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**West Papua**

The gap continued to widen between Indonesian central government rhetoric and performance on the ground in its troubled eastern province of Irian Jaya during 2001. If carrots were proffered to the province, in the form of a law on “Special Autonomy” that is due to be implemented in 2002, sticks were still wielded vigorously by the government’s security apparatus, with the police and military acting in concert with the judiciary. Among the elements on offer in the Special Autonomy package is an apparent concession on use of the name “Papua” for the province, but the failure to satisfy a widely voiced Papuan preference for “West Papua” and the retention in official usage of the alternative but deeply unpopular “Irian Jaya” (Great or Victorious Irian) are symptomatic of a continued reluctance on the part of government to engage seriously in dialogue with its Papuan citizens.

The fall of President Suharto in May 1998 had ushered in a short-lived “Papuan Spring,” a brief eighteen-month period during which civilian political expression in Papua flourished and calls for independence were relatively freely voiced. A formal dialogue held in Jakarta in February 1999 between President Habibie and a team of a hundred Papuan representatives alerted the government to the depth of pro-independence sentiment in Papua. This sentiment then found more public expression in the form of two mass meetings in Jayapura, a Convention or Musyawarah Besar in February 2000, and a Congress in May–June 2000. The Congress, dubbed the “Second Papuan Congress” in acknowledgement of the Papuan Congress of 1961, issued a number of ambitious declarations, each of them unacceptable to Jakarta: a demand that Jakarta recognize the unilateral declaration of independence issued by the first Papuan Congress on 1 December 1961; a repudiation of the 1962 New York Agreement and the subsequent 1969 “Act of Free Choice” or Pépera which, in the eyes of the United Nations, saw former Dutch New Guinea formally incorporated within Indonesia; a rejection of central government plans to carve Papua into three separate provinces; a fiat issued to the leadership of the Congress to seek international support for the cause of independence; and a call for the immediate involvement of the United Nations in a transfer of powers to an independent Papuan state.

A panel of Papuan leaders, the Papuan Presidium Council (*Presidium Dewan Papua* or *PDP*), emerged from the Second Congress, headed by Chairman Theys Eluay and Vice Chairman Tom Beanal. Theys, an elected chief from Lake Sentani, had formerly enjoyed a close relationship with Jakarta but had developed a somewhat ambivalent position since 1998 as an outspoken advocate of indepen-
dence while maintaining close personal and business relationships with various military officers. Tom Beanal, leader of the Amungme community in the area of the Freeport mine, was perhaps more widely respected as a genuine champion of Papuan rights, but early in 2000 he had decided to accept a position on the board of Freeport Indonesia.

Under the presidency of Abdurrahman Wahid, elected in November 1999, the Papuan Presidium Council and its supporters enjoyed an unprecedented latitude of political movement and expression. Across Papua, previously banned “Morning Star” flags associated with the independence movements were raised on 1 December 1999, and local community security posts (posko) established. Wahid's political and substantial financial support for the Second Congress played a part in his fall from power in July 2001, when Wahid was replaced by his strongly nationalist vice president, Megawati Sukarnoputri. Megawati's new cabinet restored hard-line nationalists and former generals to key positions, notably Gen. (ret.) Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as Coordinating Minister for Security and Political Affairs, Gen. (ret.) Hari Subarno as Home Affairs Minister, and Lt. Gen. (ret.) Abdullah Mahmud Hendropriyono as the head of the new National Intelligence Bureau. Under their direction, the hard-won concessions of provinces such as Aceh and Papua have systematically been rolled back in a return to the military dominance of regional planning and administration that characterized the 1970s and early 1980s.

This process was already under way prior to Megawati’s presidency. On 8 June 2000, directly in response to the Papuan Congress of May–June, a meeting was called by the Ministry of the Interior's Directorate for National Unity and Public Protection at the Matoa Hotel in downtown Jayapura. Those present represented all of the intelligence agencies operating in Papua, including the local intelligence heads from the Special Forces (Kopassus) and the elite Regional Reserve (Kostrad). The meeting outlined what it interpreted to be a solidifying conspiracy among Papuan leaders, and proposed a series of possible government responses, both public and clandestine. The twenty-three-page minutes reporting the findings of the meeting to Minister Hari Subarno was subsequently leaked to human rights nongovernment organizations. Attempts by Minister Yudhoyono and others to deny that the “Matoa” document was genuine were undermined by Minister Subarno who, when questioned, admitted that the meeting had indeed taken place and observed simply that there had not been adequate funding to pursue the plans outlined in the report.

In a diagram entitled “Papuan Political Conspiracy,” the Matoa document maps pro-independence cells (fraksi), each linked to a central axis, and identifies some thirty-eight leading individuals by name. Those listed include almost every notable Papuan, from known commanders of the Free Papua Movement (Organisasi Papua Merdeka or OPM), through church and NGO leaders, to the Jakarta-appointed Governor Jaap Salossa. The notion that these individuals might act in concert is absurd, though the suspi-
cian that they share a common hope for eventual independence is more plausible. The report set out a comprehensive plan of action for government agencies, including diplomatic initiatives designed to counter the Papuan Presidium Council’s international activities, fast-tracking of economic development programs, the promotion of official histories of Papua’s integration into the Republic, the creation of “civil defense” and “people’s resistance” groups (or militias), the generation of a legal framework to cover repressive action, and the prosecution of strong sanctions against the leaders of the “Papuan Conspiracy.”

Certainly the broader intentions of the Mattoa document appear to have informed government responses to independence sentiments since mid-2000. On the morning of 8 October 2000 a well-planned assault by combined security forces on Papuan posko centers in the Wamena Valley that were flying the Morning Star flag announced an end to the earlier tolerance of political freedoms. Indonesian migrants were caught in the crossfire between the Wamena communities and the police and military, and as many as thirty-seven Papuans and migrants were killed. The killing of the migrants, some of them teachers whose houses had been used as sniper posts by the security forces, made headline news nationally. Preempting the pro-independence ceremonies on 1 December 2000, five of the PDP leaders, including Theys Eluay, were arrested on charges of treason, and in each of the regional centers flag-raising ceremonies were brutally interrupted. Clashes in Fak-fak, Sorong, Manokwari, Tiom, and Jakarta resulted in several deaths and multiple arrests on charges of subversion. Many of those arrested during this period in Jayapura, Wamena, Jakarta, and elsewhere have been held under arrest for considerable periods of time and, even when released, live under the threat of having charges laid against them.

The government’s diplomatic offensive was pursued with equal efficiency, and the Papuan Presidium Council found itself progressively cut off from international forums and avenues for support. The Presidium’s success in gaining observer status at the Pacific Islands Forum in 2000 was not repeated in the August 2001 Forum meeting. Nauru, as the Forum host, had actively supported West Papua independence at the United Nations as well as at the 2000 Forum, but in 2001 withheld visas for PDP representatives while welcoming an official Indonesian government team. At the Forum, the government’s Papuan spokesman, the State Minister for Accelerated Development in Eastern Indonesia, Manuel Kaisiepo, declared that human rights violations in West Papua were a thing of the past (see below for evidence to the contrary). Australia and Papua New Guinea completed this reversal of fortune for the Papuan Presidium Council by limiting reference to West Papua in the Forum Communiqué to a simple expression of “concern about violence and loss of life,” and welcoming Jakarta’s proposals for Special Autonomy.

The future of a negotiated settlement between Jakarta and Papua revolves around the question of autonomy. Autonomy, in the form
of a degree of control over resource benefits and other local revenues and administrative functions, had been offered by President Habibie to all of the country’s regencies, thus bypassing the provinces and undermining their ability to pose a real challenge to Jakarta. In the two cases of Aceh and Papua, a “special” form of provincial autonomy was proposed, in order to counter separatist sentiment. Two competing drafts for the bill on Special Autonomy were brought to the national House of Representatives (DPR-RI) for consideration. The first had been prepared unilaterally by the Ministry of Home Affairs, with little or no Papuan input. Although this draft was endorsed by the provincial House of Representatives (DPRD Tingkat I) in Jayapura, it was ultimately rejected by the commission charged with presenting a draft to the national House. The second draft was put together in Jayapura by a team of Papuan academics and provincial government officials appointed by Governor Jaap Salossa, and represented a much more serious attempt to find some common ground between the positions of the Papuan Presidium Council and Jakarta. After lengthy negotiations between the House and the Governor’s team, the Papuan draft was accepted as the basis for the bill in June 2001, but heavily reworked to eliminate all reference to the possibility of a referendum on Papua’s future, and to emphasize Papua’s role as an integral part of the Republic of Indonesia. The bill was formally endorsed by the House on 22 October, and plans announced for the formal presentation of the law by the president to the governor in Jayapura on 22 December.

The most generous provisions in the new Law on Special Autonomy or Otonomi Khusus for Papua relate to the redirection of resource revenues, allocating 70 percent of oil and gas to Papua, together with 80 percent of other natural resource revenues, including mining, forestry, and fisheries (though some doubt remains over the precise arrangements for mining), and an ongoing 2 percent of the national general allocation fund. Given the presence in Papua of both Freeport’s Grasberg copper/gold mine and British Petroleum’s Tangguh natural gas field (see below), this is expected to result in a doubling of the provincial budget of previous years. On most other matters the final bill proved less flexible. The powers to appoint a Commission on Human Rights and a Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, and to control the deployment and activities of the police and army, are all retained by Jakarta. Although provision is made for the establishment of traditional courts (Pengadilan Adat), these are to be subordinate to the national court system, which will continue to be regulated by Jakarta. Crucially, no place was found in the final bill for popular referendums on changes to the Special Autonomy Law or, as proposed in the governor’s draft, on the fate of Special Autonomy after a trial period of five years. Although a symbolic concession is made on use of the name “Papua,” the status of other symbols of Papuan identity, such as the Morning Star flag, remains uncertain. Permission is granted to use local symbols (flags and anthems) but these can only be “cultural expressions and cannot be used as independence symbols.”

The key to Jakarta’s strategy is the
offer to Papua of revenues from the various “mega-projects,” including the Freeport copper-gold mine, British Petroleum’s natural gas project at Tangguh, BHP-Billiton’s nickel prospect on Gag Island, and the plans for an industrial park centered on the Mamberamo hydroelectric project. Freeport’s production was restored to full capacity in January 2001 after the company forced through an agreement with community leaders on dumping its overburden in Lake Wanagon, the scene of two massive accidents, the second being fatal for four Freeport workers. In April, Mama Yosepha Alomang, an Amungme leader who has campaigned actively against Freeport, was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize in San Francisco for her determined defense of the rights of the Amungme and Kamoro communities indigenous to the area of Freeport’s contract of work. Freeport countered this reversal by announcing details of a formal Memorandum of Understanding, signed with Amungme and Kamoro representatives, establishing a trust fund for the two communities, in an attempt to make amends after previous, poorly implemented attempts at compensation. In August the national environmental nongovernment organization, WALHI, secured an inaugural, if limited, victory in a Jakarta court against Freeport on the matter of insufficient disclosure about the Wanagon accidents. British Petroleum’s massive Tangguh natural gas project in Bintuni Bay is likely to proceed to production in 2004, and will ultimately produce even more revenue for the province than Freeport. However, plans for a joint venture nickel project on Gag Island involving BHP-Billiton, Falconbridge, and Aneka Tambang were suspended when Falconbridge withdrew, citing the obstruction posed to the project by legislation banning mining in National Protection Forest areas. Despite optimistic announcements by government officials, both national and provincial, little headway has been made with the formal components of the Mamberamo project, amid doubts over the technical feasibility of a large dam in a dynamic river system, and uncertainty over the scale of environmental impacts and the political future of Papua. Nevertheless, numerous timber and oil palm projects have gained a foothold in the Mamberamo area, riding on the coattails of the larger project.

Papuan disappointment with the Special Autonomy legislation focuses on Jakarta’s mistaken assumption that the financial benefits of autonomy will ultimately compensate for the lack of political freedoms and personal security. A “paralyzing polarization” of debate within Papua, which associates “M” (Merdeka, or immediate Independence) with true Papuan aspirations, and “O” (Otonomi, or Autonomy) with submission to the will of Jakarta, had previously undermined attempts to discuss moderate positions at the Papuan Congress. Even before the details of the final bill had been released, Special Autonomy had been rejected out of hand by the Papuan Presidium Council and various OPM spokesmen on the grounds that it fell short of demands for a referendum and had involved little or no dialogue with Papuan community leaders. An early attempt by the governor’s team to “socialize” their draft, at a seminar in Jayapura on 28 March, was disrupted by student protests and
the walkout of many of the regional representatives gathered together to discuss the draft. A heavy-handed attempt by police to quell these protests resulted in the death through injury of one of the protestors. As an observer remarked, if the academics of the governor’s team had failed to adequately socialize the concept of special autonomy among their own students, there could be little hope for success before the broader Papuan public. Papuan supporters of the concept of special autonomy (if not the final form of the bill), including the governor, members of the local and national legislatures, senior academics, bureaucrats, and church leaders, have argued that the new law, however compromised, is a necessary first step towards satisfying Papuan expectations.

Levels of violence in Papua have often reflected the personal attitudes and ambitions of provincial commanders, and there was an air of cautious optimism following the appointment in late 2000 of Maj.-Gen. Tonny Rompis, an apparent moderate who had put the case for a persuasive rather than repressive response to calls for Papuan independence. His death in a plane crash in the Central Highlands on 8 January, along with eight others including the provincial police chief, F X Soemardi, and the Speaker of the provincial parliament, Nathaniel Kaiway, was a severe blow to advocates for peace on both sides. In place of Rompis the army appointed Maj.-Gen. Mahidin Simbolon, a Special Forces veteran, famous for his intelligence work that resulted in the capture of Fretelin leader Xanana Gusmão, and for his role in the organization of East Timorese “militias.” In contrast, the new police chief, Brig.-Gen. I Made Magku Pastika, has proved to be an unusually liberal appointment.

Late in 2000, Minister for Defense Mahfud had declared the government’s intention to return to a “security” approach in its handling of Aceh, Maluku, and West Papua, and a major redeployment of fifty-one battalions, or 40 percent of the entire army, to these outer provinces ensued. Estimates of additional troops sent to Papua during 2001 ranged from the army’s own figure of an increase to 8,000 “nonstructural” elite police and military, to observers’ estimates of 15,000–20,000 new troops. Megawati’s first cabinet meeting nominated the resolution of the conflicts in Aceh and Papua as its most pressing goal, and in her inaugural address on 16 August the new President apologized to Papua for the suffering endured as a consequence of “inappropriate national policies.” During the following months, however, strongly nationalist policies on Papua prevailed, implemented largely through the agency of the military.

Thus far, the creation of civilian “militias” has been limited to urban centers, particularly in the western parts of the province, at Fak-fak and Sorong, where the military have attempted to pit indigenous Moslem and Christian communities against each other. There have also been several reports during 2001 of the arrival in Papua of well-armed and generously funded Laskar Jihad militants from the conflict in Maluku.

In Papua, as elsewhere in Indonesia, the army supplements its income
through a wide variety of business operations. The proliferation of army and police units in Papua, and the scope for rivalry over logging, alluvial mining, and smuggling opportunities, has led to a corresponding rise in clashes between different units. A firefight and grenade assault involving police and military took place at Serui on Yapen Island on 27 August leaving two dead and six injured, and a running war between police and soldiers in the Nabire area has claimed the lives of at least two police.

Armed resistance to Indonesian rule on the part of the Free Papua Movement appears to have increased during 2001. Although internal strife continues to dog the movement, with fatal clashes reported from OPM camps in Vanimo in mid-July, individual commanders and their units have been able to move with surprising freedom and temerity within Papua. Attacks on police or military posts, or on Indonesian migrant workers, were reported from the areas of Betar/Sarmi (3 February and 27 August), Wasior (31 March and 13 June), Timika (4 April and 23 September), Bintuni (28 August), Wapopen (16 November), and Kimaam (28 November). The township of Ilaga in the Central Highlands was overrun by the Free Papua Movement for five days, from 28 September until the army reestablished control on 2 October. This last event was sufficiently embarrassing for Maj.-Gen. Simbolon to sack eight of his senior commanders, including his assistants for intelligence and territorial affairs. Military operations in response to OPM activity, particularly in the Wasior area, in Manokwari Regency, and in the Betar and Sarmi areas of the north coast, drew harsh criticism from human rights observers. Indiscriminate “sweeping” operations conducted by army and elite police (Brimob) units in these two areas resulted in numerous reports of arbitrary detention, torture, and execution, and forced large numbers of civilians to flee to the surrounding forests.

Two hostage crises during 2001 briefly dominated national, if not international news. The first involved the 16 January kidnapping by an OPM unit, led by Willem Onde, of a group of eighteen workers from the Korean-owned logging company, PT Tunas Korindo, operating in the Asiki area in the Merauke regency. The crisis was resolved on 7 February with the return of the last hostages, among them two Korean company officials, but not before grave doubts had been raised in the media about the nature of the kidnapping. Onde had long been in close negotiation with local Kopassus commanders, and was regarded with suspicion by Papuan observers and other OPM commanders. Among Onde’s demands was a request for the military to pick up his tab at a bar that he frequented in Merauke. The “crisis” over, Onde was flown by the military to Jakarta, where he met with parliamentarians to press his case. In September, after his return to Papua, two bodies with their hands bound and gunshot wounds to their chests were retrieved from rivers near Merauke, and identified as those of Onde and his lieutenant, Johannes Tumeng. Few seem to have questioned the general wisdom that Onde’s “tab” with the military had expired. Then on 7 June, two Belgian men, Philippe
Simon and Johan van Den Eynde, were taken hostage by an OPM unit at the village of Paluga near Ilaga. Although the Belgians appear to have been tourists with an interest in documentary films, their easy passage through the military posts in Ilaga in search of the Free Papua Movement aroused the unit’s suspicions, leading to their kidnapping. Two church mediators, Benny Giay and Theo van den Broek, eventually secured their release, unharmed, on 16 August.

In December 2000 a group of approximately 400 refugees, mostly Highlanders fleeing police persecution in the Jayapura area, crossed into the Vanimo area of Papua New Guinea, but failed to gain acknowledgment of refugee status from the PNG government. The UN High Commission on Refugees had previously announced its plans to withdraw from all of the refugee camps by the end of 2001, and the Catholic church, left to bear much of the burden, also threatened to withdraw if government support was not forthcoming. In March, a PNG police riot squad attack on one of the Vanimo camps left as many as fifteen people injured. The irony of the PNG government’s willingness to receive Afghan and Iraqi refugees in support of Australia’s “Pacific Solution” did not escape observers on either side of the border.

The event that dominated the news from Papua at the end of 2001 was the assassination on 11 November of PDP Chairman Theys Eluay, a murder that remained officially unsolved by the year’s end. After attending a dinner at the Special Forces (Kopassus) base at Hamadi, in Jayapura, Theys and his driver Ari Masoka were driving back to his home in Sentani when his car was forced off the road by another vehicle. Theys was abducted by at least four men, but Ari escaped, calling Theys’s wife to tell her of the kidnapping by “straight hairs” (ie, non-Papuans). Shaken, Ari asked a passing bus to drop him at the Kopassus base, where he then disappeared. Theys was discovered dead the following morning, with his hands bound, seated in the driver’s seat of his car (though he could not drive), which had been pushed into a ravine along a road leading to the PNG border. The autopsy found no marks of strangulation, but declared that Theys had died of a “lack of oxygen,” presumably through suffocation with a plastic bag, a hallmark technique of Kopassus killings. Despite high tension and some sporadic riots, calm prevailed, and Theys was buried in Sentani on 17 November, in a ceremony attended by a crowd estimated at more than 10,000.

Police enquiries very quickly came to a standstill and a report issued on 13 December by a local human rights organization, the Institute for Human Rights Studies and Advocacy (ElsHAM), made clear the reasons for this impasse. All the indications were that the killing was the work of Kopassus, who had badly botched their attempt to cover their tracks. The vehicle had passed through numerous military and police checkpoints to reach the point where it was found, and forensic evidence (including matching paint on Theys’s vehicle and a Kopassus vehicle, and fingerprint evidence from Kopassus troops who were interviewed by the police) was supported by the testimonies of numerous eyewitnesses. Kopassus silence on the whereabouts of Ari
Masoka has only strengthened the case against them. Despite initial protestations to the contrary—Maj.-Gen. Simbolon, known for his pride in the dictum “No order, no action,” denied the involvement of any troops under his command and insisted at first that Theys had died of a heart attack—the combined weight of the police report, a public statement by provincial Police Chief Made Pastika linking Kopassus to the murder, and the findings of an internal military investigation, finally forced an admission by Army chief Endriartono Sutarto that troops may have been involved.

Jakarta, now in damage-limitation mode, has sent a notionally independent commission of enquiry to settle the case, but the composition of the team, with several active and retired military and police officers, has done little to inspire confidence. The findings of the team have been neatly anticipated by government ministers who have aired the likelihood that the murder was a criminal action on the part of rogue elements of the military, acting independently of command structures. Along with Willem Onde, Theys had been identified as a member of the “Papuan Conspiracy” in the Matoa document, and observers have suggested that their murders mark the initial steps in a systematic campaign of elimination of local leaders similar to that being conducted in Aceh.

Since the assassination of Theys, death threats have been issued over the phone to other “Papuan Conspirators,” including PDP Secretary-General Thaha Al-Hamid and ElsHAM Director Johannes Bonay.

Events during 2001 offer scant grounds for optimism about Papua’s immediate future. There is little prospect of genuine dialogue between Jakarta and Papua under a Megawati administration, and no indication that the other major parties are likely to be any more accommodating of Papuan aspirations. Much hangs on the speed with which the Special Autonomy legislation is implemented and the manner in which this is achieved, but in a climate of diminished government administrative capacity, to say nothing of will, the chances of an increase in levels of Papuan frustration appear very high. The most immediate problem for the government, obviously, is finding a credible solution to the questions surrounding the assassination of Theys Eluay, but little in the government’s handling of this case thus far suggests that it will succeed in swaying Papuan opinion.

Having cancelled her trip to Papua in late December to present the Special Autonomy legislation, President Megawati instead attended a 29 December military parade in Jakarta at which she declared, “We are suddenly aware . . . of the need for force to protect our beloved nation and motherland from breaking up.” “But with the laws of Indonesia as your guide,” she added to the assembled soldiers, “you can do your duty without worrying about being involved in human rights abuses. Do everything without doubts.”

Among the senior officers present was Maj.-Gen. Simbolon and before them a company of non-Papuan soldiers who, dressed in grass skirts and with their bare chests crudely daubed with mud, shook spears and enacted Jakarta’s necessary fantasy of savage and uncontrollable Papuans.
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