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(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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HEADER

R 032344Z JUN 98

FM DIA WASHINGTON DC

INFO RUEALGX/SAFE

R 032200Z JUN 98

FM DIA WASHINGTON DC (b)(3):10 USC 424

(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)

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SERIAL: MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIGEST {MID} 154-2A

SECTION 1 OF 3

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

SUBJ: INDONESIA MILITARY LOOKS WARILY TO THE FUTURE (U)

DOI: 3 JUN 98 {AS OF 1700 EST}

TEXT: 1. (C) THE ARMED FORCES HAVE EMERGED FROM THE RECENT UPHEAVALS

MORE UNITED AND BETTER POSITIONED TO PLAY A KEY ROLE IN INDONESIA'S POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION. NONETHELESS, THEY FACE MAJOR CHALLENGES AND MUST ACCOMMODATE STUDENTS AND POLITICAL FORCES SEEKING TO INFLUENCE THE REFORM AGENDA. MILITARY LEADERS COULD ASSUME A MORE PROMINENT ROLE SHOULD INSTABILITY AGAIN REACH CRITICAL LEVELS, BUT AS

THEIR PAST RESTRAINT INDICATED, THEY ARE UNLIKELY TO ATTEMPT A MILITARY TAKEOVER OR TO ACT OUTSIDE THE CONSTITUTION.

2. (C) SEEKING A UNIFIED MILITARY. UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF DEFENSE

MINISTER AND ARMED FORCES COMMANDER GEN WIRANTO, THE INDONESIAN ARMED FORCES WEATHERED THE RECENT SUCCESSION CRISIS AT LEAST TEMPORARILY MORE UNITED THAN IN MANY YEARS. FEARING MUTINOUS BEHAVIOR, WIRANTO SIDELINED HIS MAIN RIVAL, FORMER **PRESIDENT SOEHARTO'S** SON-IN-LAW LT GEN PRABOWO, AND REPLACED SEVERAL PRABOWO LOYALISTS IN THE SPECIAL FORCES. WIRANTO DEFERRED OTHER CHANGES, APPARENTLY IN THE INTEREST OF RECONCILIATION AND TO AVOID SUGGESTIONS OF A SERIOUS SPLIT WITHIN THE MILITARY. HE GAVE PRABOWO A FACE-SAVING REASSIGNMENT AND THROUGH SUBSEQUENT CEREMONIES SOUGHT TO REINFORCE THE EXISTING STRONG INSTITUTIONAL LOYALTY TO THE CHAIN OF COMMAND.

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

Pg. 4 is denied in full

Page 3 of 8

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(c)

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

(b)(1), 1.4 (c)

8. ~~(S)~~ WEIGHING POLITICAL REFORMS. THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP ALSO CONTINUES TO SUPPORT POLITICAL REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS IMPROVEMENT. A LEADING MILITARY REFORMER RECENTLY ADVOCATED STEPPING UP PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, CURRENTLY PLANNED FOR NEXT YEAR. MILITARY MEMBERS, HOWEVER, STILL WANT A MEASURED PACE OF REFORM BASED ON CONSENSUS AMONG THE GOVERNMENT AND ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY. SENIOR OFFICERS IN PARTICULAR HAVE WARNED AGAINST A PROLIFERATION OF PARTIES. CONSIDERING THE CURRENT RESTIVE SOCIAL CLIMATE, MILITARY LEADERS FEAR A REVIVAL OF ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS THAT COULD UNLEASH CENTRIFUGAL FORCES AND THREATEN NATIONAL UNITY.
9. ~~(S)~~ DEALING WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS DILEMMA. HUMAN RIGHTS REFORM

HAS RECEIVED RENEWED PROMINENCE FROM THE NEW PROREFORM GOVERNMENT LEADERS EAGER TO GARNER INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND REPAIR THEIR STANDING INSIDE **INDONESIA**. CHANGES IN THE WORKS INCLUDE THE PHASED RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PLANS TO SIGN ADDITIONAL UN HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTIONS IN THE COMING MONTHS.

(b)(1), 1.4 (c)

11. (c) SENIOR OFFICERS OPPOSE THE RELEASE OF CERTAIN OTHER POLITICAL

PRISONERS THEY BELIEVE REMAIN A SUBVERSIVE DANGER. IN ADDITION TO SEPARATIST REBELS, THEY ARE AGAINST FREEING MEMBERS OF THE SMALL PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY, WHO THEY FEAR SEEK TO REVIVE THE MORIBUND INDONESIAN COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. NONETHELESS, MILITARY LEADERS HAVE ALLOWED THE RELEASE OF A NUMBER OF PRISONERS AND MAY WELL FEEL PRESSURE TO MAKE FURTHER CONCESSIONS IN THE COMING WEEKS. AGING COMMUNIST OFFICIALS, FOR EXAMPLE, MAY BE FREED ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS.

12. (c) PROBING PAST MISDEEDS POSES A MORE SERIOUS DILEMMA FOR THE MILITARY. CURRENT ATTENTION IS ON THE SHOOTING DEATHS OF FOUR UNIVERSITY PROTESTERS IN JAKARTA ON 12 MAY AND THE EARLIER DISAPPEARANCES OF POLITICAL DISSIDENTS, FIVE OF WHOM REMAIN UNACCOUNTED FOR. MILITARY INVESTIGATIONS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED. WIRANTO ISSUED AN APOLOGY AND ORDERED THE COURT-MARTIAL OF 18 POLICE OFFICERS--PURPORTEDLY FROM AN ELITE COUNTERTERRORIST GROUP--FOR THE STUDENT DEATHS. SOME SPECULATED THAT LT GEN PRABOWO WAS BEHIND BOTH ACTIONS. ALTHOUGH DOUBTS EXIST ABOUT HIS INVOLVEMENT, HE REMAINS THE

PRIME SUSPECT IN THE DISAPPEARANCES. MILITARY RELUCTANCE TO IMPLICATE

PRABOWO THUS FAR QUITE LIKELY REFLECTS AN EFFORT TO AVOID FURTHER HARM TO THE MILITARY'S UNITY AND REPUTATION. YET, WITHOUT A SERIOUS

INVESTIGATION, MILITARY CREDIBILITY WILL SUFFER; CIVILIAN CRITICS ALREADY ARE DEVELOPING PLANS TO BRING PRABOWO AND THE OTHERS TO TRIAL.

13. (S) THE MILITARY'S CAUTION HAS FOSTERED SUSPICION AMONG STUDENTS AND DISSIDENT GROUPS, WHO WISH TO HAVE A KEY ROLE IN FORMULATING THE REFORM AGENDA. THEY DEMAND THAT SOEHARTO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR PAST ABUSES, AND THEY LOOK UNFAVORABLY ON WIRANTO'S PLEDGES TO SAFEGUARD THE FORMER PRESIDENT AND HIS FAMILY. HOPING TO REGAIN THE MOMENTUM, SMALLER STUDENT GROUPS HAVE RESUMED PROTESTS, TARGETING CORRUPTION AND NEPOTISM AND CALLING FOR PRESIDENT HABIBIE'S REMOVAL.

14. (S) PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS. THE MILITARY PUBLICLY URGES SUPPORT FOR HABIBIE AS THE CONSTITUTIONAL HEAD OF STATE. HOWEVER, MANY SENIOR OFFICERS RESENT HIS PAST EFFORTS TO INTERFERE IN MILITARY MATTERS, INCLUDING ACQUISITIONS. WHILE DEFENDING THE CONSTITUTION, THEY HAVE TAKEN A MORE AMBIVALENT STANCE TOWARD THE HABIBIE PRESIDENCY, VIEWING HIM AS ONLY A TRANSITIONAL FIGURE. ANY FUTURE EFFORTS BY HABIBIE TO MANIPULATE SENIOR PROMOTIONS--INCLUDING POSSIBLY REMOVING WIRANTO AS ARMED FORCES CHIEF--WILL ONLY FURTHER FAN DISSATISFACTION WITHIN THE OFFICER CORPS.

15. (S) MILITARY LEADERS APPEAR WILLING FOR NOW TO LET HABIBIE'S PERFORMANCE DETERMINE HIS FATE. PRESSURES FOR HIS IMMEDIATE REMOVAL /***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 003 *****/

HAVE LESSENED SINCE HE ACQUIESCED TO WIDE-RANGING REFORMS AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. EVEN SO, HABIBIE STILL LACKS A POPULAR MANDATE AND IS VULNERABLE TO CHARGES OF CORRUPTION AND NEPOTISM. SOME MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES IN PARLIAMENT APPEAR SYMPATHETIC TO CONVENING A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE PEOPLE'S CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY TO PICK A CARETAKER PRESIDENT. SENIOR LEADERS, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY FAVOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS FIRST, FOLLOWED BY ASSEMBLY SELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT.

16. (S) ULTIMATELY, THE ARMED FORCES WILL SEEK A PRESIDENT WHO SUPPORTS THEIR INTERESTS AND RECOGNIZES THE NEED TO PRESERVE STABILITY. WIRANTO REMAINS A POPULAR CHOICE FOR MANY OFFICERS, BUT HE LACKS OBVIOUS POLITICAL AMBITION. THE MILITARY EVENTUALLY MAY BACK A CIVILIAN WHO ADVOCATES MODERATE REFORM, BUT IT IS OPPOSED TO LEFTWING PRESCRIPTIONS OR ESTABLISHMENT OF A MUSLIM-DOMINATED STATE.

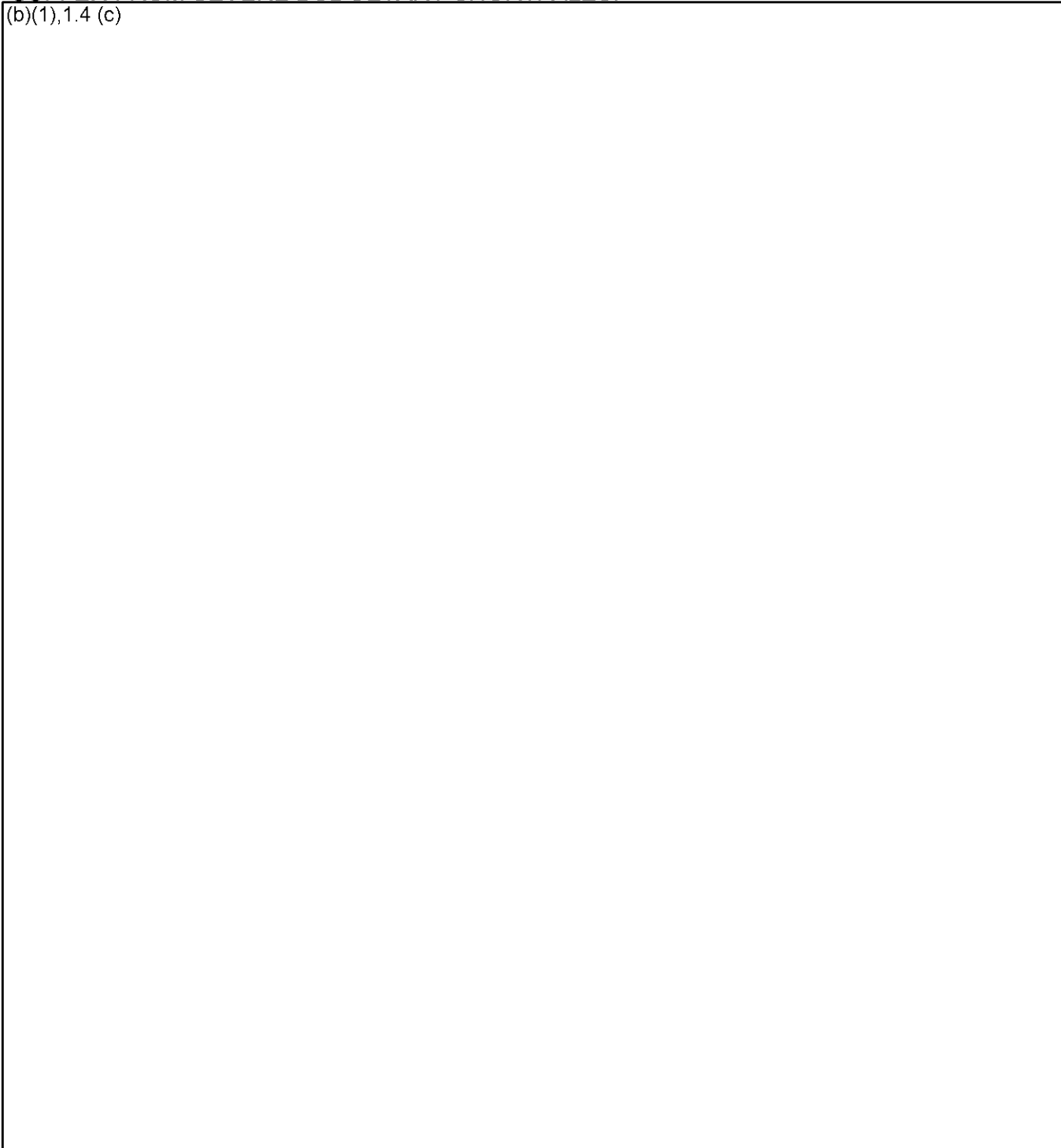
17. (S) LOOMING CHALLENGES. IN THE COMING MONTHS, THE MILITARY WILL CONFRONT IMMENSE CHALLENGES. THE POLITICAL UPHEAVALS HAVE EXACERBATED THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, AND THE COUNTRY IS NEARING FINANCIAL

COLLAPSE. INEVITABLE PRICE RISES ARE LIKELY TO SPARK FURTHER ANTI-CHINESE RIOTING, DEMANDING MILITARY ATTENTION AND DIMINISHING

INVESTOR CONFIDENCE. THE ARMED FORCES ALSO WILL BE CALLED ON TO AID IN RELIEF AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION, BUT THEIR EFFECTIVENESS MAY BEGIN TO

SUFFER FROM SEVERE BUDGETARY SHORTFALLS.

(b)(1), 1.4 (c)



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Page 8 of 8

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