Series: Governance Traps
Interview no.: ZA 2

Interviewee: Lt. General Agus Widjojo
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Date of Interview: 24 March 2015
Location: Jakarta, Indonesia
DREISBACH: This is March 24th, 2015. I'm here with retired Lieutenant General Agus Widjojo at the CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies) headquarters at Jakarta. General Widjojo, thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me. Could you start with just giving me a brief sense of your background? I know you've done a lot, a sense of your education, your service in the military, and what you're doing now at CSIS.

WIDJOJO: I received my commission in the military in 1970 from the Indonesian Military Academy. It was then the Integrated Armed Forces Academy, Army Branch. My last assignment before retiring, I was the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. We still had the dual function then, so it was a civilian position actually. Before that I was at the headquarters as the Chief of Staff for Territorial Affairs. Before that it was called Chief of Staff for Socio-Political Affairs. Then there was already the movement toward relinquishing the sociopolitical role, so it was changed to Chief of Staff for Territorial Affairs. That is why I was much involved in the reform of the military, because primarily the reform of the military is the reform in reviewing the sociopolitical role and transforming it into the national defense force in accordance with the mandate of the constitution.

I retired in 2003. My first assignment was at the CSIS, here, as a Senior Fellow directly. Between 2003 and now I had some occasions or experiences related to the reform of the military. I was one of the Indonesian commissioners in the Indonesia-Timor Leste Commission of Truth and Friendship, which dealt with the accusations of gross violations of human rights under the TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, the Indonesian National Armed Forces). I have a Master's Degree in Military Art and Science from United States Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. I also hold a Master's Degree in National Security Strategy from the National Defense University in Fort Myers, Washington, DC and also a Masters of Public Administration from George Washington University in Washington, DC.

I am a Senior Fellow at the CSIS. I am also The Chairman at the Institute for Peace and Democracy Foundation. It was established to be the implementing agency of the Bali Democracy Forum.

I am also the Chair of the Executive Board for Partnership for Governance Reform. It used to be the institution to channel or to manage UNDP (United Nations Development Program) aid to Indonesia way back in 1998. Now it has terminated that. Its role now is to manage aid from individual country donors.

I also chair a foundation that is seeing to the establishment of a school of government and public policy, called The Indonesia Cerdas Unggul Foundation.

DREISBACH: Yes, that is a lot. I wanted to ask you—it seems like this time, as I see starting the mid 1990s and definitely leading up to 1998, was a time of really intense change in the military.

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: As I understand it, you were one of the officers within the military who was really—even before Suharto stepped down in 1998—was really interested in changing some things within the military. Could you talk about just personally what that was like? What were you feeling when you were seeing these big changes happening in the military? When Suharto stepped down too, what was that personally like for someone who had really been in the system for a
long time, had worked his way up through the military, to see these big
changes happening. What was that like for you personally?

WIDJOJO:

We, officers within TNI have always wanted the TNI to be developed, to be
established into a professional military no more inferior or less than other
military in other countries. We always asked the question, what is the current
position of the TNI, and what should we do? What is the direction that we
should follow to achieve this? So that was our basic questions. With my
experience and education background I am fortunate to be able to see
comparative systems and studies in other countries in similar professional
militaries, in fact in the context of a democratic political system.

I also served in peacekeeping operations. There were not so many then in
1975-76, in the Middle East as part of the United Nations Emergency Force
in Sinai and in ’73 also in Vietnam. The peacekeeping operation in Vietnam
was part of the ICCS (International Commission of Control and Supervision).
It was not under the UN, it was initiated by the US to negotiate between North
Vietnam and South Vietnam. Eventually North Vietnam overran Saigon, and
that brought the ICCS to its termination.

So that was my basic question. To put it in the context of the TNI reform, I’m
sure that I was not the only one with that question. If we see in hindsight, in
history, that the reform started in 1998, we should not conclude or assume
that it was really started from zero in 1998. Discourses about democracy,
discourses about military professionalism, it had already started way before
1998, as far back as the early 1980s.

DREISBACH: Oh wow.

WIDJOJO: Yes. And also maybe in the 1970s because it was President Suharto who
opened up the New Order of Indonesia to return Indonesia to the
international community and also to restore its relations with Malaysia, where
the previous President Soekarno had confronted Malaysia, seeing Malaysia
as the puppet state of British colonialism.

President Suharto opened up Indonesia and Indonesia was able to restore its
position in the international community. Indonesia sent many of its
youngsters overseas to study at foreign universities, and they came back. So
when Suharto resigned in 1998, it could be said that he was a victim of his
own success about opening up the society, about opening up freedom of
expression, about starting discourse on democracy and about enhancing the
professionalism of the military.

In the military itself, the discourse on enhancing professionalism started way
back as part of that development. I remember it was in 1988, I think it was 1988,
when the Chief of Staff Gen. Edi Sudrajat initiated or established a
working group—I was part of it—to try to find a concept of how to enhance
the professionalism of the Army. It was called Back to Basics, meaning back
to the basics of professionalism, of the soldiers’ professionalism. Of course
we had those familiar names that later were involved in the reforms as Susilo
Bambang Yudhoyono, Agus Wirahadikusumah, and some others.

That process continued, even crossing the line of the reform in 1998 when
President Suharto resigned. The difference was that before 1998 nobody
dared to say explicitly that we would terminate dual function. We can say just
about anything about military professionalism and what we have to do, but
nothing is said about terminating the dual function. It was only starting in
1998 that the military reform included review of the dual function and
terminating The Dual Function Doctrine.
The Dual Function Doctrine was the document that explicitly stated the Indonesian Armed Forces existed not only as a defense and security force, but also a socio political force.

By the end of the 1980s, I was not alone actually. The political authorities also had in mind how to refine the implementation of the dual function, because of the trend of the world opening up and molding into one big village, globalization. One of them was they put out a project to LIPI (Indonesian Institute of Sciences), the National Academy of Sciences, to come up with a paper. The researchers are still here, Syamsuddin Harris and—there were several of them and they presented results to the government. I think it was spearheaded by Secretary of the State Mr. Murdiono. But the paper was turned down. It made its recommendations and made a thrust attacking the dual function; of course it was turned down. The time was not ripe yet to terminate The Dual Function Doctrine.

DREISBACH: Is this coming from Suharto? He just didn’t want discussion about the termination of the dual function? What was the reason that talking about ending the dual function was not permitted? Who was preventing that conversation from happening?

WIDJOJO: The political culture, because of course any military would be conservative in nature. There is always a rationale, a history behind why the military became such an institution. There is always a rationale and a reason and an answer to questions. It is not coming out of the blue; it is not just naked passion for power, just like any foreigner would see it in black and white. It is not that. That was set to be the background of the history of the TNI and if you recall the TNI was established during the War of Independence, the Struggle for Independence. It started as a nation in arms. We had no state, no country and no national army. It came from freedom fighters unit; it came from the Japanese-established defenders of the motherland and it came also from those former soldiers of the Netherlands Indies Army. So that was molded together. That was not easy. One important point is that in trying to integrate all the freedom fighters units they came from the armed wing of the freedom movement, movement for independence. The movement for independence would always be political.

The freedom fighters wing were the freedom fighters wing of the political movement so they were already in politics. What I meant to say is that the TNI starting from its inception was already political. That’s one.

Secondly they had to form a sort of national Army—this is just for the sake of interest—where the political authority, President Sukarno and all the ministers, were reluctant to appoint a Minister of Defense. Why? Because there were still remnants of the Japanese and the Allied Forces were coming. They thought that if they were too fast in assigning a Minister of Defense or a defense force, they would be seen as the puppets of the Japanese.

So this TNI, already integrated under General Sudirman, did not have a commander. The first commander, who was General Sudirman, was, quote, assigned by election, by popular vote amongst the officers, representing the various factions of the newly integrated national army.

DREISBACH: The Commander of the Armed Forces was assigned by popular vote?

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: It seems very unique.
WIDJOJO: Yes. It is because he had a support base in Central Java. So again, what I mean to say here is that there may be some strange things happening but there is always a rationale behind it. We have to know the historical context of events.

After that, there was always a strong bond amongst the generation of founding fathers of Indonesia. We call it the 1945 Generation. There was a strong bond, and that continued in the practice of the government. Although we tried to adopt democracy brought by those founding fathers who had just returned from Western Europe, attending universities there and acquiring the systems, including democracy. This was faced by nationalistic fighters who had never been abroad and were fighting for independence in Indonesia. But amongst them there grew a bonding of camaraderie by those, by the generation who had fought together during the struggle for independence.

So they tried to establish a political system based on the value system, eastern value system, where the family was one big family of the nation of Indonesia. That was what they tried to do. Of course, you have to take into account that after the end of the World War II there was a thrust to support democracy. Indonesia was very much assisted by that when she gained her independence.

Then there was the Cold War. These third world countries were left to deal with their own problems, to solve their own internal problems. There were rebellions, yes. What I mean to say here is—what does the resignation of President Suharto mean in this strategic review of Indonesian history? It means that President Suharto was the “last of the Mohicans”, of the 1945 generation. The question was, can we continue with the way that these founding fathers implemented or practiced the running of the state? I graduated from the Academy, now let’s see, (Muhammad) Hatta Rajasa graduated from the ITB (Bandung Institute of Technology), (Muhammed) Amien Rais graduated from Gadjah Mada University. We don’t know each other, we’re beyond the 1945 generation, and that came into effect as a reality when President Suharto resigned. What system is there to replace that system when the continuing generation was not bound by a common experience in the struggle for independence, but came from various professional educational institutions?

When it was practiced by the generation of Indonesia’s founding fathers it was democracy, but it was a very loose democracy. It’s as though they were asking the questions okay, we fought together, okay, how can we solve this, those sort of things. There was a strong camaraderie, to solve national issues. So it was democracy, 1998, 1999. So everything in the running of the state after President Suharto resigned would be practiced in accordance with the principles of democracy. That applies also to the functioning of the defense force, the TNI.

Before that, there was always uneasiness, suspicion, some enmity between politicians and soldiers during the Struggle for Independence. The soldiers would say that the politicians are holding up the progress where actually we can fight and gain our independence by taking up weapons. Then the diplomats and politicians said no, that is not possible. This was already felt by General Sudirman. General Sudirman was a teacher, a Muhammadiyah teacher. He had no military training or education or background, but he felt that disharmony. His very big plus for the TNI was that he was always loyal to the decision of President Soekarno as the political leader in the struggle for independence. That is actually how we see General Sudirman. Then came General (Abdul Haris) Nasution; to be loyal is not enough. This is a little bit too much with the politicians fighting each other in the National Assembly, the Constitutional Assembly, actually, with the task of writing a new constitution,
because the 1945 constitution was an emergency constitution and is supposed to be a provisional, temporary constitution. They did not finish. It was again coming up about the debate, should we have a sectarian Islamic Indonesia or a secular Indonesia. That debate resurfaced.

Nasution actually had started to receive education from the Dutch Military Academy when it was moved from Breda (Netherlands) to Bandung (Indonesia), when Holland was run over by the Germans. It was a professional military education. He knew everything. But from the reality of Indonesia, he was dilemmatic. What is this? How can we accept this? Where are we going with this? So he came up with the proposal of what he called the middle way, not Anthony Giddens, but the middle way where he declared during the first anniversary of the National Military Academy in Magelang in 1958 that the TNI would adopt the middle way. It is that—the military would not be the government in military dictatorship like in Latin American countries, but it would not stay as a puppet in the hands of the civilian politicians. So that is the middle way concept introduced by General Nasution in 1958.

He consulted with lawyers and he was told that Nasution, the military could not have a sociopolitical role under the current 1950 provisional constitution. It has to be the 1945 constitution because the 1945 constitution provides for representatives from the functional groups. So to my guessing, there was some political convergence to each other between Nasution and Sukarno. I think they agreed that this is too much. The deadlock in politics is because we are not in the 1945 constitution. To overcome this we should reinstate the 1945 constitution. So on the fifth of July 1959, President Sukarno unilaterally declared to go back, to return to reinstate the 1945 constitution. This paved the way for the military to enter politics because there is a provision in the 1945 constitution, for the functional group. With lobbying and pushed by Nasution, a year later, the National Assembly made a declaration that it formally accepts the military as one of the representatives of the functional group.

But to understand why The Dual Function was practically accepted, we have to understand the context where the role of the military in developing countries during that time frame was effective to contribute to implementation of national development program. We remember during that era political scientist tried to frame the phenomenon under the concept of the new professionalism of the military in developing countries.

DREISBACH: Got it.

WIDJOJO: The door is now open for the military to play a sociopolitical role. But General Nasution never meant to see the military as the government or becoming the government. The military would like only to be to be involved in strategic and national policy decision-making process. But when President Suharto assumed the presidency that was not enough for him. President Soeharto went further to assign the military with partisan political role, as part of the government ruling party Golongan Karya (Functional Group).

Again it’s as though he was saying we can’t go anywhere with this; we have to be in the government. So he continued and proceeded with that push, making the military as one of the three elements of the functional group that was to become Golkar (Party of the Functional Groups). Now, that is one. Secondly is that the military had a faction to represent them in the Parliament. The military can run for public office and if a military officer runs for public office the military candidate is actually representing the institution of the military, not as an individual. He will enjoy the backup, the support of the institution, which can assure that he will win because there is a single majority of Golkar, the bureaucrats and the military in the parliament. That
was the position of the military in the balance of power during the administration of President Soeharto.

Then came 1998, starting from the financial crisis.

DREISBACH: Yes.

WIDJOJO: Okay, it deteriorated, which developed into a political crisis, some say multidimensional crisis but—.

DREISBACH: There were mass protests; there were protests in the streets.

WIDJOJO: Yes, but suffice it to say political crisis, because everything comes from politics. President Suharto resigned. Actually in my opinion Indonesia was caught by strategic surprise. Nobody had ever expected that Suharto would resign. We never prepared a system that would succeed Suharto. So the politicians were in confusion.

One fortunate aspect is that we did not dissolve any of the political institutions, unlike Egypt now. The National Assembly, the Parliament was still intact. The constitution was still intact. One thing they forgot is, like in sports or soccer, they forgot to watch the military, or maybe they did not have anybody to watch the military. The TNI, rather than jumping into this melting pot and involving itself in this democratic transition, the TNI withdrew out of politics. Of course, some thinking had been done before 1998. But now, this was the real time that we could manifest all our thoughts what we were thinking about. What would the role of the TNI be if Indonesia went democratic? So here was the decision time. TNI withdrew and those people went to the drawing board and this is what we did trying to solve—trying to see how we positioned the TNI in a more democratic Indonesia. So that was the start of the reform.

DREISBACH: Yes.

WIDJOJO: The military reform, as I’ve said, the politicians took no care to the military, so the military had the luxury to draw the blueprint for reform by ourselves, by the military ourselves. We knew what had to be reformed, and we knew what had to be retained. We enjoyed that until 2004 because there was a de facto vacuum of political authorities overlooking the military then.

DREISBACH: There was a vacuum between 1998 and 2004?

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: The military had some freedom then to initiate reforms on its own?

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: And that is where we get the New Paradigm right? So this is something I read a lot, with the New Paradigm. So how do I understand that? Is that basically an internal document that just sort of laid out some goals? Tell me the story of the New Paradigm. Who wrote that? Was there a lot of disagreement within the military about what should be in this new plan? What is the story of the New Paradigm?

WIDJOJO: The New Paradigm. Actually the most intensive discussion took place between me and General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Even when we were captain, colonel, then we met again. I was senior until he overtook me. I replaced him as chief of staff for territorial affairs. Demonstrations had already existed during that time. He came to me and we discussed. So one
day he came to me, we were approaching the fifth of October, TNI Day. How about writing down what we have been discussing, in a sort of brochure, a formula, then we publish it on the fifth of October. Good idea I said, good idea. So I made a draft, which was supposed to be the New Paradigm One, then there would be two, two new paradigms. New Paradigm One, I wrote the draft, but he was responsible, as Chief of State for Territorial Affairs the office responsible for the function. I was the assistant for general plans and strategic policy. Because we were long together way before and we had discussions for a long time—.

DREISBACH: You say for a long time, how long had you been having these discussions with Yudhoyono?

WIDJOJO: I graduated in 1970 and went to this unit, the 17th Airborne Unit, directly. In 1973 in the East Timor area of operations, he reported to me, just returning from Ranger course in the US, taking up his duty as my platoon leader. It started from there, although it was only about the professionalism of the defense force. But in the headquarters with this—of course we were tested also in the MPR (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat/ People’s Consultative Assembly). He was an appointed ex-officio member of the MPR representing the military.

DREISBACH: Okay.

WIDJOJO: He was the primary assistant to General Wiranto as to propose the position of the TNI in the various political dynamics in the National Assembly or MPR. So I wrote the draft. I gave it to him. Actually in that draft—I knew that he would not agree, but I was trying things, you know, that you try to do but you know that he doesn’t like.

DREISBACH: Okay.

WIDJOJO: What do you call that?

DREISBACH: You tried to force something on him that you knew he wouldn’t want.

WIDJOJO: Yes. I tried in that draft to put the military directly disengaging from dual function. He recognized it. “No no no, Pak Agus, it’s not the time yet.”

DREISBACH: He wanted the process to be more gradual? He wanted more of a step-by-step process, or we can’t do it all right now?

WIDJOJO: There was no plan. It was ad hoc, what should we do, what should we do? It is because remnants of the old paradigm, seniors with the old paradigm, are still strong. Oh yes, I forgot. Those doctrines that we adopted which would form the dual-function doctrine were actually most of the practices that the TNI experienced during the war in the struggle for independence.

So it was a practice of a situation of war emergency, guerrilla government, a war government like in France, in Europe in World War II, where the military was the government. There was no distinct division between civil and military. Even in wartime government, in guerrilla government, all public servants would be subordinated to the local military commander. That also includes the territorial function, territorial command. I forgot to say that.

Then the first new paradigm was actually a softening of the practice of the dual function, but it was still dual function. Yes, a softening of the dual function. It included statements such as the TNI would not lead from the front but it would lead from the middle and from the rear. The TNI would not make a direct decision, but would persuade indirectly in the form of role sharing...
with other national elements. Those are not the complete statements, but something like that. These observers, civilian observers, the young people said hey, that is the dual function! Well, I said it is still dual function.

Then General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono became minister. I succeeded him as chief of staff of territorial affairs. In the handover he said to me, Pak Agus, continue with the reform. That I did. The command of the TNI was handed over to Admiral Widodo (Adi Sutjipto), a typical Central Javanese, very nice man, from General Wiranto. I was surprised also that he adopted many of my staff proposals in the reform. So that was 1999, signed by Wiranto, the first new paradigm.

In 2001, I went to Admiral Widodo and said, it is about time to proceed with the reform. The first new paradigm is not enough with the progress, with the development of democracy in Indonesia. What do you mean? We should publish New Paradigm Two. What is that? We should disengage totally from dual function and terminate dual function. We would publish that on the fifth of October 2001 as a sequel to New Paradigm One. That we did.

In that second New Paradigm, I proposed to totally disengaged TNI from the dual function. That is such things as that any mission that the TNI undertakes would always be a mission of the state, by the will of the people as part of the national system, those sorts of things. So I locked the TNI in as part of the national system inclusively, and not as an exclusive element of the national system.

DREISBACH: Looking at specific reforms, the separation of the police from the military; that was something that was in New Paradigm One?

WIDJOJO: No, it was separate.

DREISBACH: It was a separate thing. I’m curious about that. I think that is an extremely important policy. Everyone I’ve talked to said this is one of the most important things that happened, because it is a more modern structure for the military not to have a police function and it was one of the most important things in removing the military from a lot of the internal affairs. So I’m really curious. Was this widely accepted within the military that you had to separate the police? How was this decision made? Was it driven by the military internally? Was it driven by civilian reformers? I know (Bacharuddin Jusuf) Habibie, President Habibie took an interest in it.

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: As you see it, what was the decision to separate the police from the military?

WIDJOJO: It was a mixture of all of the above, which came into an agreement on the way of thinking. There was no real objection or rejection to modernizing the government structure, the functions of the various elements of the government, which were not appropriate. It was not difficult to come to an agreement, so what should we do that would make it appropriate.

The TNI internal reform actually is not about policy, it is about trying to think about or review the role and authorities of the TNI in accordance with the 1945 constitution. The 1945 constitution allows only for the TNI the function of national defense, no other. Of course there are other legal provisions as to how to employ the military in peacetime in support of the civilian authorities, but practically, it is an arm for national defense. We had the police inside.

We knew, way back when we were still under President Suharto. It is not difficult to see that the police should not be part of the armed forces. But
again, there is a rationale for that. In 1965 during the days of Sukarno, the last phase of Sukarno, the armed elements of Indonesia was an object to be seized by various political movements. So we see factions within the armed forces, those national elements who have the constitutional monopoly to hold weapons. The Marines gave the impression (of being) in support of Sukarno. The Army gave the impression in support of Suharto.

So when Suharto came to power, his first policy about the force structure, defense force structure, was to integrate totally between the three defense forces and the police force. That included also the academy.

DREISBACH: Okay, had they been separate before that? The police had been separate from the military?

WIDJOJO: Yes. Then of course came the democratization movements, and of course they would like to see the police separated, with all the various riots. It was to side-step the military actually, but the argument was, this is a police function. The military had taken steps with the upper hand.

In 2000, under President Abdurrahman Wahid, the police force wanted to be detached, separated from the armed forces. For those who have some minimum thinking and understanding of the function of the state, it was not difficult to see that the police and the military had very different functions. In the end it caused no opposition when General Wiranto—that was under General Wiranto, and that was a significant thing that he contributed to the reform—General Wiranto separated the police from the armed forces and the armed forces became the defense force, TNI. ABRI (Republic of Indonesia Armed Forces) became TNI (National Defence Force).

DREISBACH: That was when the name change happened.

WIDJOJO: Yes. But on the other hand we saw the wrong thing happen, let's say. Of course, when the police was detached from the military it was no longer the authority of the military to decide what to do with the police. Civil and political authorities. Gus Dur (nickname for then-President Abdurrahman Wahid) was there. 'Hey, I lost support from the military; I need a replacement for my political support, give me the police.' So the police were positioned directly under the President until now. The police felt that anything that was left by the military now falls into the responsibility of the police.

So when we see that the term was defense and security, now you only have the Ministry of Defense, so security belongs to me thought the Police. This causes a shock for the police where they still feel very proud to be separate from the armed forces and now they can be in power with the military. They would never want to be subordinated to any political authorities except the President. This is the basic problem that we have with the police now; they are an independent force. Practically, de facto, they have become the second military because we missed really putting them into the proper place of putting them under a ministerial political authority.

DREISBACH: So that should have happened right away; they should have been put under—it is not the Ministry of Interior, it is the Ministry—.

WIDJOJO: Any ministry.

DREISBACH: So just any ministry. So there was a failure then—.

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: That is the failure of civilian leadership then?
WIDJOJO: Yes. I would suspect this was the intent of Gus Dur because again when Abdurrahman Wahid was President—

DREISBACH: He had a very chaotic presidency.

WIDJOJO: Yes, he had implemented subjective civilian control. He went right into the internal management of the military, which caused of course a reaction.

DREISBACH: He interfered in the promotions process and that was a very unpopular thing.

WIDJOJO: Yes, right. Very unpopular. He saw problems with the military, he saw the police were coming, okay, come in.

DREISBACH: Interesting. So with this separation of the police from the military. So basically, Wiranto had the power to declare okay, the police are no longer in the military.

WIDJOJO: Yes, right.

DREISBACH: Was that something that happened very suddenly? One thing I'm very interested in, so if you're a police officer and all your life you felt oh, I'm part of the military and one day you're told you're not, how do you make that change actually happen? How do you actually accept that you're no longer part of the military? It feels like that is a process for you to retrain people or develop this doctrine. Do you know, was there any effort made to do that?

WIDJOJO: There are still hangovers, I can say that, until now. I was the Commandant of the Staff and Command College, Joint Staff and Command College of the TNI in Bandung. I experienced the last batch where the police attended the course and there were staff or faculty members from the police in that college. They came to me. Pak Agus, do not kick us out of the staff college. Retain us as students and as faculty members in the staff college. How can I? Our functions are drastically different. You are law enforcement agents. The business of the military is war fighting. You create and establish your own education and training system and institutions. Make yourself number one policeman. Try to find benchmarking. Benchmark with the Japanese police. That is your direction. To be retained as part of the armed forces, that is a wrong decision.

Even right now there are thoughts about again reintegrating the police, even restricted, limited, into training and education at the academy, only one year. There are still thoughts like that.

DREISBACH: I believe it was in 2000, the police were given the responsibility for counterterrorism. I understand that was a bit of a controversial subject, at least from what I read there was some resistance in the military that felt like maybe this should be something that remains in the military. How was that decision made? Who decided to give the counterterrorism folder to the police, and what were the ramifications of that?

WIDJOJO: In 2004 the political authorities reestablished their authorities. In some aspects we were lucky to have Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono elected as President.

DREISBACH: Yes.

WIDJOJO: In some aspects we were unlucky. He had vast knowledge; he had the knowledge but it does not necessarily mean that the knowledge would be translated directly into policies. But principal things he knew. Again, there has
to be a push to influence the public opinion, that is from the civil society, through media. But also I'm sure that we were lucky to have Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who knew that this was the function of the police.

Again and again and again, I was one of them that always reminded the public that the military is established with the intention for war fighting. What is defense? To prepare ourselves in the event of foreign military coming to invade Indonesia. So it is war fighting. Any threat that came from within Indonesia—which hey, accidentally, is the area of the national legal system—that would always be seen as violation of the law. The first reaction would always have to be law enforcement, and that is the domain of the police. Even if that is terror, even if that is guns, even if that is Papua (a location of civil unrest), even if that is done by a foreigner, it is the law that we would take to them, you are breaking this law, investigate, turn him over to the judicial process. It is not a task for the military. So that has to be repeated again and again and again to form the public opinion until they understand.

DREISBACH: I'm interested in the defense policy legislation that was passed in 2002. As I understand it, in 2002 there was a law passed that called for a number of reforms in defense policy and civilian military relations. There were a lot of aspects of that law. There were also some constitutional amendments that were passed in 2002.

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: My understanding is that you were sort of the lead negotiator for the military in these issues, is that correct?

WIDJOJO: Where?

DREISBACH: The discussions about drafting this law and—.

WIDJOJO: Well…

DREISBACH: What was your role there?

WIDJOJO: It was a mixture. It was a mixture of total football. In total football we don't know who is the Brazilian player, who is the Russian player, who is from Barcelona, who is from Real Madrid.

The TNI bill, you can talk to Edy (Prasetyono), Have you talked Edy about it?

DREISBACH: I'll be talking to him next week.

WIDJOJO: Talk to Edy about the TNI bill and General Sudrajat, he was much involved. The writing of those bills I was not directly involved in.

DREISBACH: What was your role at the time? You were in the parliament at the time right?

WIDJOJO: Right, I was in the parliament. Let me see. I retired in 2003.

DREISBACH: From the parliament?

WIDJOJO: From active duty military. So I was not involved in the 2004 bill. The 2002— let me see, where was I.

DREISBACH: I believe it was called the State Defense Act.
WIDJOJO: Yes, the State Defense Act. I was not directly involved in that either, because I was the deputy speaker of the National Assembly, and the military faction is a separate and different entity and was headed by General Slamet Supriyadi.

DREISBACH: So your role in the parliament at that time, you weren’t directly dealing with the military delegation.

WIDJOJO: No, not in the writing of these bills. It was in the amendment of the constitution that I was involved in. The withdrawal of the military faction was one of the highlights of the amendment of the constitution where I played a role which lead to the voluntary withdrawal of the military faction from the parliament. The voluntary withdrawal of the appointed military faction was timely, because after the amendment, members of the legislative body would comprise of only elected representatives. Other phases of the reform which I was involved in was the process of formulating the policy of the reform process at the headquarters before 2002. So that was between 1999 and 2002.

DREISBACH: So the withdrawal of the military faction from the parliament, was this a contentious issue? Was this something that basically everybody in the military accepted had to happen, or was there disagreement over whether this was the right thing to do? I think there was also some question of okay, when would be the year that the military faction leaves parliament? What do you remember about the discussions about that?

WIDJOJO: There was not much discussion actually. First of all, the situation before, it was to be decided in the national assembly because it was connected with what we called the formation of the legislative body after the amendment. Especially during the New Order, many of the politicians still wanted the military faction retained in the parliament, or at least in the National Assembly until 2009.

DREISBACH: Until 2009?

WIDJOJO: Yes, okay. That of course was seen as a support to the military, of course the military liked that. Then came the annual session of the National Assembly and came to the point in 2002. In 2002 because they had to debate on what would be the form be of the coming legislative body, still MPR and DPR (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, People’s Representative Council), after the amendment.

DREISBACH: These are the constitutional amendments that are being discussed?

WIDJOJO: Yes, the constitutional amendments. That is contained also as part of the military push to form a constitutional commission in order to accommodate the military until 2009. Until that night, as I have told you, on the early morning, it was 1 a.m. the 11th of August, the decision was made in a very small circle between General Slamet Supriyadi the faction leader, I myself as the Deputy Speaker representing also the military, and the commanding general at the headquarters. It was only a conversation between the three of us, I recommended to the commanding general and he directly agreed because there was no more time for any further discussion or debate, because in the morning the annual session was to be concluded. So it had to be decided at that point any debate beyond that point would be at the disadvantage to the military faction, because after that point all members of the legislative body would be elected. There will be no appointed member, and the military faction in the past have always been appointed members. The commanding general agreed. I told General Slamet Supriyadi okay, the commanding general agreed, withdraw from the legislative body. So that was it. It was not a big discussion or debate.
DREISBACH: Was that an advantage? Within the military these decisions could be made in fairly small groups of people, did that make it easier to make reforms if only two or three people had to make a decision, did that make it easier for reform to happen?

WIDJOJO: Yes, I think so. But in the military it is unlike a political organization where you have an open debate. This is a military institution in a political role. The substance, the content may be political but the structure of the organization is a command hierarchy. So if it is made by the commanding general, that is good enough, it is the right source of authority to make the decision.

DREISBACH: Yes.

WIDJOJO: So there was no big discussion or debate in the headquarters and it was decided by the commanding general. Even the process of the reform itself it was discussed only in the circles of the headquarters of the commanding general and his primary assistants.

DREISBACH: So one thing I’m trying to figure out, we talked about the New Paradigm. We talked about the decisions made internally within the military. What is the connection between these and then the reforms that needed to be passed as legislation? Were there aspects of the New Paradigm that needed action by Parliament to happen or were these, do you think of these more as sort of independent things? Like the New Paradigm is something that happened within the military and the parliament was doing its own thing.

WIDJOJO: There are pluses and minuses to how the reform happened in Indonesia. The plus is that it was only to take advantage of an opportunity. It was initiated by the military, decided in the small circle of its headquarters, and when it was decided it was directly implemented as a command policy. It did not have a constitutional or legal umbrella yet, so it preceded the constitutional process or legal process. That is the plus.

DREISBACH: Yes.

WIDJOJO: The plus also is when it came to back up the policy with the various legal or constitutional foundations; there was not much debate because it was already implemented.

DREISBACH: Interesting, so it was already sort of clear what they had to do because you had already done it. So basically the parliament had to in a way just sort of catch up and write laws that matched the reality of the situation.

WIDJOJO: Correct, Correct, yes.

DREISBACH: Is there anything you remember from this defense reform that was significant that was not contained in your reform?

WIDJOJO: Many.

DREISBACH: Were you comfortable with them; were you in general happy with it?

WIDJOJO: The minus was that there was a gap between the thinking of the officers in the joint headquarters, which assisted the commanding general and eventually wrote out the reform policies, and the others. The others are members of the parliament from the military faction. There was still a military faction in 2002. Of course we did coordinate but there was not much time to really understand comprehensively the whole concept. That is one.
Secondly there was not enough time also to disseminate to the various services’ headquarters, Army, Navy, Air Force, and to trickle down effect to the lower echelon of commands.

DREISBACH: When you say not enough time, why was there not enough time? Why was there such a need to do things quickly?

WIDJOJO: Right from the beginning, from the resignation of President Suharto to 2004, there was only practically four years. In 2003, the amendment of the constitution had ended and it had been handed over to the writing of the various follow-on bills that had to be formulated by the day-to-day parliament. Now that leaves between 1999—it was a political confusion right? Let’s say it is 2000, so 2000 and 2003 there were only three years and how many Presidents did we have?

DREISBACH: Four? Three?

WIDJOJO: Right, so the political dynamic was so intense, it was so high, and, of course we still had the dual function and were in the process of withdrawing from dual function. For us it was an extra test. It was already a test if we were still under the dual function doctrine because the political exams and tests given from the political authorities were so intense. Now we have to think of okay, what do we do in our new position, now that we are out of politics.

That is why also you see many abstain positions in the various issues during the parliamentary sessions, because the military considered itself as already outside the political domain.

DREISBACH: So members of the military faction just wouldn’t vote on certain issues because they were trying to—that seems like an interesting contradiction. You’re in this political body but you’re representing the military, you’re not in party politics.

WIDJOJO: Correct.

DREISBACH: It seems like a lot of the things that are happening you can’t really involve yourself in.

WIDJOJO: Correct. Like for instance the conflict between the President Abdurrahman Wahid and the parliament.

DREISBACH: Yes.

WIDJOJO: How do we vote? If we vote in support of the government we would be taking sides. We would still be in politics, we will be partisan. If we take sides with the parliament again, we will still be partisan. So where we actually have stated that we are on our way out of politics. That was the early days and starting points of our new role out of politics but ironically the political dynamics were so intense.

DREISBACH: You mentioned Gus Dur. An interesting thing is the relationship between Gus Dur and the military because—so basically he removed Wiranto from his position and also, this is something that I’m curious because I haven’t seen a lot of detail; I’ve just read that he interfered in the promotion process within the military. Was that the case? What was the relationship like between Gus Dur and the military?

WIDJOJO: It was erroneous. Again the test here was that in civilian-military relations each were occupying new positions to the other and they have no idea as to how to position themselves in the issues of civilian-military relations. All they
had as examples and as models was the model of President Suharto, and that was gone with the days of the dual function. So again here was the confusion. Like Gus Dur, his interpretation of civil supremacy is that it is an absolute supremacy, that a President can intervene in the internal management of the military.

DREISBACH: So he was doing that? He was saying this person is going to be promoted, this person is not going to be promoted. Generally that is just something that the military handles itself.

WIDJOJO: Correct. Right. Actually, that was politicizing the military. That was very difficult to prevent, because that was his interpretation. Again as though the question that he asked was that TNI supported Suharto while Suharto was President. Now I'm your President, why don't you support me. You are under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Indonesia; I am the President of the Republic of Indonesia, so why don't you support me. I don't understand.

This was actually the politicization of the TNI and inside the TNI there was the group that understood the reform, that now the TNI is out of politics. Secondly, there was a group who still thinks that it is the duty of the TNI to guard the nation, even against the President. That is represented by the Army. Generally I think many of the Army officers still hold to that assumption.

Then there were individuals—these were political Army officers who took this opportunity for their own self-interest. So out of these three groups, and Gus Dur was always looking for that group, for those officers who seemed to give the indicator of paying allegiance to his political power. So here we have a rather complicated dynamic.

DREISBACH: I think a related issue is the evolving function of the Ministry of Defense. Its responsibilities were changing; the way it was staffed was changing. Under Gus Dur you have Juwono Sudarsono appointed as the first civilian Minister of Defense. What do you remember from those early years? Was the Ministry of Defense able to do an effective job of defining defense policy and budget or did it take a little while for the civilian leadership of the Ministry of Defense to develop the capacity and understanding to do it? I guess I'm asking what was the relationship like between the Ministry of Defense and the military at that time?

WIDJOJO: The position and the institution of the Ministry of Defense, it was still Defense and Security.

DREISBACH: Yes, Defense and Security.

WIDJOJO: It was nothing new to the TNI because it was established during the dual function. The only difference was that in the past it started from the minister and the commanding general being held by the same individual; it started from there. Then it became to be separated but still from the military. The next phase would be the minister would be a military retiree. So actually there were reforms, there were steps, there was progress, but very slow. People see whether he is a retiree or a military, he still holds the title of military. He is still considered the military. So now we start seeing that full civilians start to be assigned to the responsibility of Ministry of Defense.

The relations and connections of functions between the ministry and the military had already been in existence, although in a rather shady and blurred situation. There was the ministry, there was the headquarters but it is still that the commanding general of TNI is responsible directly to the President. So it seems to be that the ministry is only responsible for providing administrative
and policies to the military. Because the model had already existed, it was based on that model and there was nothing wrong then.

As for Defence Minister Juwono, I think the problem—Minister Juwono had understood he was the deputy or vice governor at Lemhannas and he understood the military and he understood the relations between the civilian and the military. In fact he has sympathy for the military except for the corruption. His heart is in trying to destroy corruption but he has sympathy for the military even when the military issued its new paradigm and withdrew from politics. He sort of did not fully agree with it.

DREISBACH: He didn’t fully agree with the separation of politics? He wanted to retain some political role for the military?

WIDJOJO: He wanted to maintain the military in full control of the management of the nation. He didn’t say how.

DREISBACH: The military as a force of stability when there is chaos.

WIDJOJO: Yes. Political stability, not only security stability but also political stability. During the 2014 [indecipherable 24:50] election between candidate Prabowo (Subianto) and Jokowi (as President Joko Widodo is known), he supported Prabowo. When I was known to come up with a reform process even in reforming the territorial commands and sectors, in the feud by the media, by the press, he answered in a conservative way. So one of the generals asked him how about General Widjojo, General Widjojo’s concept? Oh he was born 25 years too early.

DREISBACH: Interesting. That’s an odd thing to say because the perception I think is that you are less conservative. You’re from an older generation, it seems like an odd thing to say. That’s very interesting. Do you think it was important to have—as the choice for the first civilian Minister of Defense, do you think it was important that it was someone who was conservative and who was widely known to be sympathetic to the military? Did it help gain credibility and the respect of the military?

WIDJOJO: Any extreme would not be good, any extreme. But I think there is a need to open up the minds of the military, that it is all right to return to the traditional military role of national defense, that anything that was implemented under the New Order was actually not mandated by the constitution; it was actually a situation where we had inherited the situation of the struggle for independence and an emergency situation where we were late to adjust all those arrangements in accordance with the progress of the nation, of the state.

So those sorts of thoughts needed to be pushed to the military officers during the early phases of the reform. Of course we had worse cases or examples when the minister was assigned to someone from—especially during Gus Dur of course—someone from the Islamic party although he was moderate yes, but again he doesn’t understand. So for instance, no knowledge at all relating to the military or defense. When this party was also in the process of trying to consolidate, after he works in his office in the Ministry of Defense he had to go to the party head office. You know what? He brought his assistants, full active duty generals, to the party meeting.

DREISBACH: Interesting.

WIDJOJO: Those sorts of things happened. That is the worst extreme. So compared to that Minister Juwono was much, much better.
DREISBACH: One thing I think was really interesting is, so under Suharto, you're an Army man yourself—.

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: The Army was seen as having really dominant role over the Navy and the Air Force and I guess the police too at that time. So beginning under Gus Dur for the first time we had a commander of the armed forces that was not an Army man. I know there was an effort to say now we're going to start rotating this commander position between the service branches. I'm curious to know was that something that came from the New Paradigm, was that something that you—.

WIDJOJO: That was from the New Paradigm, yes.

DREISBACH: Was the idea to have like a regular rotation where it would be Army, Navy, Air Force, Army, Navy, Air Force?

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: Because it seems like the rotation now has been like Army, Air Force, Army, Navy, Air Force, Army, Navy.

WIDJOJO: Yes. Well the law says it is not an absolute formula, especially in the sequence of the services, but it is an implementation of the joint doctrine principles that once an officer becomes a general officer, then he has to be fit to command a joint command employing the three services jointly. But again, the choice of who to assign lies in the prerogative right of the President in accordance with the situation as the president sees fit. So if it is Army, Army, Army, Navy, Army, it does not violate the law. It is only a principle.

DREISBACH: Interesting. I guess maybe you could explain, why was this an important thing? Why is it bad? The Army is the biggest of the three service branches, why is it bad that they always have the commander position? What kind of problems did that create in the military?

WIDJOJO: We adopted the joint doctrine starting in the early 1980s. We saw models and examples from other countries and we had a grasp of the principles of the joint doctrine. Part of that joint doctrine is that—again, the joint principles as I've said—any officer that has reached that general level officer, then he has to understand the capabilities and limitations of the three services and how to employ those three services in a joint operation. By that, it does not matter whether a joint command is commanded by an army officer, a naval officer or an air force officer.

Of course there are differences such as specified commands where most of the characteristics of the joint command would be an air command, like the air defense. It is a joint command, but because the characteristics is closer to Air Force, then it is a specified command where air defense artillery only is to be operated, although it is a joint command but it is a specified command. Those sorts of things exist in the doctrine. So it is part of the joint doctrine.

We had various exercises, especially amphibious operations which is still a joint military operation, airborne operation which is still a joint military operation and other operations. We come to the principles that any use of military forces, the employment of any military forces in military operations would have to be under the authority of a joint command. The services only have the authority to prepare the forces, to manage the forces. So that would lead to the consequence that any command that has the function of using
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DREISBACH: As a practical matter, until 1998, the Commander-in-Chief position of the armed forces had always been an Army person.

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: Did that create resentment by the other forces? Did they feel that they were being neglected?

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: I've read things that suggested that, but I'm curious as someone who was actually serving in the armed forces, what was your take on that? Did you see resentment? Was there a desire from the Navy and Air Force to have a greater role in leadership?

WIDJOJO: I think we were used to that. I think it did not create any resentment among the officers because they understood. For the soldiers, there is no difference for them. To shoot is to shoot, to kill is to kill. So generally it created no reaction. Although there has to be a follow up again, educating the officers, the soldiers that when the Army has a larger portion of the forces, of the budget, first of all is that there was that security doctrine when America was involved in Vietnam, the Cold War. There are no indicators of imminent attack into the foreseeable future. So that was a classical sentence. Anything that would threaten the sovereignty of the republic would come from within the republic through subversion.

So how do we treat that? With the dual function. It was supported by the dual function. We had the military in all walks of life, in all functions of the government. So that supports the kind of threat that we were facing then. So political, a sociopolitical role was actually 80% in the hands of the Army rather than Air Force and Navy.

DREISBACH: Interesting.

WIDJOJO: And they are more technological. So we say that the Army in principle is a soldier being given a weapon, but in the Air Force and Navy it is weapon systems being manned by people. So we assign people to man, to operate those weapon systems, so there is the difference.

Also we learned from history that the inception of the TNI started from the guerilla warfare during the struggle for independence and it was the Army. Just like in the US where the Air Force came from the military aviation, the same sort of process happened in Indonesia. So it started from the ground. Thirdly, to build a Navy, a modern Navy and a modern Air Force is very expensive. That would be a competition for seizing the budget. Even until now we have not been able to in a relaxed way say okay, we will prioritize the Air Force, the Navy. We knew that to really act, to allocate the budget to build a modern Navy and Air Force is not easy because when you see that chunk of budget we can do a lot more with the Army so it never manifested. But we knew that our security, national security lies within a strong and modern Navy and Air Force.

DREISBACH: You've talked a lot about decisions that were made at the elite levels of the military and changes in doctrine, the New Paradigm, new values that were being accepted. I'm really interested in how you make those take root at the lower levels of the military. Is it education and training? What kinds of things were done to instill these new values and these new rules I guess in soldiers.
Was there immediate change in curriculum? How did that happen? Who was in charge of changing the way that soldiers are trained?

WIDJOJO: Again we did not plan that very well because of the relatively short time. It is again more that we were held hostage to the opportunities that the situation made available to us. Then we can ask ourselves if there is any shift in this paradigm, what makes a soldier different in carrying out this war-fighting mission. He still has to kill the enemy. Tactics are still the same. It is at the highest level that changes a lot; the mindset, like the concept of civil supremacy, the concept of healthy civil/military relations, the political direction to guide the construction of the force structure. That does not only concern the military. It starts from the political decision.

The fading away of national borders in dealing with national issues. Not physically, but nations seem to lose freedom to make their own decisions, unlike during the Cold War. It is those sorts of things that influence the military. Guess what is most felt by the military? It is the respect of human rights. This is I think the values that influence the soldiers quite a lot. In the past the state was superior, nothing could be compared to or compete with the authority of the state. So for the soldiers they are carrying out the mission of the state. Against whom? Against those who violate the national laws. So why do we have to think about their rights? It has been like that.

Rebellions were responded to first of all with the military response. All of a sudden came the values of human rights. I think that is what was most influential in the case of changing the military into the New Paradigm. For instance, there was the accusation of gross violations of human rights by the TNI during the popular consultation in East Timor in 1999–Can you imagine that President Suharto had only resigned in 1998? Surely it was still dual function. Surely it was still authoritarian.

Then all of a sudden President Habibie declared, announced, that the government would pursue a policy to give popular consultation to the people of East Timor. This was a surprise. That was in January 1999. There was time for the military to train their soldiers the values of the new paradigm or the police to conduct an independent mission from the military.

DREISBACH: Very, very soon afterwards.

WIDJOJO: And to be held in August I think, or September 1999.

DREISBACH: A very short time.

WIDJOJO: Right, a very short time. Also for the political especially international organizing authorities to prepare the procedures, mechanics, structures, fine, that already seems to be a relatively short time but they forgot to prepare the grounds for the society, to stop the violence, because the society was divided between those who were pro-Indonesia and pro-independence. That was never touched in the preparation for the popular consultation. One. Secondly, nothing was done to prepare the military or the security forces.

Actually, it was stated that it was brave of Indonesia to take responsibility of security for the popular consultation because, quote-unquote, it was related to the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia; it was held in the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia so we should be responsible. That is fully understood, but we overlooked the readiness of the security forces and the society.

DREISBACH: Instead of having international forces.
WIDJOJO: Remember that the police were still part of the armed forces. So this was actually mission impossible, it was a mission impossible to really separate the police. I think that also put in the wake-up call for the separation of the police, which followed in the year 2000, that it was improper for the police to be integrated as part of the armed forces structure. But again, that was the first time where the police were given a mission, an independent mission, separated from the armed forces. How can they? The militias were owned by the armed forces, by the military as part of the Sistem Hankamrata, the total people defense and security system, part of that, and now the police has to put them into order.

So there was this confusion. If there was violence, first it was due to the mix in the society between the pro-Indonesia and pro-independence, that was one. Secondly, actually the security forces were put in amazement. If these things happen, what should we do? We cannot kill them anymore? It was easy to trace that these militias were connected to the Indonesian military, Indonesian police and Indonesian regional government. That was why during the CTF, Commission of Truth and Friendship Indonesia-Timor Leste, on could easily come to the conclusion that the regional government, the police, and the military were the institutions who were responsible for the occurrence of gross violations of human rights. It was easy.

Again, I think it is the imperfect planning, and some aspects have been neglected. So it is easy to accuse, but could we expect anything better than that in that situation? So that is when you ask the doctrine, I think the respect for human rights was one of the most influential new values that had to be taught to the military at all levels.

DREISBACH: So were there serious efforts to do so? Was there formal education?

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: When did that start? When was a soldier in the military, when was he first exposed to this idea that you have to respect these international norms of human rights?

WIDJOJO: It was a gradual process. Again it was much assisted also by the assistance and advocacy of some international institutions. They came in. They had cooperation with Special Forces to conduct short courses, training for the soldiers, hands-on training, seminars, those sorts of things.

DREISBACH: Going back to Timor, when I read about this it seems like it was something that was really pushed by Habibie. This was sort of his idea. I read that there was obviously some resistance from the military, reluctance to embrace this doctrine. Was it just a divide between more conservative generals were opposed to this and didn’t want the referendum and more reformist generals were okay with this policy? What was the reaction of the military to this East Timor referendum policy in general?

WIDJOJO: The political decision—again this was the opposite of the decision for the reform—the political decision was made at the cabinet meeting.

DREISBACH: Without real military—or was it—.

WIDJOJO: General Wiranto was there. I did not witness it; I do not claim to say that what I say is actually correct of what happened during that day, but from the process that we see, it is impossible that a political decision can be reached or made without hearing a representative representing the military. If we see that the process seems to go in a nice flow, then we could easily come to an assumption that there was no really strong rejection by the military.
representative, most likely General Wiranto. The others, well, once the political decision was made it is a mission for the military.

As I have said, we had already entered the modern day of TNI in the sense that the officers there were the product of a professional military education who do not consider themselves as involving directly to influence political decisions. It might have been different if the officers in charge during that time were officers from the 1945 generation.

What caused more of the confusion and havoc to be seen in reality was the influence that it made on the diplomats, on our diplomats, those who were carrying out national missions in the UN. They were caught by surprise. But for the military, okay, this is our mission, let’s do it. Although there was confusion on the ground. The confusion on the ground may have been caused by the insufficient consideration of the policy to the fact that the security force was still the armed forces of the Dual Function era, where the police was structurally part of the armed forces. Ironically the police was required to assume responsibility of public order surrounding the public consultation independent from the military. Never before had the police carry out a mission independent from the military, and this was before the reform, where later on eventually the police was separated from the military.

DREISBACH: An interesting thing that a couple of my interviewees have said was that part of making the military comfortable with giving up its political role, in terms of their representation in the parliament, was the civilians demonstrating that they did have the best interests of the military at heart. They were going to try to keep—raise salaries, keep the budget going, try to modernize the military. Do you think that’s true? Was there a sense that we can leave because we know that the civilians are going to—?

WIDJOJO: No. There were no promises. We didn’t know what would happen tomorrow.

DREISBACH: So there was a lot of insecurity.

WIDJOJO: It was absolutely purely voluntarily from the military point of view because the future of politics would lie in the domain of democracy; that’s all. That’s why, if we try to put the Indonesian reform on the template of, let’s say, military reform in Latin America countries, it is tit-for-tat. We give you this; you do this. This is not the case in Indonesia. It was fully voluntary from the military side. There were no promises and there were no bargains. We didn’t know what would happen in the new arrangement. Even way after that, there was also confusion about the concept of the military faction in the parliament.

Some say it was mentioned during the inception of the faction that—some say that was in lieu of, instead of the soldiers going out to the polls and casting their votes in elections they were given the seats, appointed seats in the parliament. Not absolutely so. Again, there was confusion also, who will take care of the military when we are out of the parliament? Even those, questions like that, we still can hear, two, three, four years after that.

So there was no bargaining. It was absolutely a voluntary attitude from the point of view of the military. This later on because part of the learning process, that it is not the military who have to struggle for their interest in the parliament. The function of national defense is not only the responsibility of the military. It is a government function. Therefore national defense is the responsibility of the government, and included in the political agenda and decide and decide the priority in the agenda of political parties.

DREISBACH: You mentioned the Latin America cases.
DREISBACH: I’m very interested in—you’re someone who studied abroad. You and some of these other reformist generals, Yudhoyono, you’re well educated, you’ve had experiences in other countries. When you were looking at this reform process did you have examples in mind? I’m thinking Korea, in South Korea they underwent a reform that maybe in some ways is similar in the ’80s and early ’90s. Were you looking to any other countries? Were there things that you were trying to model the Indonesian reform process from, or was this just an ad hoc thing where you did what you thought was best for Indonesia and you weren’t really looking to other countries?

WIDJOJO: I think it is more of an ad hoc thing. If we tried to look for a model for transition, it is not the military reform; it is the democratic transition. The military reform, as part of the national reform of democratic transition is hinged into two basic elements. Those elements are, first, the historical aspect of the inception of TNI, and secondly the constitutional and legal basis for TNI role and authority. Those two elements make the reform contains local contexts, and uniquely Indonesian in nature.

DREISBACH: Interesting.

WIDJOJO: It is the democratic transition. What goes hand-in-hand with that, for instance, how do we come to peace with our past, reconciliation, political transition? Do we try our past leaders for corruption, for human rights violation? Those sorts of things are pressing issues, but not models for military reform. Again models that came from Latin America countries were not so popular in Indonesia in the sense that Latin America countries seem so distant. We looked more maybe to countries in the region.

DREISBACH: Are there good examples in the region?

WIDJOJO: No, no, again in the region there are no examples, but again we compare not reform process but we compare the struggle, the muddling through of retaining or improvising the political role of the military in the developing country. So I think it is more focused on how should the military play its role first in a developing country, secondly, when that developing country becomes democratic. I think it is more, peculiar to Indonesia.

DREISBACH: You mentioned reconciliation. I think that is a really important issue. I think that a lot of these examples of military reform they have to grapple with how much do you focus on things that happened in the old regime and how much do you just sort of look to the future. Someone here described it as, the attitude as sort of forgive but don’t forget. Acknowledge what happened but there is an extent to which you don’t want to bring everybody before a court and try everybody who was involved in the old regime.

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: So tell me about the Indonesian process, about reconciliation. What efforts were made to share information and bring clarity to incidents that had happened under the new order. Who was prosecuted? What kinds of figures were singled out for prosecution?

WIDJOJO: I think prosecutions started only after the reform, and never looked back to the period before the reform. There were some efforts to put President Suharto on trial.

DREISBACH: Yes.
WIDJOJO: But again the force or the power that prevented that from happening was also still strong during the time. Until the day he died he was never put on trial or any of his family or any of his cronies. Like you said, people can say easily forgive but don’t forget, let’s start on things anew, but never put anything on trial. The question is we never got to an agreement as to how, how to do it. We were not brave enough even to talk about—reconciliation. The typical situation during a transition dictates that the judiciary institution in a transition is not effective enough to conduct its function in retributive justice, and that there are alternative concepts of justice in the form of transitional and restorative justice in which may fit better into a situation of transition.

DREISBACH: Interesting.

WIDJOJO: Moreover to try. Our experience in the reconciliation ironically has been with Timor-Leste, in an international basis, not domestically national.

DREISBACH: Yes.

WIDJOJO: And that was based on a political foundation so they can engineer the terms of reference which said that—I was part of the commission representing Indonesia that said that the mandate of the commission was to come up with a finding, was there gross violation of human rights? Who was institutionally responsible? The commission shall not recommend judicial processes. The thrust of the commission was to build friendship and reconciliation between the peoples of Indonesia and Timor-Leste, based on truth seeking process, and seek institutional responsibility to find lessons learned, and use them as a basis for institutional reforms so as to prevent of recurrence of similar events in the future.

It was more of a political document rather than a judicial and agreed by both governments. But there I learned most of the principles of reconciliation and that is, reconciliation is a consensus, you have to try to come to a meeting point in the middle to agree to a consensus, which means that something had to give. Some have to break the myths. We are the victims; they are the oppressors. Well, if you keep on doing that until now you can say that Indonesia is still in 1965. So you have to give up those myths. A lot of education and some method of trust building in the sense of to practice of the principles that I will be fair, I will be impartial, I will tell you what went wrong from my side, but you tell us what went wrong from your side. So those sort of things.

Until now neither the society nor any element of the Indonesian people is brave enough to try to launch an experiment on that.

DREISBACH: One thing you mentioned and I think this is really interesting, Indonesia is one of the relatively few countries where soldiers cannot vote.

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: Do you think that this is something that should be changed?

WIDJOJO: It should be changed, yes.

DREISBACH: You said that the original idea was sort of that if the military had representation in parliament then soldiers didn’t need to vote. So do you think this is something that should change in fairly short order or is this a longer process? Do you have to create sort of a foundation, change culture or something in a way that will prepare soldiers to take the responsibility of voting?
WIDJOJO: It depends. Everything in a transitional society puts the stress on education. What are actually the frictions, conflicts, issues, that we have now? Basically it is the coming of a modern society for a traditional society. It is the rubbing between the traditional belief and the modern values and to be put in more concrete terms is that any modern values during Indonesian history came from those who had studied overseas. Not only in the military, also throughout Indonesian history. For the 1945 generation they were educated in Europe, the Netherlands primarily. They brought in values of human rights, values of democracy during the initial debate for the 1945 constitution, like the “Federalist Papers” in the US.

Those who fought during the struggle in Indonesia, getting in touch with the Japanese although we were under the colonization of the Japanese, but we were so amazed by their nationalist sentiments. Some adopted that and tried to put in values of the integralist nation, some came in with the Islamic view. But these modern values came from those who had studied overseas, and had access to comparative systems.

DREISBACH: Yes.

WIDJOJO: We cannot say that provision of a military faction in the parliament was in exchange with the voting rights of the individual soldiers. The military faction in the parliament came into existence with recognition of the military as one of the functional groups as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution. The functional groups was one of the element of the parliament to be the part of the political policy making process. By that the military faction exists as the extension of the military commander’s policy. On the contrary, voting in the right of individual soldiers as citizens, having no relation at all with the hierarchy or command authority of the military. So it cannot be said that the military faction is a replacement to the individual soldier’s voting rights.

DREISBACH: Sometimes the counter argument is that if someone says okay, soldiers can vote, the worry is that they’ll vote in blocks, the whole unit will vote the same way, they’ll do whatever their commanders say. Is that a legitimate concern? I mean, I don’t think that happens in the United States. Would that be a concern if you suddenly make this change in Indonesia?

WIDJOJO: That was, that is still a concern. But the thing is if they address the concern—they meaning the military—they have not thought of any ways, policies to overcome those concerns. They just stay put with the concern and will come with the same argument next year, five years from now. So again, it is a myth, which again is subject to education, and policies to prepare the soldiers and commanders.

DREISBACH: So, this is a very broad question but I think an important one. My case study, part of the idea is that this is something that can be accessible to policy makers who maybe now, maybe in the future will find themselves in similar situations. I know there are a lot of unique things about each case of military reform and military transition, but if you had to boil down your experiences into some core lessons and say this worked or this didn’t work in Indonesia and this is something you can learn from, what are some things you might tell someone else who was in a similar position to you? This is an extremely difficult question but I’m curious what you have to say.

WIDJOJO: The plus is that reform is most likely to succeed when it is initiated from within an institution. Reform just cannot be done, be forced by external elements. Secondly is how to build that island within that institution [of people] who share the same way of thinking as the capital to initiate reform. That cannot be done overnight. It is subject to gradual and continuous education. Like Myanmar, they don’t have anybody from within the military who is educated
overseas. Anybody who was educated overseas became dissidents and live in other countries. So there is that absence and vacuum from within for change. You have to build that energy for change from within.

Of course there is that change management which is familiar to almost everybody now. But, on the other hand, is that you have to prepare for the situation after the reform. In the Indonesian case you have to prepare that the competence, the capacity of those institutions who will replace the military or who will undertake those roles that before the reform were undertaken or conducted by the military. We were late in this.

The police, the civilian bureaucracy, in general the civilians. If not, the reform can come to a relapse. Maybe I’ll tell you an example. Up in the rural areas in Kalimantan, we have territorial commands and units spread out everywhere in Indonesian national territory, especially the ground territory. There was a village. No electricity, whose responsibility is that? The Ministry of Public Works right? But there the soldiers in the command that occupies that area, just cannot stay still; they feel it is their responsibility. They came to an agreement; that they can build a generator, let’s make one. And they did. They contributed it to the people of the village. So this is two-way traffic. The people of the village came to rely on the military. They saw that the military was very useful to their needs. The military will go back again to its past legacy that we are the guardian of the nation; we are the guardian of the people. So these sort of things happen.

DREISBACH: That is something I’ve heard recently that some people say there is a growing phenomenon of these Memorandums of Understanding between civilian ministries like the Ministry of Agriculture I believe has a Memorandum of Understanding for military help to distribute fertilizer, transportation, I think they wanted more security at a train station and they had a MOU.

WIDJOJO: Yes, but I think that is an over excessive attention given by the military. I think the military still has the, still owns the passion to be seen as a hero to the people. It is as simple as that. They are looking for that, for those roles. That was met by the most appropriate situation as an example of that village in Kalimantan. It opens the door also in this phase of new democracy, for officers to invest in politics in the event of an intent to enter politics after they retire.

DREISBACH: This is related to the territorial command structure, to something that a lot of people have said is something that should be changed ultimately. I’m curious, What is your take? I’ve heard conflicting things. Some people say this is a good thing for Indonesia because of the unique characteristics of Indonesia, it is a vast area, it is good to have people sort of spread out and wherever there is local government also have local military presence but others will say this isn’t characteristic of modern military. What is your take on the territorial command structure? Is that something that should be changed or is this something that is okay?

WIDJOJO: It has to be changed. The issue there is not modern or not modern. The issue there is not it is good or not good to have military around. The issue there is to be consistent with the mandate of the constitution. The constitution only mandated that the function and role of the military is national defense. Not national development like in the 1970s of new professionalism from Morris Janowitz in Latin America countries. Not security, internal security, not law enforcement, but national defense. So if you can justify I’m here to conduct my role as national defense, then you have the constitutional right to exist but if it is not you don’t have the constitutional foundation or umbrella to exist. You’re doing the wrong thing. You are non-constitutional if not
unconstitutional. But people see more of the practicality, especially the way they’re used to doing things in the past.

The command structure was actually a legacy of times of emergency in the past in the form of a guerilla government, or in time of military emergency when the military was the government. In peace time the role and authority of the military is to return to the constitutional role of national defense. Again we were late to adjust those military roles to the constitutional peacetime military roles and arrangements. The military is to be deployed based on the political decision of the President. If that mission is outside the role of natural defense, it is to be a specific role, in expanded authority, limited in scope, area and time, as required by the national interest. But it is not an organic regular role of the military.

While again, the replacing institutions are not effective and not to the capacity that they are required, and here in Indonesia people are lazy to train, to enhance, to lift up the capacity of the functional institution. They would rather have fast food, already hot, ready to be consumed, and that is the military.

Now if that happens the military can do just about anything and we’ll be back to dual function.

DREISBACH: I’m wondering, is there a legitimate space for the military to engage in certain public works projects? I think in the United States we have the US Army Corps of Engineers, which is something that will do these big infrastructure projects, big public works things. There doesn’t seem to be much concern that it is a violation of civilian/military relations. Do you think there is a legitimate space for some of the military capacity being used for certain projects that are broadly beneficial for the public or is this something where Indonesia should really have ministries or civilian government.

WIDJOJO: Anything the military does may not be different from the role and task that the military did under the dual function. It is the procedure and the mechanics that are different. In the past the military could decide for itself. Let’s go there and clean up blah, blah, blah. Now the military is under the authority of the President. If the President, the civilian authority needs or requires the role of the military, then follow the procedure.

For instance, if there are deficiencies of teachers in Papua, the Minister of Education came up to the President, we are deficient in teachers in Papua. How come? They don’t like to be stationed in Papua. The salaries are also being sent to Jayapura. They have to come down from the hills and mountains, that is a one-week walk and the return trip would be another week walk. So effectively only two weeks. Okay, how many do you need? Five thousand. Five thousand. Why can’t you speed up the production of teachers, the education of teachers? We don’t have enough time. We need them now. Okay, then the President says use the military.

He calls in the Minister of Defense. Minister of Defense make inventory of those soldiers who can teach. What level, Minister of Education? Elementary level. Okay, elementary level, especially those who are serving in Papua. Come back to me and tell me how many. So he came back.

The President accommodated it, put it in writing. I will order the commanding general of the TNI to assign those soldiers that have the competence to teach in public schools at elementary level. This will be a temporary enlargement of the role and authority for the military, temporary in nature, only valid for the region of Papua, effective starting as of first of April until 31st of December. Okay, go out soldiers.

That will give the constitutional umbrella or foundation for the soldiers.
DREISBACH: Because the President authorized it. But in a way you can see it is a sort of lazy way to fill gaps in civilian capacity. So instead of maybe developing a ministry’s capacity and better funding the ministry, just say oh the military can fill it. Interesting. So you sort of left official life in roughly 2003, 2004?


DREISBACH: You can say in a way that a certain phase of reform was more or less finished in 2004.

WIDJOJO: Yes, correct.

DREISBACH: There were institutional changes, sort of these big things that had to happen in a very short period of time, done by 2004. Then some people say that was the end of reform, but I think people who are closer observers of the military will say no, no, there is still a lot of work to do and that is what has been happening. It is maybe a more gradual thing that has been happening I guess under the Yudhoyono administration and now into Jokowi, this idea of developing a military that has a more modern doctrine, a more modern structure, it is better funded, and it is better equipped. So I guess in your mind, the reform process that you helped start in 1998, what is happening now in Indonesia, after 2004, that is relevant to this reform process. I guess what reforms are still developing to—maybe the things that won’t ever actually be finished? What do you see as the current priorities?

WIDJOJO: The reform process halted in 2004. Why was that? In 2004 was the first real general election under the new amendment and the political authorities were reestablished with the President-elect. By the way Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono had a military background.

DREISBACH: Yes.

WIDJOJO: But the TNI had the luxury to reform itself before 2004. We were not watched by the civilian politicians and we knew what to reform and what to retain. In 2004, even if it was a sequel to reform, it became a political process, the push and pull amongst the political parties in the parliament. So it fell to the nature of the political process. It came to nowhere. For President Yudhoyono, although before as active duty military he knew what to reform, after he became President he knew what reform, but to implement and to manifest it into a real political decision that was very much different because he is now a politician.

DREISBACH: So what are the things that he needed to reform? I guess what is left on the agenda? A lot has been done but what is still left?

WIDJOJO: There are still some unfinished symphonies. First is the constitutional mandate to put the commanding general within the Ministry of Defense. To put the commanding general under the Minister of Defense was to extreme shift for a former powerful political military. So it was softened a bit by saying to put the commanding general within the Ministry of Defense. This is a constitutional mandate.

Secondly the reform of the territorial commands structures and functions. Basically the management side of the territorial command was the management of national resources to be mobilized in support of any national interest including defense. In the past it was defense. That in peacetime is actually the responsibility of the civilian government. So territorial function, that side, has to be turned over to the regional government.
DREISBACH: The military has to do this.

WIDJOJO: Yes, but policies consist of alternatives and options. That is to build the infrastructure, etc. Reform does not deal with policies. Reform is to put the military consistently and consequently under the mandate of the constitution, which in the past had been violated. And for roles and authorities under the constitution there is no alternatives or option. There are constitutional mandates.

DREISBACH: Okay.

WIDJOJO: That should be clear, so that it is not mixed between reform and transform, and reform and policies.

DREISBACH: I understand.

WIDJOJO: Next there is also the issue about putting the soldiers under the jurisdiction of public law.

DREISBACH: So civil courts. That is a very interesting issue and I think this is very controversial. When should military courts have responsibility and when should civilian courts have responsibility.

WIDJOJO: Some may say that is an issue of reform, but when we look at it there has to be an in depth analysis and discussion first. What seems to be the problem? Was the problem that military courts do not issue harsh punishment for soldiers? Because in Indonesia, military courts lie under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. It falls under the Supreme Court. The Attorney General, the full title of the Attorney General is actually the Attorney General/Military Auditor.

DREISBACH: Really, that’s interesting.

WIDJOJO: So if you have discontent about military courts say it to the Supreme Court or to the Attorney General because the military courts do not exist as an independent court, independent of the Supreme Court and the Attorney General. It is under their jurisdiction. This has been overlooked.

DREISBACH: I think the argument is that the Supreme Court has exercised more of an administrative role in the military courts and not really treated them as being within its jurisdiction. You think if that’s the case it is the Supreme Court’s responsibility to place the military courts under—they have the authority to do that.

WIDJOJO: Yes, they have the authority, but this has been overlooked. If that is the case okay. It is part of the judicial reform, which still lacks—not even started yet. Let’s look into it in a more comprehensive way as part of other things that need or are required to be reformed within the judicial branch.

Now if, assuming we would like to see soldiers being tried in public courts, first of all who would be their prosecutors? The police? The attorneys? What are their qualities? Can you imagine that the police will carry investigations of the soldiers in this point in time?

DREISBACH: There is a lot of rivalry between the institutions.

WIDJOJO: Would this bring a better situation or would this worsen the situation? Those are the realities if we assume that we would like to see the soldiers being tried in public courts. But first of all I think we have to really discuss that right
now it is part of the Indonesian national legal system that the military courts are fully under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

DREISBACH: After 2004, now it is really directly elected civilian government that has the responsibility of developing doctrine. Under Yudhoyono I understand there were new defense white papers that were produced, there was the idea of the minimum essential force that I believe started under Yudhoyono. From your observations, is this something where there is good communication between the military, the civilian government, parliament? Is there a good dialogue between different parts of the defense policy architecture to develop this doctrine or is it still mostly coming from the military? How do you rate the current system for producing defense doctrine?

WIDJOJO: The Indonesian military reform process is the wrong model. Do not let any institution reform itself. The policy for reform is to come from political authorities. But it was fortunate for Indonesia that the military was able to reform itself and did it in a swift way, the right things, although it has not completed all that is required to be reformed. Again, we lack those civilians who understand problems of defense and military.

There are young people who claim to know but they come from the political faculty and with a focus on international relations. We need openness, to be frank. We are lacking in the integration of resources between the civilians, military and other functional institutions. We suffer from past arrangements of the distinct border between the civilian and military, and that most of the government function were handled by the military. We have yet to produce civilian who develop experts and competence in military and defense matters.

DREISBACH: When you look at your doctrine now are civilians the ones who are producing doctrine within the Ministry of Defense? Are these official papers that describe the defense doctrine or is this something that is still—like you're saying, it is still coming from the military leadership?

WIDJOJO: I think it is more from the military leadership.

DREISBACH: Because they're the ones who still have the expertise.

WIDJOJO: Exactly, but starting to invite some civilians so that they understand. But to be done completely by civilian, I don't think it is the time yet. At this juncture I have not seen anything that can replace the experience of actual actors. And we better cooperation between civilian academics and military with experience so that they can produce the right fit for a modern and feasible document.

DREISBACH: I've heard the viewpoint here that if you really want soldiers to embrace the idea that they're not really involved in internal affairs anymore, that they're involved in external security matters and patrolling the borders and the different threats that you have here, you have to give them the resources to do that. This is an ongoing issue in the Indonesian military where you need to make sure that the equipment that they have, the resources that they have, the money they have is enough to—is adequate for them to fulfill this new role. Do you think this is a valid thing—is there, do we just need to in part just devote more resources to the military to make sure that they have the right planes, the right ships, the right things to do their job?

WIDJOJO: No, I don’t believe in the dichotomy between civilian and military. This is our country that we have to defend. This is our land, this is our people. So let’s talk of it. First of all is to believe that the role of the military is external defense; let’s start from there. Then we can talk about resources but not
put it as a hostage. I need this money; if you don’t give me this money I won’t be there. No, it is not that way.

Of course we need resources. The more modern that we build our armed forces the more resources and budget we need, but again I think the political authority—the President—can see the whole picture of the requirement of the nation, of the state. So help him to do it.

DREISBACH: Interesting. You’ve been very generous with your time so I’ll make this my last question. I’m very interested in this idea of parliamentary oversight over the military because this is something where you were in the parliament at a time when there was a direct military presence, there was a lot of military expertise. The needs of the institution were very well represented in parliament.

Now we have just a few people who have—I think I was told this morning that there were maybe five MPs right now who have military experience.

WIDJOJO: Yes.

DREISBACH: I’m very curious about—is the parliament right now doing a good job of exercising its oversight role? Are they taking it seriously? Some people would suggest to me, if you’re an MP, you’re running in whatever—a district in Sumatra, there is not a lot of value for you to take on the military, to criticize them, to tell them, hey you shouldn't buy this because it is too expensive. There is no political advantage to it. So some people suggest that the MPs right now in Commission One aren’t really taking their military oversight role seriously. I’m very curious about your observations since you left parliament. What do you think of the work of Commission One? Are they doing an effective job or is this something maybe because they don’t have the capacity, they don’t have the will, they aren’t doing quite as good a job as they should?

WIDJOJO: I think this is not unique to the military. It is a symptom that is felt by a new democracy where the parliament will recycle in five years’ time. There will be a learning curve after three or four years where the learning curve was almost overcome. Then you start again by facing a new batch of completely new parliamentarians, starting from zero. So that is the nature of democracy, especially new democracy. But the pattern is already established. The quality of people? Of course that will be a subject of how to manage a new democracy. Political parties have not even been anywhere near what we would like to see of a political party. So there are many things that have to be achieved by the political parties but what can we do? We with a military background can say many things, various disappointments, but it is part of a new democracy in the world, so that is the challenge. But the pattern is there. The legislature is aware of what they have to do and the military is aware that they have to be answerable, accountable to the parliament. I think in the big picture the pattern is already established.

DREISBACH: Thank you very much for your time. I really appreciate this.