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NSC/RMO PROFILE

RECORD ID: 0405265

RECEIVED: 21 Jul 04

DOC DATE: 9 Jul 2004

SOURCE REF:

TO:
NATL COUNCIL (MISC)

FROM:
JIMMY CARTER (HIST)

KEYWORDS: INDONESIA

PERSONS:

SUBJECT: RPT FM FORMER PRES CARTER RE TRIP TO INDONESIA

ACTION: FOR RECORD PURPOSES

DUE DATE: 27 Jul 04

STATUS: C

FILES: PA

STAFF OFFICER:
ERIC ALTBACH (NSC)

LOGREF:

DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION

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ACTION DATA SUMMARY REPORT

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DISPATCH DATA SUMMARY REPORT

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16

Please Staff @ Asia

THE
CARTER CENTER



July 9, 2004

A corrected version of President Carter's report on his recent trip to Indonesia is attached. Please disregard previously mailed report.

Sincerely,

Office of Jimmy Carter



JIMMY CARTER

Indonesia Trip, June 30-July 7

This mission to Indonesia happens to be the fiftieth election monitored by The Carter Center in different parts of the world, all of them in nations that were facing some kind of crisis or problem in their democratic institutions – either a form of dictatorship making a transition to democracy or an established democracy under serious threat.

Five years ago, The Carter Center together with the National Democratic Institute, had the unique opportunity of being the prime international observer for Indonesia's first democratic election. It just happened that Rosalynn and I had become friends with B.J. Habibie when he was President Suharto's science advisor. To everyone's surprise, he was later chosen as vice-president and, when Suharto was forced out of office on corruption charges, our friend was president of the world's fourth largest nation! Instead of clinging to office, he resolved to have an honest and fair election and invited us to monitor the process of electing members of parliament, who in turn chose Abdurrahman Wahid as president. When he was impeached in 2001 because of incompetence, Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri assumed the office.

The president is being chosen by direct vote this year, following parliamentary elections held in April. The leading candidate in public opinion polls has been Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, known as SBY. He is a former general, with a reputation for honesty, who gained his popularity by standing up to former Presidents Wahid and Megawati on what the public perceived as matters of principle. He has a master's degree from Webster University in Missouri. The primary struggle is for second place and a chance to challenge SBY in a September 20 runoff, if he fails to get a clear majority and at least 20 percent of the vote in more than half the provinces.

Those approximately equal in pre-election polls have been Megawati, retired General Wiranto, and Speaker of the House Amien Rais. Megawati has a strong core (about 25 percent) of supporters but is seen to be a weak leader who did quite poorly in recent debates. Wiranto is accused (in East Timor and not officially in Indonesia) of human rights crimes and has most of the old Suharto political party (Golkar) behind him. Rais holds a masters degree from Notre Dame and a doctorate from the University of Chicago, and has made public attacks on Christians and ethnic Chinese. He has little support in the rural areas. Vice President Hamzah Haz is also a candidate, but seems to have few followers.

For the presidential election, Rosalynn and I were joined by former Prime Minister of Thailand Chuan Leekpai as co-chair, and we, Carter Center Executive Director John Hardman and his wife, Laura, and 58 other international observers from eight countries deployed throughout the nation under the direction of David Carroll, interim director of the Carter Center's Democracy Program.

There are other international observer groups this time, most notably a large delegation from the European Union and an extremely impressive array of domestic observers, who also played a major monitoring role in 1999. After meeting with our own delegation members and seeing them off to their assigned locations, we met with the four most important domestic observer groups. They have recruited, trained, and deployed more than 200,000 observers among the 575,000 polling places, and one of the groups conducts a preliminary vote tabulation (quick count) that has proven so accurate that it is accepted by the central election commission (KPU) as definitive.

Before election day, we met with members of the KPU (all of them professors) and the Constitutional Court (five of nine are professors). Both organizations seem to be dedicated, unbiased, and competent, and we never heard any concerns about their integrity from candidates or private citizens. The court handled 273 disputed cases following the April election, even reversing 15 election results, and all of their decisions were accepted without further dissension. We also had sessions with candidates Rais, SBY, and Wiranto, but Megawati postponed our scheduled meeting until after the election.

On election morning, we found the polling places to be well organized and were impressed when all the officials stood erect, raised their hands, and took a solemn oath to perform their duties properly. There were few early voters, and we finally realized that the Portugal-Greece soccer game had not ended until three hours before the polls opened, and most of the people had watched the entire match. There was general satisfaction with Greece's victory, since they were the underdog and Portugal had previously been one of the European occupying powers in Indonesia. Some observers commented that there was less excitement about presidential candidates than had been evident during the parliamentary elections in April, when local candidates were involved.

We returned to the hotel to assess reports from our teams around the country and then went back to polling sites to observe their closing at 1 p.m. With very simple ballots, the counting was rapid, but there was a problem (corrected somewhat late in the day by election officials) with excessive nail punch holes caused by some ballot sheets being folded. As the PVT results became clear, SBY had 33.2 percent, Megawati 26.0 percent, and Wiranto 23.3 percent, and these relationships are not likely to change. Our observer teams reported some scattered problems, but an overall election that was free, fair, and safe.

Extending 3,200 miles across the Southern Pacific and Indian Oceans north of Australia, with 235 million inhabitants divided into 100 ethnic groups and speaking 300 different languages and dialects, Indonesia is an extremely diverse and complex society. Of the total population, *87 percent are Muslims, making Indonesia by far the largest Islamic nation. Overwhelmingly moderate, this dominant religious group joins Christians, Hindus, and others in embracing a secular government.

In the United States, especially in Washington and the news media, there is an obsession with violence and terrorism and a pervasive sense of confrontation between Christians and Muslims. The people of Indonesia are providing a dramatic example of peaceful political change and firmly negating the claim that Muslim societies are averse to truly democratic governments. It is interesting to note that, of the world's three largest democracies, the overwhelming majority of their populations have different religious faiths: Hindus in India, Christians in the United States, and Muslims in Indonesia. This is a good message for Americans to absorb.

I had press interviews about the election with major international news media and exchanged assessments with Glyn Ford (head of the EU team) and domestic observers. All of us regretted the confusion on election day about hole punches, but agreed that this did not threaten the integrity of the results.

On Wednesday, July 7, (our 58th wedding anniversary), we met with President Megawati, and I had an interview with Indonesia TV and held a general press conference before leaving Jakarta. Rosalynn and I will spend six days fishing in the Zhupanova River in the Kamchatka Peninsula of Russia before returning home.

**correction from "8 percent"*

THE
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ACTION DATA SUMMARY REPORT

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Office of Jimmy Carter

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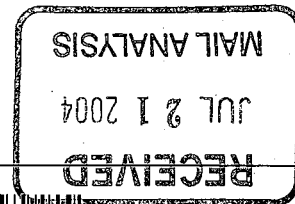
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**correction from "8 percent"*

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Lauren Gay
OFFICE OF JIMMY CARTER
453 FREEDOM PARKWAY
ONE COPENHILL
ATLANTA, GA 30307



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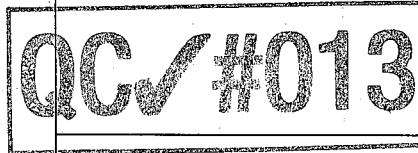
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President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

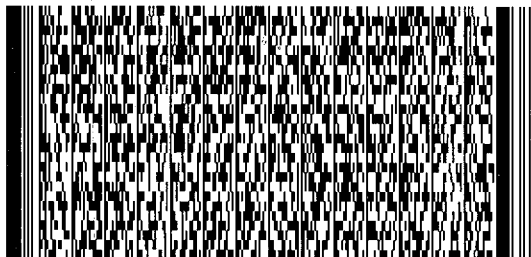


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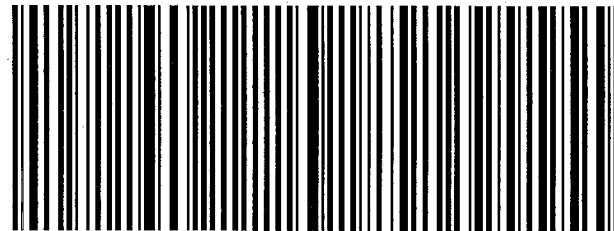
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7

MEMORANDUM TO: JOHN FICKLIN
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

FROM: FRANCES CAMPBELL
OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT: MORE IMPORTANT MAIL ADDRESSED TO
THE PRESIDENT

DATE: 8/25/04

TRACKING NUMBER: 633170

FG006-06

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