

## GOLKAR'S SELF-DESTRUCTION?

The rift in Golkar is widening between the party's old guard and up-and-coming leaders, as the party looks to hold a National Congress (Munas) to elect a new chairman and set its political course in the Jokowi era. A raid of an executive board meeting presided by Aburizal Bakrie and his backers by the party's own youth wing (AMPG) earlier this week and AMPG's subsequent takeover of Golkar's Jakarta offices, together with an open threat by Bakrie rival Agung Laksono (former house speaker/senior SBY minister) to hold a competing Munas that threatens to split Golkar, underscored an increasingly acrimonious situation in the party. The intra-party clashes in Golkar are the worst in years.

### Where do things stand now?

A national congress (Munas) has been scheduled for 30 November in Bali. The date was moved up by supporters of current chairman Aburizal Bakrie following a party leadership meeting on 18 November. A party session earlier in the month had initially set the Munas for January next year, a decision that was backed by other aspirants to the party chair who wanted time to consolidate their support in the party. Meanwhile, coordinating minister for political and security affairs Tedjo Edhy Purdijatno has advised police not to give formal permission needed for Golkar to hold a public event in Bali like the Munas unless they can guarantee security. Tedjo has also encouraged Golkar to stick to its initial plan of holding the Munas in January, indicating which side the administration is leaning towards, although cabinet secretary Andi Widjajanto has subsequently stated that the government has no intention of intervening in Golkar's affairs. If Golkar somehow still holds their Munas on 30 November, the event will likely be stage-managed to reelect Bakrie.

Potential challengers looking to take on Bakrie include Priyo Budi Santoso (48, current house speaker), Hajriyanto Tohari (54, current deputy MPR speaker), Zainudin Amali (52, chair of Golkar East Java chapter), Agus Gumiwang (45, Golkar central board member, son of Soeharto era Golkar leader Ginandjar Kartasasmita), Agun Gunandjar Sudarsa (56, Golkar lawmaker) and Ibnu Munzir (54, Golkar lawmaker). Bakrie is 68 years of old. The average age of his potential challengers is 52.

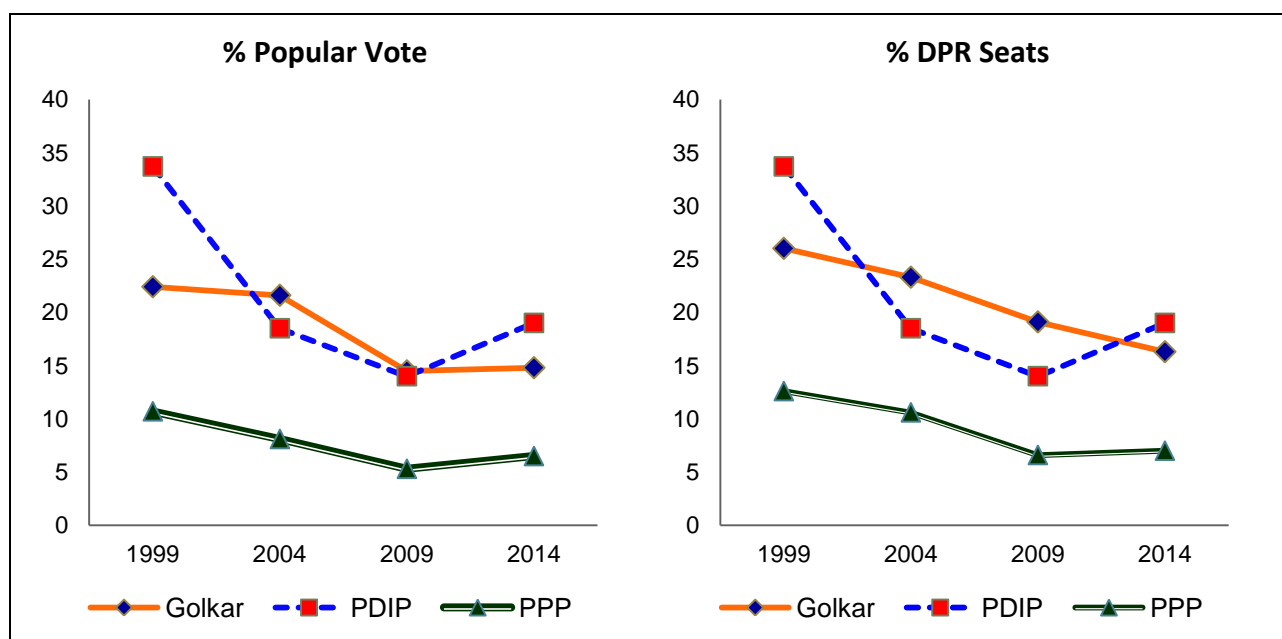
### What's at stake?

Survival of the Red and White Coalition (KMP). Bakrie wants to maintain a prominent position for KMP, created by losing presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto of Gerindra and which Bakrie now chairs, as a hostile opposition force. So far, the KMP is holding strong and in fact appears to be expanding its outreach to the regions, despite the assessment of many that the core parties comprising the coalition (Gerindra, Golkar, PAN, PKS) would disband the alliance following the elections. (The inauguration of KMP's Central Java branch earlier this month, attended by Prabowo, Bakrie, PAN's Hatta Rajasa and PKS' Anis Matta, saw hundreds of supporters calling for Jokowi's impeachment. Bakrie specifically called for a formal DPR inquiry into the fuel price hike.) Bakrie appears to have bought into the idea that KMP will be able to depose of Jokowi before his

term ends in 2019 by pursuing a highly adversarial stance or, at minimum, hamper the government and do enough damage to the administration's credibility that Jokowi would find it difficult to run for reelection.

In contrast, the election of one of Bakrie's challengers could well mean the end of the KMP. The sense is that they don't want to be left behind, as Jokowi moves forward with a reform agenda that Indonesian business chamber (Kadin) chairman Suryo Bambang Sulisto said was "the most pro-business" of his 40-year career. (Ironically, Suryo Bambang is a close associate of Bakrie.) Most appear intent on joining former Golkar chairman and current Vice President Yusuf Kalla in support of the government.

Moreover, in many respects Golkar is at a crossroads. They are still a top-tier party. However, like the other Soeharto-era parties PDIP and PPP, they've seen a significant decline in popularity since the start of the reform era (see graphs and table below). They've fared relatively better than PDIP and PPP (for 1999-2014 Period: %popular vote down 33.9% vs. PPP down 39.3% and PDIP down 43.6%; %DPR seats down 37.3% vs. PDIP down 41.1% and PPP down 44.4%), due in large part to a vastly superior organization. More recently, however, Golkar has underperformed (2009-2014 Period: %popular vote up 2% vs. PDIP up 26.3% and PPP up 18.5%; %DPR seats down 17.2% vs. PDIP up 12.8% and PPP up 5.7%). Many attribute this to Golkar's failure to rejuvenate and bring in new, younger leaders, and its inability to create a strong enough anchor to stop people like former party executives Prabowo Subianto, Wiranto and Surya Paloh from setting up their own parties. (Prabowo and Wiranto founded their respective parties Gerindra and Hanura following the party's 2004 congress; Surya Paloh created Nasdem following his loss to Bakrie in the party's 2009 congress.)





# POLITICAL PULSE SPECIAL

		1999	2004	2009	2014	Change (1999-2014)	Change (2009-2014)
<b>Golkar</b>	% Popular Vote	22.4	21.6	14.5	14.8	-33.9%	2.0%
	% DPR Seats	26	23.3	19.1	16.3	-37.3%	-17.2%
<b>PDIP</b>	% Popular Vote	33.7	18.5	14	19	-43.6%	26.3%
	% DPR Seats	33.1	23.3	17	19.5	-41.1%	12.8%
<b>PPP</b>	% Popular Vote	10.7	8.1	5.3	6.5	-39.3%	18.5%
	% DPR Seats	12.6	10.6	6.6	7	-44.4%	5.7%

Bottom line, reliance on organization and political machine alone is no longer sufficient to be a top-tier party. Golkar needs to make inroads with younger voters amid changing preferences of an Indonesian electorate that only knows the party's role in bringing Indonesia back from the brink of economic and political meltdown of the late Soekarno years and helping provide the economic stability of the early Soeharto era from history books. They need to move away from the old guard brand and find a relevant space in face of a political environment that has put independent reformists like Joko Widodo (PDIP), Tri Rismaharini (PDIP, Surabaya mayor) or Ridwan Kamil (PKS/Gerindra, Bandung mayor) at the forefront of voters' mind of the kind of politician that they want in government. The Munas will determine the direction the party will go. A new, younger leader with fresh ideas could help Golkar maintain their premier position on the Indonesian political scene. The reelection of Bakrie, in contrast, could well mean Golkar's continued decline into a second-tier party.