

Giving voting rights to the TNI and police is part of democratisation

People's Democratic Party Statement

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Reform of the TNI (Indonesian military) and National Police Force (Polri) must be resolved so that it is in concert with civilian supremacy as the pillar of a democratic system.

The reform agenda of the TNI/Polri must be completed in unison, not in installments, one by one. Delays only lay the grounds for compromises, horse trading with sections of the TNI/Polri's internal leadership and the political parties in power that are exploiting the reform of the TNI/Polri for their own interests. Delays will only end in distortions, such as ending the political role of the military being reduced to merely the abolishing the TNI/Polri factions in parliament while the territorial command structure (Koter) — the political machine that has been responsible for the majority of cases of gross human rights violations by the TNI/Polri - has instead been retained. Likewise, resolving human right violations by high-ranking TNI/Polri officers though the courts was reduced to resolution by reconciliation.

In relation to the view that giving voting rights to the TNI/Polri in the 2009 general elections should be in parallel with the upholding of human rights, the People's Democratic Party (PRD) declares its agreement. In so far as these voting rights represent the individual political rights of TNI/Polri members as citizens, there can be absolutely no discrimination with regard to such rights. Doing this however will only have a positive effect when all of the aspects of reforming the TNI/Polri also follow within the same time frame. In addition to this, we must distinguish between the individual rights of the TNI/Polri as citizens and the TNI as a military institution that has the special right to carry arms - that is as a tool of national defense in confronting the threat of attack from another country. The key to this issue is

clearly regulating their rights as citizens and their obligations to the TNI/Polri in order that they do not contradict each other and are carried out consistently. It is this that is the best measure of the professionalism of the TNI/Polri.

Giving voting rights to the TNI/Polri is part and parcel of their political rights as citizens, and is precisely what will have positive meaning for the quality of democracy in the future. Giving them such political rights will make TNI/Polri officers be in touch with the realities of the nation's problems and the lives of the Indonesian people. It will also lead them a fuller understanding of the roots of the social, economic and political conflicts that are developing in civil society. Thus by giving them voting rights, individual members of the TNI/Polri can weigh up these issues using common sense, using their consciousness, and can be distanced from "command-istic" tendencies of blind discipline to the political views of their superiors as has taken place up until now. Demonstrations by workers to demand improvements to their welfare and protests by ordinary people over the injustices that befall them will no longer be arbitrarily seen as disturbances to security and public order. Likewise, the mindset that national stability is only measured in terms of there being no unrest when the reality of ordinary peoples' lives continues to worsen.

Concerns by parties that giving voting rights to the TNI/Polri will result in the risk of the TNI/Polri being boxed into a particular political party that could lead in the direction of civil war, such as the statement by the deputy speaker of the House of Representatives from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), Soetardjo Suryoguritno, as well as an almost identical view expressed by Yudi Chrisnandi from the Golkar Party, are shallow and erroneous. It is precisely the opposite. If these rights are not given, for as long as the political aspirations of TNI/Polri officers are demanding an outlet, they will seek "special" channels such as TNI/police factions in parliament, officers being assigned to temporary duties such as civilian posts, the dual social and political role of the military, the territorial commands and so forth. It has been proven that the impact of this is far more damaging to the democratic system. Even though in formal terms some social and political roles have been abolished, it has not eliminated the TNI/Polri as

institutions from continuing to be involved in politics or being politicised. The enthusiasm of the TNI/Polri leadership to continue their involvement in politics for their own political interests or the interests of certain groups in the TNI/Polri leadership is still often being channeled by expressing political opinions on non-TNI/Polri issues. In addition to this, the fear of the military's reaction to consistently implementing the reform of the TNI/Polri by a mainstream political parties has perpetuated the syndrome of a civilian inferiority complex in the face of the institutions of the TNI/Polri and is precisely what has caused the development democracy to be so fragile.

This is ridiculous because what the mainstream political forces are afraid of is precisely the tools of their own democratic system. Coinciding with this however is that in victoriously seeking power they have competed with each other to build cliques with the TNI/Polri leadership. The most recent example was the political conflict surrounding the appointment of the commander-in-chief of the TNI. A negative symbiosis developed between the PDI-P who wanted to compete for the political sympathies of the army and the army officers that had ambitions to dominate the post of TNI commander. This was indeed dangerous because the political maneuvers by the TNI/Polri as well as particular political parties around the centers of power ended up drawing the TNI/Polri into the process. In reality the determination of this political issue merely became the special right of high-ranking TNI/Polri officers, while ordinary TNI/Polri officers just became tools for the interests of and a stepping stone for their political carriers or the narrow interests of civilian the political forces that are holding power.

Fear over the internal politicisation of the military, the threat of a military coup, that the military will used as tool by civilians, has no relationship with giving democratic rights to members of the TNI/Polri as individuals. As long as the TNI/Polri are a social group that has a monopoly on carrying arms, for as long as a minority of civilian forces oppress the majority, for as long a small fraction of the elite enjoy affluence while the majority of people suffer, efforts to attract political support from the military to side with

their respective but contradictory interests will continue. If this is said to be dangerous, then this danger will continue to exist, whether or not the TNI/Polri have the right to be elected or to vote. If this is said to be dangerous, it is better if this danger were resolved by surrendering it to the wishes of the majority of the people.

The other problem originates from the high-ranking officers in the Department of Defense. The statement by Rear Air Marshal Koesnadi Kardi who said that giving the military the right to vote and be elected cannot have a time limit and that it depends more on the capacity of civilians to improve their civilian leadership is an extremely arrogant, political and New Order-ish statement. It is truly ridiculous! Opposing giving political rights to soldiers in the style of old politicking by high-ranking TNI/Polri officers continues to this day. Is it based on the military as an institution feeling it has the right to judge of the quality of civilian leadership? This is a uniquely New Order argument - that civilians are not yet ready - and another justification to perpetuate their capitalist-military dictatorship. At the same the statement reflects the reluctance of the military as an institution to ever be prepared to be subordinated by civilians under a democratic system. Political statements of this kind are a danger to democracy. Unfortunately, quite a number of high-ranking military officers that have expressed opinions on various other political issues.

The People's Democratic Party therefore is of the view that giving political rights to members of the TNI as individuals, who have the same political rights as other citizens, will be positive for democracy as long as the following conditions are met:

1. The territorial commands must be dismantled along with an end to the involvement of the military in business. If not, giving them these political rights will become an additional legitimisation for the continued consolidation of the TNI as an institution in politics.
2. There must be clear laws, complete with sanctions and the enforcement of this law, regarding those that violate the separation of the individual political rights of the military as citizens and the obligations of the TNI/Polri as an institution in

carry out its central functions and role in a professional manner.

3. The law must deal with cases of human rights violations by TNI officers. Safeguarding the image of the corps by protecting officers and former officers involved in human rights crimes is an error. Perpetuating the impunity of high-ranking TNI/Polri officers involved in human rights crimes along with compromises with the mainstream political parties in resolving cases of human rights violation by serving and former TNI officers must end. This model of resolution will become an example to be imitated in the future by others. And, the ideals of braking the chain of human rights violations in Indonesia that have taken place for decades will never become a reality if there is a precedent that those involved in violations will in the end be freed from the hand of the law.

4. The function of defense must gradually be shifted to the people themselves. The best defence and defence of the nation is if it is carried out by the Indonesian people themselves as demonstrated by the Indonesian nation's own history in fighting Dutch colonialism. This can be realised though regular training of all healthy citizens in the use of arms so that in the future the size of regular forces need not be too large and no longer squander the state budget. All of the political risks of having a regular military, as a social group that has the special right to carry arms will also be removed.

Central Leadership Committee of the People's Democratic Party

For a united people's government though a national front towards socialism

Jakarta, February 17, 2006

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