

The unfulfilled promise of Joko Widodo



***New Mandala* talks to Indonesia politics expert Greg Fealy about whether everyone got it wrong when it came to Jokowi and his promise of reform.**

Last July, Joko ‘Jokowi’ Widodo was elected as Indonesia’s seventh president, riding a wave of popularity to just overturn fast-finishing rival Prabowo Subianto in a hotly contested vote.

Coming from humble beginnings and having no links to the country’s political elites, his election promised [a new era](#) of ‘clean’ politics; an end to cronyism, a break with Indonesia’s authoritarian past and better social welfare for the poor. Jokowi’s win was a victory in the battle between Indonesia’s [old guard and breath of fresh air](#).

But since coming into office in October 2014, the heady warmth of victory has become a bitter chill, and Jokowi now finds himself out in the cold – as unpalatable to former colleagues and supporters as a plate of leftover *nasi goreng*. Once a man of hope, he’s now a man facing widespread disillusionment both [at home](#) and [abroad](#). A man who promised so much reform is charting a path

of compromise and disappointment.

Jokowi is now under attack from all sides, and a lot of it is his own doing; from [poor selections in his first cabinet](#) to an inability to break free from the shackles of his political masters and the controversial appointment of former general Ryamizard Ryacudu as defence minister, the promise of reform and a new era in Indonesian politics under Jokowi [is fading fast](#).

In this exclusive in-depth video interview, *New Mandala* talks to ANU expert Associate Professor Greg Fealy about whether the hope in Jokowi was misplaced and whether he can drag himself out of the minefield he has been digging for himself.

"Nearly all observers overestimated Jokowi's capacity to bring about change," says Fealy. "The harsh reality might be that Jokowi is not equipped to be a good president."

Fealy discusses the ongoing battle between Indonesia's corruption commission (KPK) and national police (Polri), which has already claimed the scalp of Jokowi's nominated police commissioner Budi Gunawan on account of corruption charges.

"This is a case where a really bad decision has all kinds of knock-on effects," says Fealy.

He also touches on Jokowi's hard-line stance on drug smugglers and refusal to consider clemency for death row inmates, which speaks against his popular image as a social progressive. But in [recent revelations](#), Jokowi apparently hadn't even looked at the documents for Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran's clemency plea.

Watch the full interview in the player above.

[mlw_quizmaster quiz=1]