

interactions can be either favorable or depriving to both the intellectual and the society. An intellectual with relatively more and better knowledge, experience and observations than the common people is expected by society to inform, teach and help the people in

By doing so, they consciously take a great risk that they may well lose their jobs.

There are also "fake" whistle-blowers who do the same thing for their own benefit or personal interests. The latter intellectuals are better called traitors. Whistle-blowing intellectu-

als can be considered an intellectual who resists totalitarian regimes. History repeats itself. During World War II in Germany, atomic scientist Werner Heisenberg and his coworkers sabotaged the war by passive resistance and delayed the atom bomb project. Soon after the war ended, an Austrian

Indonesianist from the United States, in the middle of the reform movement in Indonesia, stated there might be corrupt practices in the signing of a contract between the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Mines and Energy and the local subsidiary of Freeport McMoran

of to prove or disprove his claims, the government responded by accusing Panigoro himself of committing corruption in his Meaco group of companies.

It seems that in the reform era, whistle-blowing intellectuals who speak up about the wrongdoings of government officers are dissuaded from doing so. If they

experience democratic life in the country. The most probable consequence of such a situation is that pro-status quo government officers and their followers will enjoy the moment to bolster their positions.

The writer is a graduate of the University of the Philippines.

Sizing up an appropriate electoral system

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JAKARTA (JP): In an important article in *The Jakarta Post* on Dec. 5, Mulyana W. Kusumah, secretary-general of the Indonesian Independent Committee for General Election Monitoring (KIPP), pointed to what might be the positive effects for democratization of an electoral system based on a simple majority in one-person constituencies; the so-called district system.

No doubt there is much to the argument that such a district system may help undermine authoritarianism, and especially the dominance of centralized

established parties and certain leaders.

It might be added, however, that such a system is also likely to generate fiercer conflicts between people mobilized on the basis of ethnic and religious loyalties. Both to win the only seat and after the election, groups may end up fighting each other rather than trying to compromise.

Furthermore, since the win-

ner takes all (and only large parties will benefit from a national proportional/distribution of additional seats), this system is not likely to result in the inclusion of many of the weak groups that were excluded under the country's authoritarian regimes.

Even more important, the new rules of the game to be decided upon are likely to be formative and of great importance for a long period of time. Most powerful groups will adjust their machineries to the new institutions and thereafter change will be difficult.

Hence, it may also be crucial to consider the effects of different electoral systems on the possibility of not only undermining the remnants of authoritarianism but also consolidating and further developing democracy.

For the future, then, I would argue, experience from other relevant countries suggests that a proportional system in rather large constituencies may be preferable, especially if combined with decentralization, local elections and democratization of parties.

There are two major reasons

for this. First, one-member constituencies are likely to promote personality-oriented politics and local boss-rule on the basis of guns, goons and gold — plus ethnic and religious loyalties.

Second (and even worse), such boss-rule within a district system would make it extremely difficult for new concerned groups in civil society to enter politics by gradually organizing new mass movements and democratic parties based on societal interests and ideas — thus compensating for their economic weakness and lack of muscle. They usually have to limit themselves to extra-par-

liamentary struggles, lobbying, and to betting on the least worst passion.

For instance, the above were the clear and frustrating experiences of democrats in cases such as the Philippines after Marcos.

In conclusion, while no electoral system is ideal, it may be important to consider the effects beyond the undermining of authoritarianism — on the consolidation and further development of democracy.

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ASEAN's nonintervention policy put to the test

KUALA LUMPUR (AP): The longstanding pledge by Southeast Asian nations to avoid interfering in each other's business was put to the test recently when U.S. Vice President Al Gore came to town and stepped into Malaysia's internal affairs.

In front of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, host to a Asia-Pacific trade summit last

Indonesian presidents took the unprecedented step of publicly reprimanding Mahathir for the sacking and jailing of his deputy, Anwar Ibrahim.

Next week, the Philippines will take issue with China, who

immediate entry and the membership issue is likely to dominate the summit.

Noninterference into members' internal affairs could also be on the agenda, though an attempt by Thailand and the Philippines to alter that ASEAN founding principle was rejected when foreign ministers met in Manila in July.

Abdul Razak notes that ASEAN was paralyzed during the hazardous haze that blanketed the region last year. It stood by silently during the Cambodian coup and the deadly riots that led to the end of Indonesian President Soeharto's 32-year rule in May. And it has done little to focus on the crippling Asian economic crisis, now well into its

Razak. "One gets the impression that it's every man for himself."

The fledgling reform movement in Malaysia is hoping ASEAN will chuck the non-interference policy and use the summit to discuss Anwar, who is on trial for corruption and sodomy.

"You speak about justice, universal values, and human

Thai newspaper *The Nation*. "Because those values are borderless."

Mahathir disagrees. During a recent visit to Brunei, he said Southeast Asian leaders who begin sniping at one another would undermine regional unity.

"That will be very bad, because we all have got a lot of