

### October cabinet reshuffle?

## Reshuffle Rumors

It's that time of the year again and reshuffle rumors are resurfacing once more as the second-term Yudhoyono government ends its second year in office. Among the latest commentaries: Senior presidential advisor Daniel Sparingga: "on the first day of the administration's third-year in office, there will be new faces and a new commitment...there is no denying that the government wants changes." House speaker and senior Partai Demokrat (PD) executive Marzuki Ali: "It's been two years and changes need to be made to make the government more effective...problematic ministers need to be replaced." Senior PD official Ruhut Sitompul: "Two years is enough to show whether a minister is capable or not." Hatta Rajasa, chief economics minister and PAN chairman (and soon to be father-in-law to SBY's youngest son) in a recent Q&A with journalists: "I'm not going to preempt the president, but you can see from my body language what I'm trying to say." PAN parliament faction head Tjatur Sapto Edy: "the government will reshuffle the cabinet by October."

### Legitimate reasons for changes

These same politicians have made similar comments in the past, so they may not be the most accurate barometer of whether a cabinet reshuffle will actually transpire. Nevertheless, for a number of ministers are under tremendous pressure for misdeeds real or alleged and the government would be more credible without them. For example, there are growing indications that the corruption scandal in the manpower ministry now under KPK investigation will eventually implicate the minister, Muhamin Iskandar (PKB). Housing minister Suharso Monoarfa (PPP) is facing divorce proceedings amid allegations of an affair – taboo to country's socially conservative society. There are also huge questions as to whether SOE minister Mustofa Abubakar will be able to carry out his duties after suffering from a major heart attack last month. The scandal around former PD treasurer Nazaruddin, also under KPK investigation, may implicate youth and sports minister Andi Mallarangeng (PD). Meanwhile, there are the usual suspects, from energy minister Darwin Saleh (PD) to transportation minister Freddy Numberi (PD), who reportedly continue to score poorly in SBY's own internal evaluation and could potentially be replaced. SBY can't afford to keep these individuals in the cabinet without further damaging the government's credibility.

**Current environment should make things easier**

All of this is speculation at this stage. At the same time, there are genuinely good reasons legally, socially and health wise for SBY to make broad changes. The fact that there are no significant political clashes of the likes of Bank Century or the Gayus tax scandal among the coalition partners at present could actually make it easier for the president to finally reshuffle his cabinet and try to restore some luster to the last three years of his presidency.

## A presidential nomination for Bakrie?

**Bakrie closing in on Golkar nomination**

Leaders of Golkar's provincial branches met in Bali earlier this week for a national meeting. The gathering was supposed to focus on consolidation and organizational affairs. The event, however, was highlighted by a surprise declaration to nominate party chairman Aburizal Bakrie as Golkar's 2014 presidential candidate. As Aburizal and other senior party figures have emphasized, the declaration was not official. Only the party's national congress can determine its presidential candidate. The declaration nonetheless shows the support Aburizal enjoys from at least some elements in Golkar that will ultimately determine the party's presidential candidate. Golkar will hold its annual national congress around November this year. Some analysts suggest the recent declaration by the party's provincial chairs could set the stage for a formal nomination at that time.

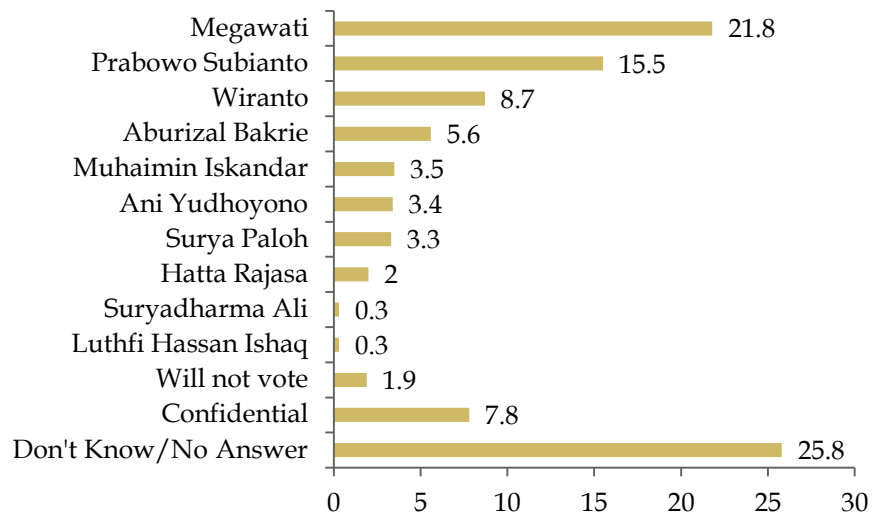
**But does he really stand a chance against likely opponents?**

A key question is whether Aburizal will be able to gain traction with the public. Deputy house speaker and senior Golkar board member Priyo Budi Santoso acknowledged this issue recently. (Priyo has stated that he personally supports Aburizal's nomination.) He asserted that Aburizal has not yet been able to match the popularity of Golkar, and has not seen an equivalent rise in electability that the party has seen in its internal polls. This is in contrast with political figures like Yudhoyono and Megawati, who in the past have polled significantly better than their own parties. Other senior Golkar executives including former chairman Akbar Tanjung and former industry minister Fahmi Indris have also acknowledged this. Unfortunately, no respected independent pollsters like Lembaga Survei Indonesia (LSI) have published any surveys to gauge the popularity of likely 2014 presidential candidates yet. Nonetheless, there are older polls like Indobarometer (August 2010)

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that show the challenges people like Aburizal face against more established candidates like Megawati or even Prabowo Subianto (see below).

## Who would you vote for if presidential elections were held today?



Source: *Indobarometer, Aug 10*

**Note:** Megawati is head of PDIP; Prabowo Subianto chairs Gerindra; Wiranto is head of Hanura; Muhaimin Iskandar is PKB chairman; Ani Yudhoyono is SBY's wife; Surya Paloh is former Golkar advisory board chairman and now heads recently established Nasional Demokrat (Nasdem); Hatta Rajasa is head of PAN; Suryadharma Ali is head of PPP; and Lutfhi Hassan Ishaq is PKS president.

It is still unclear why there is this strong push among some of Golkar's constituents to accelerate Aburizal's nomination, given the chairman's apparent mediocre ratings. Aburizal's backers in Golkar may be calculating that a formal nomination could boost the chairman's popularity. Aburizal may be trying to preempt others in Golkar who could be trying to seek out a more popular, alternative candidate. Golkar's regional chapters may also be pushing Aburizal's nomination for their own interests, as an early and extensive presidential campaign effort would require significant grassroots investment from the Bakrie Group's war chest. And cynics suggest that if Bakrie runs and fails, he will have to give up the party chairmanship, opening the way for rivals.

Whatever the case, there appears to be an increasing sense of inevitability regarding Aburizal's nomination. This is despite the fact Golkar does not traditionally name its presidential candidate this early in the election cycle. (Golkar's 2009 presidential candidate – Yusuf Kalla – was only named in May 2009 or roughly two months before the July poll. Golkar's 2004 presidential candidate, Wiranto (now head of Hanura), was only nominated in April 2004, less than three months before the July poll.) In addition to the recent declaration by Golkar's provincial chairs, senior party figures like Kalla are also publicly expressing their support for Aburizal's candidacy. Bakrie's media machine (including free-to-air broadcasters TVOne, ANTV and online news portal Vivanews), meanwhile, is also pushing this agenda with substantial coverage of Aburizal's possible nomination and the support he is getting from Golkar's rank and file.

### Additional Highlights

**Indonesian prosecutors on Thursday sought 12 years in jail for Abu Tholut, seen as one of the most dangerous Islamist extremists in the mainly Muslim country.** Tholut, 49, was found guilty of playing a key role in the formation of a militant training camp discovered in Aceh province last year, of recruiting militants and raising illegal funds for terror activity, prosecutors said. "He carried out an 'evil conspiracy' with other terrorists including Abu Bakar Bashir and Dulmatin," prosecutor Bambang Suharyadi told West Jakarta district court, adding that Tholut should be jailed for 12 years. Tholut received militia training in Afghanistan during the mujahedeen war against the Soviets in the late 1980s and became a leading figure in Southeast Asia's Jemaah Islamiyah terror network when he returned home. "His acts have stirred up an atmosphere of terror and widespread fear," the prosecutor said.

[AFP, 16 September 2011](#)

**Thousands of workers at Freeport-McMoran's gold and copper mine in eastern Indonesia began a month long strike Thursday over a wage dispute.** Juli Parorongan, spokesman for the union, said roughly 90 percent of the mine's 12,000 workers were taking part. They are seeking salary increases from a current \$2.10 to \$3.50 dollars an hour to globally competitive levels of \$17.50 to \$43, he said. It's the second strike this year at one of the world's biggest gold and copper mines. An eight-day work stoppage in July -- also protesting low wages and the dismissal of union leaders -- brought the mine to a near standstill. The Phoenix-based company lost production of 4 million pounds of copper and 7.5 ounces of gold per day, analysts say, or about \$30 million daily. Workers only returned to their jobs after management agreed to reinstate the labor leaders and reopen negotiations about wages and benefits.

[Boston Globe, 15 September 2011](#)

**Indonesia sent security forces to an eastern region after gangs of [Muslims and Christians](#) armed with rocks and machetes clashed in violence that left [five people dead](#) and more than **150 injured**, officials said on Monday (9/12). The violence broke out in the Maluku provincial capital of Ambon on Sunday after rumors spread that a Muslim motorcycle taxi driver who died in a traffic accident had been killed and tortured by Christians, said Captain Marinus Djati, the Ambon traffic police chief. Groups of Muslims confronted Christians after the man's funeral. The two sides traded insults and later started throwing rocks and swinging machetes, police said. Five people were killed and 154 others were injured, 31 of them seriously, said Bakrie Asyatri, the Ambon government spokesman. National Police spokesman Major General Anton Bachrul Alam said more than 400 special forces were deployed in Ambon.**

[Gulf Today, 13 September 2011](#)

**Jakarta General Elections Commission (KPU) is now preparing the implementation of the election of Jakarta Regional Head (Pemilukada) for 2012.** It is estimated that 2012 Jakarta pemilukada will be held in the end of July or the beginning of next August. Head of Jakarta KPU, Juri Ardiantoro stated that his party has reached finalization of the schedule for its stages as well as program of 2012 Jakarta pemilukada. "We have decided two options concerning the

implementation time so far, whether we have it at the end of July or the beginning of August 2012. We are considering which one is the best," he said, Wednesday (9/14). Concerning the voting schedule, its registration period for participants is estimated to begin at the end of April or May.

[Berita Jakarta, 14 September 2011](#)

**Reporters Without Borders condemns today's forcible closure of Radio Era Baru by police and frequency monitoring officials** although last week's conviction of its manager on a charge of broadcasting without permission and disrupting neighboring frequencies is still the subject of an appeal. The closure of the station, located in Batam (in Riau province), was carried by at least 30 officials including members of the military police and local police and representatives of the Communication and Information Ministry (Kominfo/Dirjen Postel), the Frequency Monitoring Agency (Balmon) and the Riau branch of the Indonesian Broadcasting Committee (KPID Kepri). They arrived at Radio Era Baru at around 11 a.m., forced the padlock on the door of the transmitting room and, despite the protests of the journalists present, removed transmitting equipment, thereby preventing the station from continuing to broadcast.

[Reporters without Borders, 13 September 2011](#)

**Indonesia on Thursday welcomed an international court's finding that the Dutch state was responsible for a 1947 massacre in Indonesia** and that the victims' families should be compensated. "It is an important and significant decision which in effect acknowledges and upholds the rights of those civilian victims of the Dutch military's violent acts," foreign ministry spokesperson Michael Tene said. Eight widows and one survivor from the town of Rawagede, east of Jakarta, took the Netherlands to court in 2008 to claim compensation for the execution of men and boys in 1947 by Dutch troops during Indonesia's independence war. A three-judge bench of The Hague civil court ruled on Wednesday that seven of the eight widows and the family of the survivor should be compensated by the Dutch state.

[News24.com, 15 September 2011](#)

**Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said on Thursday that the country plans to modernize military equipment to boost defense system.** President Yudhoyono told a cabinet meeting that the government had risen the budget for defense sector, the highest among others sectors. "There is much urgency to conduct a modernization and build strong forces, as the number of defense equipment badly needs rejuvenation," Yudhoyono said at the State Palace. The president said that the government targeted to modernize all the equipment of police and military by 2014 or 2015. Indonesia, a vast archipelago country with over 17,500 islands, plans to purchase scores others Sukhoi jet fighters from Russia and a number of submarines.

[Defence Professional, 12 September 2011](#)

**President Barack Obama will visit [Australia and the Indonesian island of Bali](#) in mid-November,** the White House said on Monday. It will be Obama's first stop in Australia -- after scrapping a visit twice last year because of domestic concerns -- and his second presidential visit to Indonesia, where he spent part of his childhood. Obama will be in Australia from November 16-17 after



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hosting the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in his home state of Hawaii and will then travel to Bali for an East Asia summit, the White House said. Obama last visited Indonesia, a major oil producer and the world's most populous Muslim country, in November during a tour of Asia.

[Reuters, 12 September 2011](#)

**The Indonesian Army Special Forces (Kopassus) is currently conducting a two-week joint training exercise with the Australian Special Operations Command (SOCOMD) in the Pulau Seribu regency situated north of Jakarta.** Members of the special forces from both countries will take part in exercises, including live fire training and marine terrorism prevention. Kopassus commander Maj. Gen. Lodewijk F. Paulus officially opened the joint exercise on Tuesday at the Kopassus headquarters in Cijantung of Jakarta. The exercise is hoped to encourage exchange of knowledge between the two delegations, and improve cooperation between both countries, he said. "It also aims to improve the forces'abilities and skills in personal and group fighting techniques and tactics," he said.

[China Military Online, 11 September 2011](#)

**The real life adventures of former al-Qaida-linked militant Nasir Abas have become a comic book in Indonesia,** chronicling his transformation from foe to invaluable ally in the fight against terrorism. The story of the soft-spoken, seemingly mild-mannered 42-year-old — recognized by strangers on the streets and even asked for the occasional autograph — is well-known in the world's most populous Muslim country. He went from helping train Muslim extremists who carried out some of Southeast Asia's deadliest attacks, including the 2002 Bali bombings, to informing police about the inner-workings of the Jemaah Islamiyah network. He's also joined a government program to convince convicted terrorists that killing unarmed civilians in the name of their faith is wrong.

[The Washington Post, 10 September 2011](#)

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