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INDONESIA: Situation Report

[redacted] The Indonesian Government is taking further steps to hinder opposition activities, although the atmosphere in Jakarta has been generally calm since the government shut down major newspapers and temporarily detained a few hundred university students. Indonesian authorities may have released most of the students but continue to hold their leaders. Student travel is restricted, and all activities of student councils have been banned. [redacted] are also pressing university rectors to expel those students who were arrested, a move that the rectors have so far resisted.

[redacted] Given the restrictions, students will have greater difficulty coordinating their activities on a nationwide basis, but scattered local demonstrations are continuing.

[redacted] The government apparently does not intend to lift the ban on newspapers soon. [redacted] warned the foreign press this week to temper its coverage of opposition groups or face possible closure of local offices. The new, harder line may be due to the influence of Ali Murtopo, President Suharto's political troubleshooter. Murtopo is said to want a longer ban to avoid further damage to the President's reputation that could stem from recently publicized allegations of corruption.

[redacted] At the same time, Suharto is trying to generate more support in other quarters for his anticipated reelection next month. By announcing his intention to refurbish the grave of former President Sukarno, he is wooing old-guard supporters of Sukarno who still wield considerable influence in parts of Java.

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[redacted] The Army continues publicly to demonstrate its loyalty to Suharto. At the installation of the Army's new Chief of Staff this week many major Army leaders appeared in an apparent show of support for the President--including two men whom Suharto had dismissed but who still have a following within the Army.

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