participate to choose (in general election) and sit in DPR based on the quota, this is the result of national political consensus in the initial period of the New Order". The implication of this view, if there is any suggestion to change the position in DPR should be through a new national consensus or referendum.

Although Nasution seemingly is still consistent with his idea that he launched since 1958, his view is often considered as the pre-New Order interpretation. This doctrine is for military when they have not dominated politics like what happened in the New Order period, says one observer. While, one military source has a similar judgement. He claims that Nasution tries to see the implementation of dual-function like the implementation when he was still the Army Commander in which the army just placed itself on one side within national political life, whereas nowadays, the military has been involved totally. From these different views, it is clear that the dual-function basically is an open doctrine. This means that it could be open upon any proposed interpretation. Indeed, its implementation besides being conditioned by the environment, seemingly it much more depends on the interpretation of the top leader at that time.

From the description above, clearly, there are different views dealing with whether ABRI should still sit in a key political position or not in adaptation of its role toward tut wuri handayani. Regarding this issue, generally speaking, there are two groups. Borrowing Crouch's terms, there are view of "structural dwifungsi" and view of "mentality

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50 Said, ibid.
51 ibid.
52 Confidential interview, 26 November 1995.
The former, although see the urgency of the adjustment of the military role, they still see that ABRI should sit in the key political positions. While the latter argue that in the normal condition like at the present, it is better for ABRI to decline its direct participation in politics, and to give more chance to civilians. There is worry among this group that if ABRI still play politics directly it could lead to abuses of power in which this in turn can damage the ABRI's image itself.

In term of the relationship between ABRI with and social and political forces, there are different views. General Soemitro, former voice of the armed forces commander, appeals to ABRI to stand above all groups and to be neutral, and to ABRI has to return to become the tool of state, not the tool of power. "This is important, mainly for keeping the image of the ABRI itself", he stressed in one discussion. He also evaluates that because of unneutrality of ABRI and bureaucracy, democracy in Indonesia cannot run smoothly. In line with this, General Hartas says, "it is the time for ABRI to be consistent to become 100% statemen. ABRI must stand among all, and can keep a distance with social-political forces. No intervention, directly or indirectly, to the internal affairs of the forces".

Lieutenant General Syarwan Hamid, the present Social and Political Chief of Staff, has a different view. He justifies the relationship between ABRI and Golkar, "a government party", by referring to the historical setting in which, the establishment of Golkar was initiated by ABRI. "It is political nature when there are 'bargaining' and 'scouting' among social and political power, for choosing (partner) which is suitable with its perjuangan (struggle) context". This view is more or less in line with President Soeharto that ABRI must choose partners.Interestingly, however, the number of those who have similar ideas with

54 quote from "Untuk Apa Soemitro Menggebrak?", GATRA, 8 July 1995.
55 Hartas, op.cit.
57 Vatikiotic, op.cit. p. 79.
Soemitro and Hartas, in which ABRI must stands above all groups, become more and more\textsuperscript{58}.

If the description above represents the views of the military elites, how about the political perception among the members of ABRI in general? I think it is interesting to notice their opinion because some of them, probably, will held the future ABRI leadership. In order to commemorate the golden anniversary of the Indonesian independence last year, one of the leading magazine held an opinion poll about democracy. From 520 respondent it could get 22 respondents who are active military officers. But one refused to be indentified as ABRI's member, so the number of the sample is 21 respondents. It was also reported that these respondents, based on their education, age and ranks, were various and representative enough to measure the ABRI's opinion.

From table I. we can see that respondents view the items which mainly reflects the guarantee of human rights such as the existence of PTUN, Commission of Human Rights and the proposed protest law as the factors that are conducive for democracy. Even they completely agree (100\%) for the first two items. More interestingly, most of them also perceive the prohibition of journalists involved in "Sirnagalih Declaration" asl hamper the development of democracy. This view seems to be different from the government point of view which tends to see the journalists as "dissidentsing". While, dealing with the decrease of the quota of ABRI's representatives in DPR, most of them think that it will be counter-productive for democracy despite the fact that the gap with those who see the opposite is narrow.

In term of dwifungsi, almost all of them (90,5\%) view that it will support democracy. Although what kind of democracy they want is still questionable, but from the two items we can see how ABRI convince themselves as a dinamisator (dynamiser) in political development, particulary democratisation. A military source explains that one of the reasons why the plan to decrease the quota is in limited number that is 25 and this is not conducted in provincial council--is that ABRI sees

\textsuperscript{58} Said, "Tut Wuri Handayani", \textit{op.cit.}
civilian politicians, particularly in regional council as still weak\textsuperscript{59}. It is not rare, he adds, that the ABRI's fraction takes initiatives in that councils, in crucial issues. It has been acknowledged, that ABRI's fraction in the DPR who took initiative to rolling the transparency issue in the late 1980s.

Their view about the formation of the new parties seems to be contradictory to their conviction expressed before. Most of them see the effort as not good for democracy. One possible explanation is that the political trauma in 1950s in which many parties had brought the country to continued political instability. And the most interesting point. I think, is that most of them see the limitation of president post as important for democracy. This is, apparently, in line with the "mainstream" opinion of the public that the longer one sits in the post, the bigger the possibility of abusing power.

\textsuperscript{59} Confidential interview. 26 November 1995.
Table 1.
ABRI's Perception about Democracy

<table>
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<th>conducive</th>
<th>constraint</th>
<th>abstain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The existence of PTUN*</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The existence of Komnas HAM (National commission for Human Right)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The decrease of ABRI’s members in DPR</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Formation of New Parties</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABRI’s Dwifungsi</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The intervention of the chief of Mahkamah Agung (Supreme Judicial Body)**</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The implementation of District System in General Election</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitation the period of president post</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The proposed protest law</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The prohibition for those involved in “Sirnagalih Declaration” to work as Journalists***</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: "ABRI Bicara Demokrasi" (ABRI Speaks Democracy), Forum Keadilan, special edition 50 years the independence of Indonesia, August 1995. p. 52-53.

* the court for charging the government's decisions.
** the intervention to any court decisions.
*** "Sirnagalih Declaration" is declaration made by the journalists whose magazines are banned by government in 1994. They then established an alternative journalist association as a rival the official on which acknowledged by government.
No less interesting is the respondent's perception about the present government as expressed below. From table 2, we can see that respondents who perceive the current system democratic are almost balanced by those who have the opposite views. It is difficult to make a single explanation of this fact. One possible optimistic explanation is that despite some see the present system is less favourable to democratic development, they are still optimistic that democracy can be improved step by step without conducting a drastic political reform. While one possible pessimistic reason why most of them see the current system democratic is that, they tend to "choose" a view which is not contradictory with the "dominant" view.

Table 2.
ABRI about Democracy
Their evaluation about the Present Political System
N=21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>number</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not democratic</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(42.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(52.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(4.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: "ABRI Bicara Demokrasi" (ABRI speaks Democracy), Forum Keadilan, special edition 50 years the independence of Indonesia, August 1995. p. 52-52

This number of respondent is of course not reliable to measure the general perception of all ABRI personnel. However, I think, we can also propose an opposite assumption: if in the small segment within ABRI there is a relatively big percentage of those who have the progressive opinions, seemingly it is quite possible that in a bigger
proportion there would be a large number of military officers who have the such opinions.

In general, from the two tables above, the impression we can get is that there is a segment within ABRI who respects ideal type of democracy. This group, which is not a large number, apparently wants to see that the government should be based on the principles of democracy and wants it to improve the quality of democracy.

Given the fact that there is a growing demand for democratisation, which in turn implies a division of interpretations of dual-function within the military elites; one important thing to note is that the differences are merely in term of the implementation of the concept, not about the concept itself. So, it would be wrong to assume that ABRI will go to the barrack. Indeed, the Indonesian military always sees that the concept must be permanent. They never think that they will stay out of politics, and the legitimacy is there. To be sure, the three forms of ABRI's role is not irreversible. If now there is intention to decline the direct role, by taking the tut wuri handayani role, it is because it is good for stability. ABRI most likely will take overt role again if the they think that it is necessary. Thus, the implementation of one form of their roles does not necessarily means the negation of other forms.

One crucial question is that, by the various interpretations above, could it lead to any political or regimes change? Considering the present "real-power" and other factors mentioned above, seemingly in the immediate future any drastic political transition is not likely to happen. Besides, the fact that Soeharto still makes all key decisions, some military sources also say the ABRI would not break the system down. They say if Soeharto eventually steps down, he will do it with dignity. Therefore, any political reform could happen, as I insist before, as long as Soeharto tolerates it. Yet, the interpretations become important in the post-Soeharto period, because when Soeharto steps down, military will almost certainly become the final arbiter. There will be big competition because there will be no very powerful figure like Soeharto. As one General points out that the post-Soeharto period is the best chance to make political reform,

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60 Based on two interviews, 26 and 27 November 1995.
because his successor would not be as powerful as Soeharto\textsuperscript{61}. There will be a wider arena for political bargains which allows the progressive thinking to emerge. All of these reasons has placed the issue of succession in Indonesia to become very crucial.

Will the prediction above really happen? Time will prove that. However, I think, at least there is an imperative demand for ABRI to become progressive. By claiming itself as dinamisator, ABRI, indeed, has burdened itself with a heavy task. One certain thing is that they have to be always responsive and creative, particularly in responding the growing demand for democratisation in which this inevitably will be stronger and stronger; otherwise its legitimacy will be threatened. In the future, the military legitimacy which mainly relies on their historical role might not be really strong anymore. In case the dwifungsi can prove its positive contributions to all aspects of development it is most likely that it will become more important in determining the legitimacy of the military to be active in non-military affairs.

\textsuperscript{61} ibid.
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