

## 'Eyes and Ears'

**O**n the advice of colleagues in the Catholic party, Jusuf Wanandi decided to get close to Sukarno, to help Suharto become president!

**T**HIS conversation occurred as I tried to stop Major-General Ali Moertopo, who was intent on emerging from the offices of the CSIS, brandishing a pistol. Ali wanted to confront Hariman Siregar, Chairman of the University of Indonesia Students Council, who was heading up a demonstration and accusing Ali of being a Japanese stooge.

The 1974 demonstration and the ensuing riot became known as the Malari incident (Indonesian abbreviation for "The January 15 Tragedy"). In his biography, written by Heru Cahyono, the Public Order and Security Operation commander, General Sumitro suggests that the riot may actually have been engineered by Ali Moertopo.

Whatever the case, it was the biggest student demonstration since 1966 and the overthrow of the Old Order and the establishment of the New Order under Suharto. I was part of that process and so I know precisely how formidable student protests could be.

The background to the Malari incident was public anger resulting from soaring rice and other basic commodity prices, the cause of which was the global recession that had set in 1973 due to the Arab oil embargo and the ensuing surge in world oil prices. The anger came to a head through the student movement as the students had been asked by Sumitro six months before to criticize the government so as to serve as feedback for government policy.



*Sukarno and Suharto*

A flood of Japanese products, accompanied by a superior attitude arising from their investments in Indonesia, particularly in the automotive industry, further enraged the students. So, it was no surprise that one of their targets was Astra, an Indonesia-Japan joint venture—the students pushed a number of Japanese-made cars and motorcycles into the Ciliwung River.

The situation put a lot of pressure on President Suharto, especially given that Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka was in the country at the time. Due to the riots, he wasn't brave enough to emerge from Hotel Indonesia, where he was staying.

In 1973, Sumitro was appointed the Public Order and Security Operation commander. Previously, President Suharto was overly trustful of him, since he was the nephew of Doel Arnowo, a figure from East Java known to be a Sukarno loyalist. However, Sumitro had performed well when he was Deputy of Operations at Armed

### *Back then, the PMKRI worked closely with the Muslim Students Association (HMI) ...*

Forces HQ.

He had succeeded in sorting out the “rebellion” by a number of generals in the regions who were unhappy with Suharto, including Kemal Idris in Sulawesi, H.R. Dharsono in West Java, Sarwo Edhie—Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s father-in-law—in North Sumatra, and Amir Machmud. Sumitro managed to pull this off by transferring the generals away from their power bases.

As Public Order and Security commander, Sumitro acted like a prime minister. He could summon ministers, the Attorney General and technocrats to meetings in his office. He used to make visits to various universities and meet with student leaders, including Hariman. He encouraged them to express criticism so as to

provide feedback on government policy. I thought this was very strange. Students don’t normally need to be told to be critical. But this was exactly what he was doing.

At the same time, Ali Moertopo, Soedjono Hoemardani, myself and some others had just visited Australia and a number of Pacific nations, including Papua New Guinea, Fiji and New Zealand. We didn’t know that Sumitro was working to get permission from Suharto to put Ali in his place because Ali was felt to be too pro-Malaysia in its dispute with the Philippines over Sabah.

So, Ali’s telephone was tapped by Strategic Intelligence. His bodyguard and adjutant were withdrawn by Skogar at Sumitro’s instigation. Upon arriving back in Indonesia in December, Ali and Soedjono were surprised to find themselves being treated as *persona non grata*. “What does he want?” Ali asked me angrily. “If it was just him, it would be nothing to worry about.” Ali was convinced that Sumitro was using the students to get at him.



*Des Alwi, Adnan Buyung Nasution, and Sofjan Wanandi*

*“Tell Sukarno that if he surrenders his powers to me, I will guarantee his safety ...”*

Suharto sensed the outbreak of a Cold War in the ranks. Acting quickly, he summoned nine generals to the Palace on December 31, 1973. Besides Sumitro and Ali, also present were Soedjono, Kharis Suhud, the head of Strategic Intelligence, later the Strategic Intelligence Agency, Intelligence Coordinating Agency head Seotopo Joewono, Public Order and Security Deputy Commander Sudomo, State Secretary Sudharmono, Presidential Ministry Secretary Tjokropranolo, and Army Chief of Staff Surono.

Suharto admonished the generals: “If there are those of you who want to take over as president, go ahead. You don’t have to be competing with each other to launch coups like in Latin America,” both Ali and Soedjono quoted him as saying. The meeting left Sumitro very nervous, and he swore that he had no ambitions to replace Suharto. After the meeting, Kharis, Ali and Sumitro were asked to hold a joint press conference and say they were the best of friends, while at the same time attempting to douse down the student protests. It was too late. Two weeks later the Malari incident occurred. The pressure that had been building up for six months couldn’t be dissipated just like that.

The CSIS was originally a documentation bureau on Jalan Gunung Sahari, Central Jakarta. Established in 1962, its job was to collect clippings on social events and analyze them for the Catholic Party and the Church Council.

In 1963, we came to the conclusion that the Indonesian Communist Party was going to take power. We believed they were set to win the general election in five years’ time as Sukarno

appeared entranced by the party’s mass movement. And we, the Catholics, would be the first up against the wall as we were the most opposed to the Communists, alongside Masyumi and the United Indonesian Islamic Party (Partai Sarikat Islam Indonesia).

We, members of the Republic of Indonesia Catholic Students Association (PMKRI) and Catholic intellectuals, ran the bureau. Social analysis was needed to provide material for argumentation and making decisions by the Catholic Party and the Church.

At the time, I was the deputy chairman of the PMKRI, while Harry Tjan was secretary-general of the Catholic Party. We were two of the prominent thinkers in the movement. We also had people with military training. Our movement was an underground one devoted to resisting the communists, who were so strong back then.

At the time of the 1965 events, the bureau helped us in the Pancasila Front, which was a kind of anti-communist think tank. After Suharto became president, we were asked to keep helping as a think tank within the presidential structure. At the time I remember thinking that this guy was naturally clever. If we weren’t careful, we would end up under his thumb.

While we believed that there was a need for a research institute to help the government create a more developed Indonesia in the political, economic and defense realms, we took the view that it would be better if it was not part of the presidential structure but independent and self-financing.

For Suharto back then, questions of strategy meant military strategy without any need for civilian input. We thought differently. But we also understood that the military needed to be involved. So we opted for military men who were able to think, like Ali Moertopo and Soedjono Hoemardani. It was they who became the protectors of the CSIS.

## Conversations with Jusuf Wanandi

Ali and Soedjono were Special Operations officers who subsequently became personal assistants to Suharto. The special operation in question was ordered by Army Minister and Commander General Ahmad Yani to bring a resolution to the confrontation with Malaysia. In reality, their duties were primarily political in nature.

Through the CSIS, we provided political, economic and defense input to Suharto, all in the form of academic and strategic studies. We also invited various experts from Western Europe to assist us. Daud Jusuf and Hadi Soesastro joined us later after they had completed their studies.

It was Ali who presented us with our first offices on Jalan Kesehatan, Central Jakarta. It was

also Ali who provided the funding to set up the institute. In order to allow us to become self-financing, we set up the Proclamation Foundation—subsequently the CSIS Foundation—and Sofjan Wanandi was appointed treasurer to take charge of fundraising.

We did not only present our studies to our own government, but also to other countries. For example, we presented a report at the Japan-Indonesia Conference at the start of December 1973, six weeks prior to Malari, in which we criticized Japan's policy of shoving its way into Indonesia, including in the investment arena.

I was of the opinion that Japan, after the end of World War II, saw Indonesia and Southeast Asia as nothing more than a market for their products. They were still not very shrewd



### Jusuf Wanandi at the 21st Asia Pacific Roundtable, 2007

