

We are proud of you both

One is a Muslim Javanese man, the other a female Christian born in Manado, North Sulawesi. On the badminton court, half a world from home, they fought together for their beloved country: Indonesia.

The red-and-white flag was raised and the national anthem "Indonesia Raya" was played after the mixed doubles team won a gold medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics on Wednesday. They represent this nation — regardless of their religion, their ethnicity or their social status.

Tontowi Ahmad and Liliyana Natsir are just young Indonesians, whose ambition was only to strive for the best, to win and to make their country proud.

Lifters Sri Wahyuni Agustiani, the first medal winner for Indonesia, and Eko Yuli Irawan have played an equally important role in boosting Indonesia's ranking in the overall medal standings.

In the past 10 days we have witnessed American swimmer Michael Phelps and Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt create history in the quadrennial events. We saw Singaporean sensation Joseph Schooling upset his idol Phelps and create hype in our neighboring country. Thai female lifters Sopita Tanasan and Sukanya Srisurat as well as shooter Hoang Xuan Vinh of Vietnam have also contributed gold medals for their respective countries.

It is a common practice in almost all countries to give rewards to the victors. Indonesia is no exception.

The government plans to not only provide cash bonuses for our Olympic medalists, but also lifetime allowances. This is good news for our athletes and we hope it will be extended to sports winners at all levels of competition. We need the government to provide the legal basis for the rewards system, to ensure the continuity of the program.

Now that the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro is almost over, it is time for stakeholders in national sports development to reflect and evaluate. Since winning the silver medal for archery at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, only three sports — archery, badminton and weightlifting — have contributed medals to Indonesia. Despite this history of success, the result must serve as a challenge to this country's strategy in competing in elite sports.

While Indonesia is right to focus on its strengths, which are badminton and weightlifting, it should also find new talents in other sporting events. The Indonesia Badminton Association (PBSI) can net new talents from clubs in Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan, while the Indonesian Weightlifting, Powerlifting and Bodybuilding Association (PABBSI) can focus on its training centers in Lampung and East Kalimantan.

Of course the opportunity to compete at the Olympics is not limited to shuttlers or lifters only. Sports organizations are welcome to compete in the qualifications too. We have so much to learn from our sportsmen: values of sportsmanship, respect, fair play, friendship and equality.

And what makes us prouder is that we learn these values from our young generation, who barely ask what the nation does for them. They have given so much to us. It is payback time. We can do this by recognizing their achievements, appreciating them and ensuring they never have cause to regret their sacrifice. Because they are our true heroes, and we should all be proud of them.

OTHER OPINION

Pondering Citizenship Law revision

Law No. 12/2006 on Indonesian citizenship has freed the nation from issues of discrimination, human rights, equality and protection of women and children.

However, this law hasn't yet fully anticipated the rapid development of the times. At least two cases have lately emerged in connection with citizenship.

First, President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo honorably dismissed Arcandra Tahar as energy and mineral resources minister for holding US and Indonesian passports. Second, Gloria Natapradja Hamel was disqualified as a national flag-raising team member for possessing a French passport because her father is a French citizen, despite her mother's Indonesian citizenship.

Both cases should serve as a basis to consider whether Indonesia still needs to maintain the principle of single citizenship. So far 56 countries have adjusted their immigration and citizenship policies to accommodate members of diasporas. At least 44 countries have implemented double citizenship policies.

The time has come for the government and the House of Representatives to think about the endorsement of double citizenship by revising Law No. 12/2006. Moreover, the plan to amend this law has been included in the national legislation program for 2015-2019.

- MEDIA INDONESIA, JAKARTA

Thailand's national reconciliation

One would have to conclude that Thailand has opted for prolonging the life of the junta. Is it possible to pave the way for national reconciliation, which is Thailand's biggest challenge?

To obtain the trust of the international community, the junta must put all its efforts into realizing a full transition to civilian rule. A draft of a new constitution compiled under the military rule was endorsed by a majority of votes in a referendum. As the constitution was designed to ensure the military's political influence, the content of the new basic law is far from democratic.

It is feared that continued uncertainty in the political situation will affect the economy, curbing foreign investment and profits from tourism. Thailand is an important production base for Japanese companies, such as automobile manufacturers.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is shaken by the issue of the South China Sea. The stability of Thailand — one of the association's main member countries — is also important for ASEAN unity.

In response to the referendum, interim Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha issued a statement that said he would employ every possible means to eliminate public concern. It is indispensable for him to sincerely make efforts to overcome the nation's divided society as mentioned in the statement.

- THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN, TOKYO

Dual citizenship and national security concerns

As an Indonesian citizen having benefited from an overseas education, I was proud to see that an established technocrat and businessman like Arcandra Tahar was still willing to return to his nation of origin with the declared intention of building his original motherland. However, his return has evoked controversy due to his citizenship status. Having learned from this experience, we now need to view this issue critically and positively from a number of points of view.



Wibawanto Nugroho WASHINGTON, DC

From the strategic point of view, it is indeed beneficial in the long run for a nation to call back its best minds from overseas. The calling back of the nation's diaspora — if managed properly would benefit and enrich the nation in political, intelligence, economic and socio-cultural aspects in the long-run.

Indonesia is a democratic nation, and the long-term success of a democratic nation is significantly determined by the compliance of its society and its national political leadership with law enforcement. Law enforcement and an enlightened society are the coexisting determining factors in generating a quality democracy in the long-run.

Falling to honor law enforcement, will in turn fail to generate an enlightened society, which in turn will fail to produce a quality democracy in the long-run. In other words, the strategic intention of recalling the best minds from overseas must still be carried out harmoniously according to the laws and legislation that are stipulated in the Republic of Indonesia.

Indonesia is a democratic nation, whose political leadership success-

sion is relatively rapid through a higher turnover of its national leadership compared to a less democratic nation. Therefore the government needs to establish comprehensive moral, ethical, legal, political and intelligence mechanisms in selecting its leadership, not only at the national level but also down to the provincial and local level.

The purpose of this mechanism is solely to make sure that the selected or appointed leaders have truly passed the rigorous security clearance needed for them to fill the public positions.

The US allows more than one citizenship for its citizens, but still strictly regulates the citizenship issue on a case-by-case basis, particularly when it relates to national security. For example, foreigners living in the US on a green card (working and permanent residence permit) can still serve in the US armed forces, but only to the level of non-commissioned officers (NCO).

If they are willing to be commissioned as officers (the rank of second lieutenant and above), they must discard any citizenship other than US citizenship plus undergo a very tight security clearance process involving various national security institutions in the US government.

The same procedure applies when a US private citizen like a businessman holding more than one

citizenship living in the US wishes to become a political leader in another country (as a president, prime minister, political leader, minister, ambassador or national security leader) he or she must renounce their US citizenship and clearly position themselves as a foreign agent who could (later) deal with the US through government-to-government contacts.

In the case of former minister Arcandra, at the time he accepted a ministerial post in the Indonesian government he automatically lost his US citizenship and positioned himself as a foreign agent to the US government. Legally and technically he could no longer claim his US citizenship at the time he was officiating as a high-level minister in the Indonesian government.

Since Indonesia has been shocked during the last couple of days by the news that Arcandra once held US citizenship, this country can learn and move forward to handle this sensitive issue by looking at strategic, law enforcement and national security points of view. This is a huge lesson-learned not only for the current government, but also by our Indonesian democratic society.

There are a number of possible solutions to this situation, but at least we should know that any solutions taken by the government must accommodate these three aspects at the same time: strategic, law enforcement and national security concerns.

Out of this combination at the minimum it is advisable, if President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo is willing not only to dismiss Arcandra as energy minister but also to annul his

appointment and policies during the last 20 days serving in this position (to satisfy the law enforcement concerns), to expedite the reissuance of Indonesian citizenship for Arcandra — with the President's discretion (to satisfy the strategic concerns), and to process his security clearance in the strictest sense (to satisfy the national security concerns) before Arcandra can be named again by the President as his assistant or minister in his chosen field.

Who dares wins, but who thinks also wins, and for the nation to win it must think and be daring. This case should become an examining case for Indonesian political leaders, intellectuals and other stakeholders in our democratic society; either we can elegantly resolve this issue in the fairest way possible by looking at the long-term strategic benefits without any unnecessary costs or other aspects.

On top of that, this is now the time when a comprehensive, independent study must be carried out to examine whether endorsing dual citizenship for Indonesian citizens will contribute to Indonesia's strategic advantage and to enable this nation to successfully compete in the highly competitive global marketplace in the long-run.

If so, changes to our legal system might be needed in order to fulfill our strategic needs and national security concerns.

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E-commerce and Trans Pacific Partnership

Ronald Eberhard JAKARTA

Amazon, Lazada, Grab, Uber and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) share a common interest in Indonesia. All favor openness and competition in the field of e-commerce.

The intention to open up the economy is surely to attract more investment in e-commerce. However, it will come at a cost that is not low, as opening up the economy for competition surely will reduce the policy space of the government.

The government needs policy space to regulate for public interest. It remains to be seen how the TPP will influence future regulation in the field of e-commerce. It is not only the case of Amazon, Lazada, Grab, Uber and Facebook but also many other companies such as Twitter and Google.

The TPP has set high standard obligations that favor openness and competition over the government's policy space. In return for the expectation of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, the government is

obliged to deregulate and regulate in a number of issues related to e-commerce. Deregulation entails market access commitments, such as easing requirements and restrictions for service providers to open their businesses.

The TPP will also oblige states to develop regulations pertaining to personal data protection. The communications and information minister issued a draft regulation recently that obliges techno giants such as Facebook, Google, Twitter and Netflix, to establish local representative offices or permanent establishments in Indonesia.

If we join the TPP, we are certainly prohibited from requiring such establishment in Indonesia. Another deregulation move may entail scrapping the obligation that computing facilities must be located in Indonesia to conduct e-commerce in the country. The local content obligation for smartphones will be difficult to maintain.

The TPP also prohibits the performance requirement provision, thereby preventing the government from introducing such policy. More-

over, such provision is subject to the investor-state dispute settlement, which enables foreign investors to bring a claim against sovereign states in international arbitration.

Furthermore, the TPP will also oblige its member states to treat digital products indiscriminately. The movies we download from Netflix or songs we download from Apple Music fall into this definition.

If we ban Netflix from operating in Indonesia, we also need to ban other similar service providers, both locally and internationally. The regulation for personal data protection is still being developed and we haven't seen any regulation, apart from the Law No. 11/2008 on Information and Electronic Transaction that requires consent from the user to use their personal data. However, the law itself does not provide further protection of such personal data after the consent is given, such as how long the data could be stored by a service provider such as Facebook and Google. A ruling by the European Court of Justice has provided Europeans with a "right to be forgotten". Such "right" enables Eu-

ropeans to ask Google and Facebook to erase and delete their data permanently. The TPP will ask the same standard, including the availability of local legal remedies for disputes regarding personal data protection.

E-commerce is growing rapidly in Indonesia by looking at the number of Facebook users in Indonesia, which reach 69 million, and the potential for e-commerce.

The growing demand is accompanied by the emergence of start-up companies such as Go-Jek, Blibli, Tokopedia, Bukalapak and foreign companies such as Lazada, Amazon, Grab and Uber.

Fair competition between local and international companies is a prerequisite in joining the TPP. The TPP will also entail the obligation to develop a personal data protection framework. The public will see itself whether we are up to joining the TPP or not.

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Voters shun Trump in three key states

Albert R. Hunt BLOOMBERG VIEW

Donald Trump's presidential campaign has a lot of problems. Near the top of the list is this: Suburban voters want nothing to do with him, especially in three states where he needs to compete.

The latest indicator was this week's Washington Post survey, which showed Hillary Clinton up by 14 percentage points in Virginia among registered voters and eight with likely voters. The driving force: She enjoys a 45-point advantage in the voter-rich Washington suburbs, almost double the margin rolled up there four years ago by President Barack Obama.

This follows similar findings in Philadelphia's suburbs, where Clinton's big lead threatens to put Pennsylvania out of Trump's reach.

A Marist College poll out this week shows the Democratic nominee with a 14-point lead in Colorado. Lee Miringoff, director of the

poll, says looking at the statewide response, "You can extrapolate that she has almost a 3-to-1 lead in the Denver suburbs." This is a bigger advantage than Obama held while carrying the state in 2008 and 2012.

These three states have been considered crucial for Trump — among the half-dozen or so states he has to switch from the Democratic column to win. The growing suburbs in these states seem to be making that impossible. If he loses Colorado, Pennsylvania and Virginia, a pathway to victory is hard to see.

Trump is especially unpopular in these venues, which include a lot of college-educated residents, rising diversity and voters who are more tolerant on social issues. But this only is accelerating a political trend in suburbs outside the Deep South, which have been trending Democratic for almost a quarter-century. As recently as 1988, they were Republican bastions.

A few things changed. The growing numbers of minority-group sub-

urbanites are mainly Democrats. White suburbanites aren't drawn to the Republican Party's campaign to connect with religious and cultural conservatives.

"The Republicans' positioning resonates with rural voters and some working-class areas but turned off many suburban voters," notes Seth McKee, a political scientist at Texas Tech University who has researched partisan and demographic changes in American politics. "It's hard now for suburbanites to identify with the Republican brand."

Another factor, he notes, is the nature of migration. New residents coming into Texas suburbs, for example, are mainly from conservative areas, so the politics of those places haven't changed. But many new migrants coming into the suburbs of cities in Virginia and even North Carolina, he says, are coming from more progressive places and are changing the politics.

Virginia is a classic case. From 1952 until 2008 it voted Republican

in every presidential election except 1964, when Lyndon Johnson thumped Barry Goldwater in an historic landslide.

Obama's victories in Virginia in the two most recent elections were fueled by his winning margins in the Washington suburbs and exurbs. In 1988, when Republicans easily won the state, George HW Bush carried the large Washington suburb of Fairfax County with 61 percent of the vote. In 2012, when there were 200,000 more votes in Fairfax, Obama won it with 59 percent.

The two most significant exurbs, Loudoun and Prince William counties, cast a little over 90,000 votes in the 1988 election, with Bush winning two-thirds. Four years ago they contributed over 340,000 votes, with Obama taking almost 55 percent.

If current trends hold, Clinton will exceed these winning margins.

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