

Prabowo Subianto: Indonesia's Next President?

(NAPSA)—Indonesia will choose its next president in a few months and the historic presidential race is heating up. The strategically important archipelago nation of 17,000 islands in the heart of Asia shuttered a dictatorial system in the late 1990s and continues to build its fledgling democracy. Home to the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia maintains its moderate Islamic views as it chooses to focus its attention on emerging as a potent economic player on the global stage—and this focus is paying off. Indonesia has the world's fourth largest population and boasts an economy currently ranked 16th but is projected to move up past Germany and the United Kingdom and to seventh by 2030. With a respectable 6 percent growth in 2012, the country's longer-term economic outlook remains strong. So with this type of potential, who leads this rising star matters to the world, and one candidate is emerging as the odds-on favorite: Prabowo Subianto.

Prabowo Subianto is a former military general and the son of the prominent Indonesian economist and former cabinet minister Sumitro Djojohadikusumo. He is widely viewed as a strong leader and enjoys a significant lead in many of the presidential election polls and surveys. His popularity can be attributed to his belief in building up the country's economic infrastructure and social services in a way that is equitable for all, rather than just Indonesia's elite who mostly reside in the capital city of Jakarta. He has declared war on the country's rampant corruption problem and religious intolerance, and has stated that the country's significant socioeconomic challenges could lead to social upheaval and "failed state" status if not aggressively addressed.

Prabowo and his Gerindra party have released a "Six-Point Action Plan to Transform the



America's interests in an important part of the world could be affected by the presidential election in Indonesia.

Nation," which they believe reflects their commitment to the party's stated core principles of pluralism, equal rights for all and uplifting the country's poor. His plan is an aggressive one, focusing on investment in economic infrastructure, particularly in the poor rural areas; energy and food security; high-quality health and education; environmental protection; and eradicating corruption in government. He also believes Indonesians are fed up with politics as usual and he's here to deliver change. His logical, commonsense approach to governing for equality and transparency in a nation that craves strong and assertive leadership has many analysts believing that Prabowo's ascent to the presidency is inevitable.

At this point in the race, the momentum is clearly on Prabowo's side, prompting many foreign leaders to take note. Surely, many of those leaders, including our own, would agree that a strong Indonesia is in America's interests, considering the U.S. need for strong partners in a region with rapidly increasing Chinese influence. To have such a partner in Indonesia, the country must be strong domestically, so perhaps a strong leader with the credentials of Prabowo Subianto is exactly what the doctor ordered.