

Radical Islam and Politics in Indonesia: The Post- Suharto Era

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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INDIA
2003

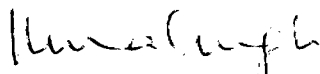


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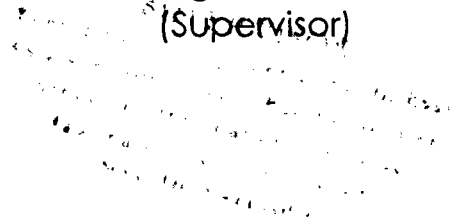
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Dedicated to my elders.

PREFACE

Indonesia is witnessing the rise of two kinds of Islam, mainstream or what Robert Hefner has called “Civil” Islam, and its more militant cousin. The rise of mainstream Islam comes from Indonesia’s democratic struggle after years of overt political suppression. The surge in radical Islam is rooted in Suharto’s policy turn towards conservative Muslims late in his tenure to shore up political power. Fundamentalist militant Islam is also on the rise in the post September –11, 2001, primarily because of the perception of Indonesian Muslims and Muslims elsewhere, that the U.S. interests and its policies are inimical to the Islamic world. Thus the U.S sponsored war on terror has united Muslims all over the world against what they perceive to be U.S. policy of confrontation against Islam.

The first chapter, “Islam & Politics in Post-suharto Era”, is introductory. It starts with explaining the role and position of Islam and military during Suharto’s New Order and goes on to explain their position after the end of his rule.

The second chapter, “Mainstream/Civil Islam in Indonesia”, portrays the Islamic beliefs of the majority of Muslims in Indonesia. The chapter focuses on Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, the two Islamic organizations, having a sizeable majority of Indonesian Muslims as its members. It tells us about the basic orientations of these organizations and also about their contributions towards promoting a democratized civil society in Indonesia. The chapter also highlights their interpretation of Islam, and briefly outlines their response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on American Cities.

The third chapter, “Radical Islam in Indonesia”, begins with tracing the roots of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia by discussing the Masyumi and the Darul Islam

movements. Then it tells us about radicalism in the post Suharto Indonesia while focusing on organizations such as the Laskar Jihad, FPI (Front for the Defense of Islam) and the MMI (Indonesian Mujahideen Council).

The fourth chapter, “Prospects for a Secular Indonesia”, discusses the Islamic transition in Indonesia. It tries to find whether Islam is compatible with democracy and religious freedom. The chapter also talks about *Pancasila* as an ideology promoting secular and democratic ideas in Indonesian society. The chapter also briefly examines Islam’s contribution to democracy and civil society and the threat posed by communal violence.

The conclusion attempts to assert that inspite of the recent revival of Islamic radicalism and fundamentalism in Indonesia, the majority of the Indonesian Muslims remain tolerant and inclusive. It also tries to briefly discuss the underlying causes behind this revival and portrays *Pancasila* as an ideology suitable for maintaining Indonesia’s integration and religious plurality.

I am indebted to my supervisor Dr. Ganganath Jha without whose cooperation and valuable guidance I may never have been able to produce this work. I am equally thankful to the chairperson, Prof. Uma Singh for granting me the requisite permission to obtain memberships of various libraries across Delhi for consultation purposes. I also thank the office staff of the Centre for South, Central, South East Asian and South West Pacific Studies for their valuable support in helping me in smoothly fulfilling official obligations.

I would also like to record my debt to the librarians at Teen Murti Library, Jamia Milia Islamiyah University’s Zakir Hussein Library and Indian Council of World Affairs,

for helping me find and xerox materials from their library. I also wish to thank my seniors, Gautam Kumar Jha, Krishnadev (KD), and Sunil and Vibhanshu for providing the valuable tips on writing my work. I am also greatly indebted to my colleague Pranav Kumar and junior Amit Singh for engaging me in intellectual debates on Islam. I also wish to thank my friends Manjeet, Raghav and Vinay Kumar for typing my work.

I am also grateful of my family for taking care of the finances incurred while producing this work. I also wish to thank my father, Sri. Amarjeet Banga who has always been a major source of inspiration for me. Finally, I would also be remiss, not to mention my mother, Ranjana, Sister Sonia, my Nanaji, Naniji, Mamaji and my friends, Nitin Amit Singh, Sandeep, Rajeev, Arun, Bhanu and brothers Tika, Babloo and Pamma for their never ending support.

GLOSSARY

Abangan - orientation	The fringe Muslim or Spiritually syncretic community in Java.
ABRI - Armed	<i>(Angkatan Bersenjata Republic Indonesia)</i> Indonesian Forces.
Adat -	Customary Law.
<i>Ahl al – hall wa 'l' aqd:-</i>	Chief religious authority.
Ahlu Sunnah -	Those who observe the teachings of Prophet Muhammad.
Aliran -	Current, flow.
Amir -	Head, leader.
Assas Tunggal-	Pancasila as the sole basis.
Darul Islam - State.	Home of Islam, a militant faction striving for an Islamic State.
Dewan pembina -	Patron
DPR - Assembly	<i>(Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat)</i> People's Representative Assembly
Dukun -	Magician, healer, seer.
Dwifungsi -	Dual function of the Indonesian Armed Forces.
Fiqh -	Islamic Jurisprudence.
FKAWJ -	<i>(Forum Komunikasi Ahlusunnah wal Jama'ah)</i> Forum of Communication for followers of Sunni Tradition.
FPI -	<i>(Front Pembela Islam)</i> Front for the Defence of Islam.
Golkar -	<i>(Golongan Karya)</i> , functional group party of Suharto.

Hadith -	Tradition of Prophet Muhammad.
Haram -	Prohibited, forbidden by Islam.
HMI-	Muslim Student's Association.
Hukum -	Law
IAIN -	<i>(Institute Agama Negeri)</i> Government Institute of Islamic Studies at the university level.
ijtihad/ijtihad --	Independent reasoning for reinterpreting Islamic law in accordance with the changing needs & requirements of Muslim community.
Jakarta Charter -	Compromise Preamble to the Constitution of 1945 that would have stipulated that Indonesian Muslims were obliged to carry out draft of the Constitution.
Jl -	Jemaah Islamiyah
Jihad -	Holy war.
Kafir harbi -	Belligerent infidels.
KISDI -	<i>(Komite Indonesia untuk Solidarities Dunia Islam)</i> Indonesian Committee for solidarity of the Islamic World.
Kramat -	Holy man
Kraton-	Palace, court.
Kyai -	Honorific title for Javanese Islamic notables.
Majlis/Majelis --	Council, assembly.
Masyumi -	Majelis Sjuro Musallimin Indonesia

MPR -	(<i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat</i>), People's Consultative Assembly.
Muffakat -	Consensus.
Muhammadiyah –	Modernist Indonesian organization founded in 1912
Muswarah-	Discussion or negotiation.
New Order -	The Suharto years, beginning 1965.
NU -	(<i>Nahdlatul Ulama</i>) Muslim Scholar Party.
OPM -	(<i>Organisasi Papua Merdeka</i>) separatist movement in Irian Jaya.
Pancasila (<i>Lima Dasar</i>)-	The Indonesian State Doctrine
Pesantren -	Islamic boarding school.
Politik aliran -	Sectarian politics.
Priyayi -	Administrative upper class of Java.
Santri -	Orthodox Muslim community or orientation.
Sunnah -	Actions and sayings of Prophet Muhammad
Syariah, syari'a -	Islamic Law.
Tafdiziyah-	Executive body.
Taqlid-	Imitation, unquestioned acceptance of an opinion.
Tareqat -	Sufi mystical centers.
Tauhid -	Strict monotheism.
Ulama -	Islamic scholar.
Ummah -	Community, people, nation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I	1
SUHARTO AND HIS NEW ORDER	1
THE MILITARY DURING THE SUHARTO REGIME	3
ISLAM DURING THE SUHARTO REGIME	5
THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE FALL OF SUHARTO.....	9
POST SUHARTO INDONESIA.....	10
THE MILITARY IN THE POST SUHARTO REGIME	11
ISLAM IN THE POST SUHARTO ERA	14
CHAPTER II	24
MAINSTREAM ISLAM IN INDONESIA	24
NAHDLATUL ULAMA AND ISLAMIC TRADITIONALISM	29
NU, ISLAM AND THE PANCASILA DEBATE	30
NU’S INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM.....	32
NU AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	34
NU AND CIVIL SOCIETY	35
MUHAMMADIYAH AND ISLAMIC MODERNISM.....	36
MUHAMMADIYAH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	38
MUHAMMADIYAH, ISLAM AND CIVIL SOCIETY	39
INSTITUT AGAMA ISLAM NEGERI (IAIN) AND IT’S IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM IN INDONESIA	40
STUDENTS AND THEIR INFLUENCE OF ISLAM-“CAMPUS ISLAM”	41
MAINSTREAM ISLAM AND SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS.....	43
CHAPTER III	46
RADICAL ISLAM IN INDONESIA	46
A BACKGROUND OF RADICALISM.....	48
<i>Darul Islam Movement</i>	49
<i>Masyumi</i>	50
RADICAL ISLAM IN THE SUHARTO ERA	52
KISDI (KOMITE INDONESIA UNTUK SOLIDARITAS DUNIA ISLAM)	54
ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST GROUPS	55
MAJELIS MUJAHIDIN INDONESIA (MMI), INDONESIAN MUJAHIDDIN COUNCIL.....	56
FRONT PEMBELA ISLAM (FPI, FRONT FOR THE DEFENCE OF ISLAM).....	58
FORUM KOMUNIKASI AHLUSSUNNAH WAH JAMA’AH (FKAWJ)	60
LASKAR JIHAD	62
CHAPTER IV	67
PROSPECTS FOR A SECULAR INDONESIA	67
ISLAMIC TRANSITION IN INDONESIA	69
THE QUEST FOR A MODERNIST ISLAMIC FAITH	72
PANCASILA AND ISLAM	75
CIVIL SOCIETY, ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY	78
COMMUNAL VIOLENCE AS A CHALLENGE TO SECULARISM	80
CHAPTER V	84
CONCLUSIONS	84
BIBLIOGRAPHY	90
BOOKS	90
ARTICLES	96

Chapter I

SUHARTO AND HIS NEW ORDER

Sukarno; the father of the nation and the protagonist of the archipelagic concept, Guided Democracy and Pancasila: was not prepared to tolerate any opposition to his policies from either the *Masyumi* or the communists.¹ In 1960 he even officially banned *Masyumi*. Hence Indonesian society became highly polarized. Sukarno began to attach importance to Communist Party as the latter became ambitious to control power. On October 1, 1965, when allegedly a small group of communist leaders mounted a coup attempt against him, General Suharto seized the initiative by taking charge and foiling the coup. Sukarno was eventually forced to hand over power to General Suharto. The shift in power however precipitated a violent wave of reprisals against the communists and their alleged sympathizers. Much of the killings however involved settling of old scores.

A new political system, the New Order (Orde Baru) emerged in which the military, particularly the army, played the dominant role. The army was assisted by civilian technocrats in development planning and its implementation. The primary aims of the New Order were restoration of 'Pancasila' Democracy and economic development.

Suharto manipulated the political process and consolidated the eleven political parties to just three. This *Golongan Karya*, or *Golkar*, nominally a grouping of functional groups representing the whole of Indonesian society,

¹ "Indonesia's Political System and Complexities" G.N. Jha in Satish Chandra and Baladas Ghoshal ed. *Indonesia A New Beginning*, New Delhi, 2002, pp. 86

gained the majority of votes in the 1971 elections. The government political organization *Golkar* or Functional Group, backed by the military and the bureaucracy became the largest political party and mobilized support for the government during the five-yearly general elections, which maintained a charade of democracy while presenting none of its risks. These so called “festivals of democracy”, as the five yearly elections were known, channeled dissent along ineffectual lines and served as an escape route for pent up emotions and frustrations. Golkar always managed to get around 70% of the votes.² Thus Suharto with the help of his close aide, the late General Ali Moertopo, created the institutional framework of power that governed state-society relations in the New Order and created new, powerless political parties which left the state-backed party, *Golkar*, supreme. At the same time, corporatist, state controlled organizations presiding over workers, the peasantry, youth and other groups in society were also established, basically to pre-empt independent organizing and political activity. Ideologically the framework projected a ‘developmentalist’ world view that maintained the overriding importance of safeguarding stability and order to secure economic development.³ It was basically ‘floating mass politics’, according to which the ordinary people should be separated from the political process to ensure that economic development is not disrupted.⁴

The Suharto regime in spite of being authoritarian did a good job in managing the economy and encouraging growth. For almost three decades

² “Islam and Politics in New Indonesia” Greg Barton in *Islam in Asia: Changing Political Realities*, Ed by Jason. F. Isaacson and Colin Rubenstein. P.10

³ “Response to Riots signal Disorder” by Vedi R. Hadiz.
<http://www.arc.murdoch.edu.au/asiaview/nov96/hadiz.html>

⁴ *Ibid.*

Indonesia managed an economic growth rate of around six to eight per cent. While much of the wealth generated was soaked up by corruption and nepotism, there was still sufficient distribution of the fruits of growth to encourage Indonesians towards optimism about the future and the convictions that things were getting better steadily. The urban middle class benefited greatly from the decades of growth. While in many ways, the poor remained poor while the rich got richer, many individuals were able to break the shackles of poverty and enjoy remarkable social mobility through opportunities offered by education and an expanding economy. Population growth was checked and infant mortality rates also declined.⁵

The Military During the Suharto Regime

Indonesian army and police had been developed along lines of territorial warfare so that at every level in society, from the local suburb or village to the provincial level, the military was closely engaged in monitoring and running the society. The military was actively engaged in social and political life. The official name for this military engagement was *Dwifungsi* or dual function.⁶ Indonesia's relatively small and poorly equipped military was more than able to check dissent.

The military's involvement in politics started gradually with the introduction of the 'Middle Way' concept in 1958 which was later developed into the doctrine

⁵ "Islam and Politics in New Indonesia" by Greg Barton in *Islam in Asia: Changing Political Realities* Ed by Jason. F. Issacson and Colin Rubenstein. P. 10 n.2

⁶ Ibid., p. 11

of *DwiFungsi*. The 'Middle Way' path was propounded in 1958 by chief of staff, General Nasution and it was modified into *Dwi Fungsi* to legitimize the military's domination in all aspects of national life.⁷

According to J.Kristiadi, 'Dwifungsi' derived its legitimacy from the embryonic ABRI's (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, Indonesian Armed Forces) active participation in the Indonesian struggle for freedom (as the *Badan-Badan Keamanan Rakyat* or People Security Forces).⁸ ABRI gradually became not only a military instrument of Indonesian Government but also the guardian of Indonesian nation state. Subsequently, through People's Consultative Assembly decrees (*Ketetapan-Keterapan MPR*), laws and government regulations and military doctrines [for instance, *Tri Maya Cakti* (Three Sacred Effort,) and *Catur Dharma Eka Karma* (One Sacred Creed)], the New Order regime established and formally institutionalized ABRI's dual function. ABRI's socio-political role and involvement however always remained subordinate to the ever-increasing centralized political power of President Suharto. It was controlled and used by the president to maintain his position. However, there is no evidence to suggest that ABRI did not enjoy its subordinate relationship to the President.⁹ ABRI thus lost its original identity as the people's armed forces from the beginning of Suharto's presidency. ABRI's political 'interference' was most often conducted through repressive than persuasive means. The military remained active in every

⁷ "Indonesia: *Ketahanan Nasional, Wawasan, Nusantara. Hankamarato*" by Dewi Fortuna Anwar in Ken Booth and Russell Troad Ed *Strategic Cultures in the Asia Pacific Region* (1999) p. 207

⁸ "The Future Role of ABRI in Politics" by J Kristiadi; in Geoff Forrester edited *Post-Soeharto Indonesia? Renewal or Chaos*.

⁹ *Ibid.*

political party congress, in every general election and general session of the MPR and in other political events throughout the past 3 decades.

The armed forces hierarchy was meant to be based on merit and professionalism. Suharto fiddled with the recruitment system in the beginning of the 1990's, increasingly promoting military personnel who acted as loyal 'guardians' of his power. Resultantly all the top military officers were from Suharto's inner circle, cynically known as graduates of the University of Canada (the Suharto residence in Jakarta). Such an election process inevitably fragmented ABRI's upper ranks. Suharto also distributed civilian positions to the military through the appointment of a two star general as *Asyawan* (Assistant for Functional Group Affairs) in ABRI headquarters, whose task was to identify civilian positions that could be filled by military personnel. Military personnel generally ignored military doctrine and pursued lucrative civilian posts and thus corruption flourished. The military's business involvements increased as each of the forces had its own business network, which did not follow competitive market rules to win tenders. Such a military way of doing things had a deleterious effect on the spirit and professionalism of the armed forces.¹⁰

Islam During the Suharto Regime

Islam plays a central role in modern Indonesian life. Indonesian society is not really Islamic and Islam in Indonesia represents but a thin veneer over a Hindu-Buddhist core. According to Ganganath Jha, the most striking feature of

¹⁰ Ibid.

Indonesian politics is that it has not declared any state religion.¹¹ For most of this century, Islam in Indonesia has been dominated by 2 large mass organizations: Muhammadiyah (modernist) and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, traditionalist). These were the only mass based organizations to have truly national networks and significant sections of the population under their influence. Islam thus became the only area outside the control of government. Suharto had realized that a direct attempt to control Islam could be counter productive and so he sought to indirectly influence the discourse of Islamic expression along lines conducive to the supporting government policies. Both Muhammadiyah and NU were responsive to moves that involved government development initiatives. Thus he felt no need to control them. In the 1960's Modernists and Traditionalists initially supported the New Order but in the 70's they criticized the regime's policies to suppress dissent. Both, NU and Muhammadiyah being concerned with cultural and social matters did not pose a great threat to the New Order.

In 1980's Suharto began to push all organizations in the Indonesian society to acknowledge Pancasila as their *Asas Tunggal*, or sole basis. He thus wanted all organizations to acknowledge Pancasila as the fundamental doctrine underlying their organizations. At first Muslim groups took offense and suggested that to do this would mean putting Pancasila, an artificial human creation, above their faith. Other leaders like Abdurrahman Wahid, argued that there was nothing wrong in adopting Pancasila as a basis for interacting in public life. Consequently

¹¹ "Introduction" by Satish Chandra and Balada Ghoshal in "Indonesia's A New Beginning" pp.8. n.1

NU became one of the first organizations to adopt Pancasila. In due course all other groups followed and embraced Pancasila.

Muhammadiyah and NU in spite of their ideological differences during Indonesia's freedom struggle had worked together under one political party, Masyumi. In 1952 however NU broke away from Masyumi as they were discontented and enraged at the Muhammadiyah (Modernists) assessment of NU members being 'unsophisticated' and ill-equipped to play a leading role in modern, democratic Indonesian politics. The Modernists in particular had hoped that the New Order would be more supportive of their political aspirations and allow a reemergence of Masyumi. These hopes were dashed, however, and while the Suharto regime did allow formation of a Masyumi successor by the name of Parmusi, they did not allow the old Masyumi leadership an active role in leading Parmusi. Some Modernists, including some of the former Masyumi leadership also wanted Suharto to declare Indonesia an Islamic state. The traditionalists however continued to operate much as they had always done regarding the preservation of religious and personal freedom as the highest political goal. The New Order government's strategy of containing Islam was generally successful. It did however have consequences, intended and unintended. One of the most significant side-effects was that it provided a fertile and sheltered environment for the development of a new movement of Islamic thought, New Modernism. It also provided an environment in which liberal-minded young thinkers were freely able to explore new ideas and exchange them. Most of them were involved in the peak Islamic student body HMI and

were based either in Jakarta at the State Islamic Institute (Institut Agama Islam Negeri-IAIN) or at the IAIN in Yogyakarta. The leading figure in Jakarta was Nurcholisch Madjid who also was the National Chairman of HMI. The chief figures in Yogyakarta were Djohan Effendi, Ahmad Wahib and Dawan Rahardjo. Many of the IAIN graduates went on to become active in civil society either through joining established NGO's, setting up new NGO's or through becoming active in public life as journalists, activists, academics and public intellectuals. Resultantly the Indonesian civil society was greatly strengthened in Indonesia during the 1970's and 80's through Muslim intellectuals who sought to integrate civil society concerns for social and political reformations and transformation.¹²

Islam's political influence, under Suharto's New Order was effectively curtailed by other political actors such as the military. This began to change in the mid 1990's towards the end of Suharto's presidency, for two interrelated reasons. First, the mainstream Islamic organizations began to unite with nationalist parties to form a political coalition opposing Suharto's rule. The nationalist-Islam or "red-green alliance became a central force after the onset of East Asian Financial Crisis that hit Indonesia in 1998. The second and related change occurred when, sensing his political base weakening, Suharto turned from suppressing Islamic politics, to embracing a more militant and conservative faction of Muslims who were willing to trade political support for patronage. This turn toward militant Islam led to chaos. Acts of violence erupted throughout the archipelago. Churches were defaced and burned. Mobs lynched people accused

¹² "Islam and Politics in the New Indonesia" by Greg Barton in "Islam in Asia: Changing Political Realities" Ed. By Jason F Isaacson and Colin Rubenstein. (1999), pp. 18-19 n.2

of anti-Islamic tendencies. Such trends persisted even after Suharto's fall. Churches were bombed. Ethnic conflicts in Irian Jaya, Ambon and other areas intensified.¹³

The Economic Crisis and the Fall of Suharto

At the beginning of 1998, the domestic interest rates in Indonesia were 3 times higher than those available in the international market. Indonesian businesses became highly dependent on foreign borrowings which were unhedged, short term and mostly channeled through the poorly regulated and inherently corrupt domestic financial systems. Soon, Indonesia was facing U.S. \$30 to 40 billion of short term loans which it could neither repay nor refinance. Soon the crisis, Krismon (Krisismoniter-monetary Crisis) was compounded at every turn Chinese business minority was targeted in Solo and Jakarta.¹⁴

On March 10, 1998 Suharto was sworn in for a seventh five year term as President. He chose Habibie as Vice President despite the opposition of his advisors. On May 9, Suharto flew to Cairo for the G-15 summit. The anti-Chinese riots took place on May 14, in which hundreds of Chinese shops and houses were torched in Jakarta and Solo. Over 1200 people died and Chinese community suffered loss of millions of dollars to their properties. The security forces were nowhere to be seen. Many Indonesian Chinese fled the country Resultantly the economy suffered a huge loss, not just in terms of billions of dollars, but because of the exodus of highly skilled and experienced Chinese

¹³ "Indonesia and Islam: Before and After 9/11" by Ehito Kimura.
<http://www.afsc.org/pworr/0112/011216.html>.

¹⁴ "Islam and Politics in New Indonesia" by Greg Barton in Issac,*Islam in Asia*, p.13-14, n. 2

business community. Suharto flew into Jakarta on May 15 only to see his city up in flames. He proposed a cabinet reshuffle, but with a community enraged and thousands of students peacefully occupying the parliament building, his support gradually gave way. No one was willing to join a new Suharto cabinet and former sycophants overnight became outspoken “reformers”. He had no alternative but to turn to the radical Muslim leaders whom he had been trying to cultivate. He summoned them to the *Istana* and sought their help. He even offered to make them his cabinet advisers. But, to his surprise, they rejected his offer and left him with no alternative but to resign. Late on the evening of the 20th May 1998, Suharto resigned and culminated his tenure as President of Indonesia for 32 years in a rather unceremonious way.

Post Suharto Indonesia

The end of the Suharto regime served a blow to the authoritarian forces in the country, freed Indonesians from a claustrophobic and oppressive political system and created opportunities and possibilities for a more open and accountable political system. The absence of democratic transition, a weak civil society inexperienced in social and political mobilization, ongoing economic crisis, ethnic and communal violence, religious tensions and military unrest greeted Habibie, Suharto’s immediate successor.¹⁵ While B.J. Habibie showed signs of capacity to handle the country early in his tenure, violence and political instabilities marred his regime. Habibie was basically a technocrat and his abilities to handle political, economic and social crisis was skeptically viewed in

¹⁵ “Political Transition in Post Suharto Indonesia” by Baladas Ghoshal in Baladas Ghoshal and Satish Chandra ed “Indonesia A New Beginning”. (2002) p.35-36, n.1.

various quarters in Indonesia. Besides, it was also felt that Habibie, having been a close Suharto aide, was reluctant in bringing Suharto era culprits to account.¹⁶

In October 1999 a new government was formed under the leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Soekarnoputri as President and Vice-President respectively. It was a legitimate government, the result of a fair election and parliamentary process. It was committed to economic and political reforms. But Wahid was erratic in his behaviour and style. He was in a habit of using private accounts to keep large amount of money donated for government administrative purposes. He did not distinguish between public and private spheres. He was also criticized for having appointed members to his cabinet on the basis of loyalty rather than experience and expertise. He tried to establish a new style of governance. He needed to adjust himself to the demands of a head of the government whose actions must conform to certain rules and must be transparent and accountable. He occasionally resorted to practices that circumvented the regular channels of bureaucratic norms and procedures. He proved inept in handling the country's political and economic affairs. Megawati took over the reigns of presidency from him and has been in office till date. Her Presidency has been marred by the September 11 incident, terrorism in the country, independence of East Timor and an upsurge in separatist tendencies in Aceh.

The Military in the Post Suharto Regime

¹⁶ "Indonesia in 1998-the pot boils over" Asian Survey V39, n.1 (Jan-Feb,1999) by Judith Bird.

In the five years before Suharto's fall, the dominance of ABRI in Indonesian political and social life had begun to be questioned, but to little effect. However the events of May 1998 and afterwards in Indonesia forced the military to adapt itself institutionally as well as functionally to the needs of political reform in the post Suharto era. The TNI (formerly ABRI) is perceived neither as a friend nor as a moderator within the political landscape. It is ill equipped to play its former role and is unwilling to relinquish its powers and privileges. It is experiencing a crisis of legitimacy. Besides, the revelations of ABRI's role in the disappearances of political activists, unlawful killings in Aceh and other parts of the archipelago have severely tarnished ABRI's authority and credibility in the eyes of the Indonesian populace.

The TNI is divided over its dual functions. Some want the military to end all its socio-political practices. Any military personnel occupying non-military positions should quit the job. Some want it to shun day-to-day practices, including the seats in the parliament (DPR) but to retain it in MPR (People's Consultative Assembly), which is not involved in political activities. Still another group wants TNI to dispel not only politics but also business activities. Most, however want the military personnel to improve their professionalism.¹⁷

The TNI has also been seeking greater legal authority to handle ethnic unrest, separatist tendencies, and communalist upsurges. The military is at crossroads and is facing a dilemma to either concentrate in maintaining the national integrity (through active role in politics and governance) or to play its

¹⁷ "Political Transition in Post Suharto Indonesia" by Baladas Ghoshal and Satish Chandra in.....(2002) p. 50-56, n.1.

sole role of external defense. Another interrelated aspect of Indonesian society is the police whom the general masses believe incompetent to even catch petty thugs. Thus some quarters have even backed the proposal for military to play the role of police in maintaining internal security. Such a proposal would give the military more autonomy in security issues while the political leadership deals with its own issues. The proposal was backed by Susito Bambang Yudhoyono, a retired general and coordinating minister for political, social and security affairs under Wahid and now Megawati.¹⁸

Patrick Walters, in his book *Post-Suharto Indonesia*, also envisages:

- An ABRI that succeeds in defining its traditional role and playing a crucial role in a more democratic political system, progressively withdrawing from formal politics.
- The possibility of military takeover in case of major differences with the ruling elite.
- A weakened ABRI with rejection of *dwifungsi*, a demoralized armed force/simply withdrawing to its barracks.
- A most unlikely scenario-an ABRI, which becomes a professional defense force, just like the forces in Western countries with no formal involvement in politics.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ "The Indonesian Armed Forces in the Post-Soeharto Era" by Patrick Walters in *Post Suharto Indonesia? Renewal or Chaos*, Ed by Geoff Forester. (1999) p. 62 n.8.

Islam in the Post Suharto Era

After Suharto's fall Muslims across the country were allowed to form parties representing their goals and interests. Members of both NU and Muhammadiyah formed political parties to participate in the 1999 elections. By late 1998, eighty political parties had been established of which about 20 were Islamic i.e. owed allegiance to the Islamic groups. These parties were either associated with NU, that is traditional Islam, or were related to moderate Islam.

The Islamic parties were as under:

- Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB) / National Awakening Party.
- Partai Nahdlatul Ummat
- Partai SUNI
- Partai Kebangkitan Ummat
- Partai Aliansi Kebangkitan Muslim Sunny.

Non NU Islamic Parties:

- Partai Bulan Bintang.
- Partai Keadilan
- Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP)/ Uinter Development Party.
- Partai Masyumi Baru
- Partai Masyumi
- Partai Ka'bah
- Partai Ummat Islam (PUI)/ Muslim Believers Party.
- Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia
- Partai Islam Persatuan Indonesia

- Partai Thariqat Islam Indonesia
- Partai Islam Indonesia
- Partai Ummat Muslimin Indonesia
- Partai Kesatuan Ummat Islam Indonesia
- Partai Gerakan Insan Muttaquien.

Thus, the establishment of a range of Islamic parties provided a forum for all Muslims to participate in politics. Previous experiences have shown that excluding Muslims from politics tends to foster hostility among Muslims towards the state. The coming up of numerous Islamic parties also dilutes the possibility of emergence of a Islamic party which could impose its political agendas, for example, that of establishing a Islamic state. Multiplicity of Islamic parties has contributed to the rise of civil Islam and prevented Islamic fundamentalism from taking its course. The parties guarantee a broader acceptance of Islamic aspirations. The focus has been on substantive rather than legal or formal aspects of Islam.²⁰

Political parties banned during the Old and New Orders have also re-emerged in one form or another. According to Amien Rais, for some Muslims the proliferation of political parties is a sign of disunity among Indonesian Muslims. Some Muslims are concerned that this multipolar situation will favor the emergence of old modes of *politik aliran* (sectarian politics). For others this

²⁰ "Islam, Political Parties: Threats or Prospects?" by Jamhari in Geoff Foffester ed. *Post Suharto..... Chaos*, p. 184-186, n.8

development will facilitate participation and compromise in political life through electoral politics.²¹

The result was the rise to power for the first time of a Muslim *Kiyai* (religious teacher), Abdurrahman Wahid. Pronouncements over the unity of the *ummat* (Muslim believers) by the top leader of the two key organizations, NU and Muhammadiyah, were made. But soon the Muhammadiyah leadership began to doubt the ability of a *Kiyai* to lead the *ummat* of the nations. Nevertheless many of the western educated Islamic leaders of the new generation have found importance in successive governments. The rise of Islamic consciousness among the Muslim intellectuals has also been remarkable. The increasing stress on an Islamic identity in light of the era of globalization has also contributed to the rise of civil Islam. Islam's societal role is thus gaining strength. Social and religious demands are being asserted. For example, the demand for closure of THM's or *Tempat hiburan Malam* – literally nightclubs during the month of Ramadan. Similar demands against things perceived to be anti-Islamic are on the rise. There has also been a major shift in the focus of the Islamic movements as its leadership is now more pragmatic and willing to adjust to changed situations. This can particularly be seen in the *Santri* middle class who can now be seen in large numbers in many BUMN or state owned enterprises, LSM or NGO's etc. They have started asserting themselves as pressure groups as they wish to see the *Ummat* socially and economically strong.²²

²¹ "Islam and Politics in Contemporary Indonesia" by Amien Rais. In Geoff Forrester ed *Post-Suharto*..... p.200, n.8.

²² "Islam and Political Movements in Indonesia"- Dilip Chandra in Baladas Ghoshal and Satish Chandra ed.....(2002), p. 136, n.1

Indonesia had experienced indigenous radical groups since independence that wanted to establish an Islamic state, the most famous being Darul Islam (1950-1962). These radical groups failed because they were crushed by the army and also because they failed to gain support from the mainstream Muslims. According to Azyumardi Azra this persistent but minor thread has emerged again because of the power vacuum after Suharto's fall and after the ouster of Gus Dur. Many, according to him are new groups that were unknown before, but observers assert that they have been close to certain army generals and have been sponsored, or at least helped by certain circles of the Indonesian army. Many of these groups are led by people of Arab, particularly Yemeni origin. For e.g. Habib Rizq Shihab, leader of FPI (Islamic Defence Group); Jafar Umar Thalib, leader of Laskar Jihad; Abu Bakar Baasyir of the MMI (Indonesia Council of Jihad Fighters) and Habib husen al-habsyi, leader of the JAMI (Jamaah-al-Ikhwana-Muslimin Indonesia). These groups share a literal interpretation of Islam and claim that Muslims should practice only 'pure' Islam as practiced by Prophet Muhammad and his companions or *Salaf*. They are included in the Salafi activist movements that attack discotheques and other places of violence. They also take a militant view of *jihad* as 'holy war' against perceived enemies of Islam, rather than the mainstream view of *jihad* as meaning "exerting oneself to the utmost" in Muslim activities, with war as a last resort.²³

According to Robert Hefner, the radical groups, although operating with the collusion of certain officials, do not represent the views of the majority, which

²³ "Islam in Modern Indonesia"- A Conference Cosponsored by the United States – Indonesia Society and The Asia Foundation, February 7, 2002.
<http://www.usindo.org/Briefs/Islam%20in%20Indonesia.html>

is uneasy with violence and yearns for politics that is moderate and inclusive. The June 1999 elections have displayed that most voters favor secular or moderate Islamic political parties. According to him, it is not Islam that is destabilizing Indonesia but “a breakdown of governance exacerbated by elite factionalism and the willingness of.. Elite’s to take advantage of ethno religious tensions for their own purposes”. There is a collapse at the centre and an inability or unwillingness to prevent the excesses of individual players. Further, elites from the old Suharto regime have remained in power. Rather than simply uniting to oppose reform, they have turned to various national and local level groupings to create expedient alliances to remain in power.²⁴

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the US cities saw Indonesia join the American led global war against terrorism. Al Qaeda, the Osama Bin Laden led terrorist organization, believed to be behind the attacks was alleged to have links with Jemaah Islamiah, another radical Islamic group, which has operational bases in Indonesia and Malaysia. The Megawati government was quick to denounce the terrorist attacks and deny the presence of substantial terrorist networks in the archipelago. Nevertheless US international policy agenda considers Indonesia a haven and breeding ground for terrorist groups. Radical Indonesian Muslim leaders have been accused of having links with Al-Qaeda. Thus successive developments in Indonesia (the October 2002 bombings in Bali) have made Indonesia to consider formulating an anti-terrorism law. According to Bantarto Bando TNI can play a role in curbing terrorist tendencies in the state if it is properly trained to do the job? But before that it

²⁴ Ibid.

needs to brush up its previous acts and win the confidence and support of both the general masses and the international community. Basically the US further believes that Indonesia needs to have a reliable intelligence network to detect the linkages and the capability to deal with terrorist elements.²⁵

The September 11 terrorist attacks proved to be the first serious challenge to President Megawati since she became president in July 2001. As Indonesia was caught between international necessity and domestic political reality, Megawati was forced to find a balance between US demands for full fledged support on its war against terrorism and radical Islamic groups outcry demanding the government to take a primarily anti US stance. Several Islamic groups took to the streets in Jakarta, and expressed their anger at the US accusation of Osama Bin Laden as the mastermind of the September 11 attacks; an act they saw as the US attempt to make Islam the scapegoat. Even Vice President Hamzah Haz of the Muslim oriented United Development Party, saw it as a US attempt to discredit the Islamic world. He not only resented US accusations but also went to the extent of saying that the attacks “will hopefully cleanse the USA of its sins”. Meanwhile Megawati pledged that “Indonesia is ready to cooperate with the US and other civilized countries on counter- terrorism”. In New York, she called the attacks as “the worst atrocity... in the history of civilization”. US reciprocated by lifting an embargo on sales of non-lethal military items and the establishment of a bilateral dialogue. It even pledged to provide an aid of US \$ 657.7 million to Indonesia. Meanwhile the situation in the country exacerbated. Several hard line

²⁵ “War against Terror: Lessons for Indonesia” by Bandarto Bardoro. The Indonesia Quarterly, Vol.XXX/2002, no. 3, p. 234-236.

Islamic groups, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and the Laskar Jihad began to warn Americans to flee Indonesia as they threatened to attack American facilities in the country. The Indonesia's Council of Ulama (MUI) on 25 September 2001 issued a declaration calling "on Muslims in the world for *jihad fii sabillah* (fight in the path of Allah) should the aggression by the US and its allies against Afghanistan and the Islamic world occur". The declaration of jihad was seen as one of the harshest statements, in support of Afghanistan's Taliban regime, from any state-sponsored religious body in the Muslim world. When US attacked Afghanistan to topple the Taliban the Indonesian government expressed deep concern. It called on UN (United Nation) to undertake collective response to restore the situation. Such a government stance further infuriated the radical groups. The response, which stopped short of criticizing US military campaign, was seen as a statement of support to the US. In Makassar, South Sulawesi, Japanese flag at its consulate was hauled down by a group of radical students. Islamic organizations launched campaigns to boycott American goods. MUI renewed its call for Jihad. Megawati finally had to sharply criticize the US military campaign at Istiqbal Grand Mosque in Jakarta on October 14, 2001. Australia reciprocated by criticizing her speech. However, the general reactions from Islamic community were those of measured condemnation. Muslim leaders, besides severely criticizing the attacks also reminded the US to acknowledge that the roots of the problem were to be found within the American policy towards the Islamic world in general and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular. Thus the terrorist attacks were often qualified with arguments that successive

American governments themselves were also partly responsible for what happened. They however resented American's accusations that "Islamic" terrorists were behind the attacks and pointed the US support to Israel as the root cause of terrorism. The image of Islam in Indonesia as a moderate force deteriorated further when the call for *jihad* was renewed and some Islamic organization began to recruit volunteers to be sent to Afghanistan to fight along the Taliban. The police and TNI just gaped at the situation. When the voice of mainstream groups within the Islamic community was not clearly heard and anti American protests went on for weeks without challenge from the authorities, worry grew both in Indonesia and abroad that Indonesia's Islam had been dominated by the radicals, and it's moderate face has been radicalized. Robert Hefner notes that "rather than reflecting broad public sentiments, however, extremist statements like those calling for *Jihad* against the US have more to do with a bitter struggle now unfolding between moderates and hardliners for the hearts and minds of the Muslim community".²⁶

Majority Muslims in Indonesia have a vision of society with more economic and political justice and more equal gender relations, but one does not encounter them in the conspicuous radical groups. Both among traditionalists and reformists young people are searching for a relevant Islamic liberalism, different from Western models and rooted in an authentic Islamic discourse. Young traditionalists are opening dialogues with (the heirs of) Marxist left. Intellectually, this is the most interesting group that has discovered and embraced the neo-Ibn

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²⁶ "Indonesia and the September 11 Attacks: Domestic Reactions and Implications" Rizal Sukma. *The Indonesian Quarterly*, VXXX/2002, No. 3, p. 266, n. 26

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Rushdian thinkers of the Muslim West, Hasan Hanafi, Muhammad Abed al-Jabri etc. Liberal Muslims, in response to radical groups prominence, have stepped up their activities and are making a serious effort to strengthen their presence at all levels in the public sphere. The nature of the Muslim political movements appears to be a response to the changing political environment (and the availability of foreign funding) rather than to some inherent internal dynamic. Saudi money has undeniably played a role in shaping debates in Indonesian Islam and in promoting certain interpretations and attitudes. There has been a prominence of Indonesian Arabs in the leadership of the more militant groups. Arabs have played a prominent part in transmission of neo-fundamentalism and *jihadist* discourse from the Middle East to Indonesia.²⁷

It has been observed by several scholars that governments of Muslim countries have often, in order to preempt radical Islamic opposition movements, taken policy measures that have served to Islamize economy, legislation and culture. Suharto courted the Islamists towards the end of his tenure in spite of their having no strong Islamic opposition to his regime. Habibie depended even more on their support and it was under him that radical Muslims were given arms and employed as paramilitary auxiliaries of the police and army. Wahid had to face these violent radical groups and attempted to bridle them but failed because he had weak control over the army. In fact these armed groups were sponsored and given free rein by Wahid's military and civilian opponents. Megawati has even less legitimacy in the eyes of the radicals, not only because she is a woman

²⁷ "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia" Martin Van Bruinessen. http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/genealogies_islamic_radicalism

but also because her party is perceived to be dominated by anti-Muslim elements. This has given the conservative Muslims in her coalition extra leverage, that may result in some Islamizing measures. It has also made her dependent on, if not hostage to, the military.²⁸

²⁸ Ibid.

Chapter II

MAINSTREAM ISLAM IN INDONESIA

Islam entered Southeast Asia towards the end of the 13th century when Muslim traders from India came in search of the archipelago's prized spices and natural resources. As trade between the two regions increased, so too did the gradual conversion of local people to Islam. During colonization Islam spread, because it offered a common language to express political discontent.²⁹ Islam became a social form in which, to mobilize against the enemy, religion became a symbol of resistance. Islam was given its first official recognition under the Japanese, who allowed the appointment of a Muslim to a newly created office of religious affairs, and permitted the establishment of two Muslim political parties, *Masjumi* and *Hizbullah*.³⁰

Traditionally Indonesian society was regarded as perpetually in a state of dynamic tension between devout followers of Islam, termed *Santri*, and more syncretic elements concentrated in the ruling class, termed *abangan*. Among the *santri*, a distinction can also be drawn between modernist and traditional approaches to Islam. Islamic modernism arose from the Muslim merchant community and was an important component of early nationalist movement. They easily influenced a society trying to break the shackles of colonialism. More conservative trends in Islam have always been fostered in the country's

²⁹ "Indonesia and Islam: Before and After 9/11" by Ehito Kimura, <http://www.afsc.org/pworR/0112/011216.html>.

³⁰ "Towards An Islamic Identity" pp 120-121 in *Indonesian Politics under Suharto-Order, Development and Pressure for Change*, by Michael R. J. Vatikiotis.

traditional Islamic school-*Pesantren* and *Madrassas*. The teaching in these schools draws predominantly on Sunni thought. Until their supervision by the state, these institutions provided the only source of education in many areas. Rigid adherence to Islamic *Shariah* is not found, and certainly not encouraged by the government. Religious courts do exist but only for determining marital and inheritance disputes. Strict observance of Islamic ritual is in some communities the exception rather than the norm. In most of Indonesia, traditional, culturally based law, or *adat* takes precedence over strict Islamic customs.³¹

During the latter part of 19th century and early 20th century a nationalistic movement developed in Indonesia. The Muslims played an important role and the first nationalistic mass movement, the Sarekat Islam (SI) was founded in 1911 and it had a Muslim character. SI grew quickly and soon formed the core of the anti colonial resistance movements. The rapid growth however led to divisions within the movement and in 1921 it was split into two parts, one pan-Islamic, the other socialistic. After the division, the SI rapidly declined and two political parties emerged, one a nationalist party under the leadership of later on President Sukarno and the other, a communist party.

During the Japanese occupations, Indonesia's Muslims became politicized. *Ulama* were given military training. All Muslim organizations were merged in the Japanese created organization Masyumi (Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia), which in the war for independence was to be transformed into a leading political party. The attempts of the Dutch to return and reestablish their

³¹ Ibid.

rule met with armed resistance. *Ulama* declared *jihad*, and Muslim militias, often led by *ulamas*, played an important part in the struggle for independence.

For almost a century Islam in Indonesia has been dominated by two large mass organizations: Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. These two organizations are the largest Islamic organizations in the world. Both the organizations, in their track records, in the stances of their leading figures, and their approach to social issues have shown themselves to be essentially moderate. However, the real defenders of Islam in Indonesia are the Islamic masses that mainly belong to these organizations and visualize Indonesia as safer within its traditional plurality. Both of them have extensive national networks and a strong sense of community.

Over the past two decades, an Islam based on tolerance and inclusiveness has taken roots as mainstream Islam in Indonesia. Key factor in this development has been the mass Muslim organizations and their emergence as political as well social forces especially after the fall of Suharto. Indonesians insist that their version of Islam is much more peaceful and liberal than of the Middle East.

On 17th August 1945, the Republic of Indonesia was born. President Sukarno made *Pancasila* the ideological and philosophical basis and its ideals were incorporated into the 1945 constitution commonly known as UUD'45. The constitution embodies the goals and ideals of the nation. Ideals of Pancasila were incorporated in Indonesia's foreign policy and domestic affairs. The five principles of Pancasila are:

- Belief in one and only God.
- A just and civil society.
- Unity of Indonesia.
- Democracy guided by the inner wisdom of deliberations of the representatives.
- Social Justice

The founding fathers were inspired by the urge for unity, common goals, and democracy built upon the age-old Indonesian concept of *Gotong Royong* (mutual assistance), of deliberations of representatives (*Muswarah*), and consensus (*Mufakat*). Pancasila was included in the constitution.³²

A conflict soon developed between Sukarno's ideology, the Pancasila, and the secular nationalist on one hand; and the Islamic state protagonists on the other. The latter believed that Islam should be the state ideology, and that Muslims should be obliged to follow the Islamic Law (*Sharia*). This was the genesis of the debate over *Pancasila* versus Islam, which still lingers on and occasionally resurfaces in Indonesian politics and society. The controversy mainly centers on the Djakarta Charter (*Piagam Jakarta*) which contained the words "with the obligation of the Muslims to follow *Shari'a* (Islamic Law). The largest Muslim political organization of the period, the Masyumi, wanted the Charter to be treated as the Preamble of the UUD'45. The nationalist secular and Christian parties vociferously rejected *Masyumi's* demand for an Islamic state,

³² "Indonesia's Political System and Complexities" by G.N.Jha in *Indonesia A New Beginning* Ed by Satish Chandra and Baladas Ghoshal (2002) p.88.

claiming that all other religious and ethnic groups had played an equally important role in the struggle for independence and that a secular basis of state would satisfy the demands of all sections of the society. Eventually Sukarno adopted UUD'45 as the constitution for the Republic. Pancasila remained as the guiding doctrine of all organizations (religious, political) until the fall of Suharto in 1998. Thus Pancasila sought to remove ideology based politics from Indonesian society. Sukarno had even banned Masyumi in 1960 after it was believed to have instigated rebellion in the outer islands, especially Sumatra and Sulawesi, in 1958.³³

Pancasila Democracy is a system of life for the state and society on the basis of people's sovereignty. It is the foundation of the Indonesian Republic. A decisive shift in the approach of the Islamic Parties and organizations towards a greater accommodative and inclusive approach occurred in the late 1970's. The movement responsible for this was the Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam (Islamic Renewal Movement), whose main proponent was Nurcholish Madjid, fondly called Chak Nur. He is regarded as the pioneer Muslim figure to conceptualize the accommodation of Islam to the state policy on Islam. He called for renovation and integration of *Ummat* (Islamic Community) while saying "Islam Yes, Islamic State No". He cited the *Medinah* experiment of the prophet as an example of how Islam enjoins Muslims to live in harmony in a non-Islamic pluralist society. His ideals are even today shared by Muslim intellectuals who wish to see Muslim interests promoted in various ways other than through political struggle and who

³³ "Islam and Political Movements in Indonesia" by Dilip Chandra in *Indonesia A New Beginning* Ed by Satish Chandra and Baladas Ghoshal, p.124-125.

call upon Muslims to actively participate in every department of public life and benefit from the economic prosperity of the nation.³⁴

Nahdlatul Ulama and Islamic Traditionalism

The organization was formed in response the Modernist movement (*Muhammadiyah*). Prior to it the response of the *Ulama* to *Muhammadiyah* had been reasonably positive. They were antagonized by two aspects of the modernists, namely their rejection of traditional religious practices such as praying at the tomb sites of saints and the negative attitude of Modernists to the classical Islamic scholarship. The *Ulamas* believed that the spread of modernists would threaten the traditional *pesantren*, or Islamic boarding system, was the backbone of classical religious instruction. They in fact feared the extinction of the *pesantren* system. Consequently, in January 1926, a group of leading *Ulama* in Surabaya, East Java got together to form an organization to facilitate networking and cooperation among *Ulama*'s and their *pesantren*. They called this organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), an Arabic name meaning the awakening of the *Ulama*. From the beginning it enjoyed rapid growth and substantial consolidation but never achieved the organizational efficiency and sophistication of the more urban-based *Muhammadiyah*. Nevertheless, it's relations with the modernists remained congenial although frequently marked by underlying tensions. They remained concerned not only about the antipathy of Modernists towards classical scholarship, but also their rejection of many traditional Javanese Islamic practices as being Islamic. Nevertheless it took an

³⁴ Ibid. p. 128.

active part in the modernization of the Indonesian Muslim community, by involvement in the development of education, social welfare, and economic activities. It not only cooperated with Muhammadiyah during the Japanese occupation and subsequent struggle for independence but also worked with it under one political party, Masyumi.³⁵

The good relations however did not last very long and in 1952 NU broke away from Masyumi. The main reason for the split appeared to be frustration within NU with the Modernist domination of Masyumi and its (Muhammadiyah's) assessment of NU members as being unsophisticated and ill-equipped to play a leading role in modern, democratic politics. Failure of the NU faction to have its candidate selected for the post of Minister of Religious Affairs triggered the split. Consequently, in the 1955 elections, both Masyumi and NU received twenty-percent votes each. A united Masyumi may have swept the polls.

NU, Islam and the Pancasila Debate

After the decline of Masyumi, Nahdatul Ulama was looked upon to channelise the political aspirations of the Islamic community. The political aspirations of the party of religious scholars or *Kiyai* were represented by the *Tanfidziyah* (Executive Body), which constituted the link between the organization and the government. NU was successful in forcing the government to change certain clauses of the Marriage Bill of 1973 and preventing the elevation of the status of various *Aliran Kepercayaan* (Streams of Beliefs) to the status of religions. The government retaliated by successfully manipulating the

³⁵ 'Islam and Politics in New Indonesia' Greg Barton in Jason, F. Issacson and Colin Rubenstein, ed., *Islam in Asia* p.6.

PPP (the grouping of political parties with religious basis) leadership, and creating dissensions among its constituents in 1982. In 1983, at a meeting of top *Ulamas* of the NU's Legislative Body (Syuriah), the NU decided upon the acceptance of *Assas Tunggal Pancasila* and upon withdrawing from active politics. Such a policy made the ideological struggle of Islam irrelevant and hence a policy of confrontation with the government lost its rationale. The decision was formalized at the NU national conference in 1984 at Situbondo in East Java.³⁶

In 1984 the leadership of the *Tafdiziyah* was passed on to Abdurrahman Wahid popularly known as Gus Dur and who belonged to a new generation of intellectuals. He facilitated greater understanding with the Muhammadiyah, which too made adjustments to accept the *Asas Tunggal* in 1985. NU however maintained that its Islamic values hadn't changed due to incorporation of the Pancasila.³⁷

Gus Dur has for long been in favor of broad-based organizations and cooperation with other secular and democratic forces, rather than Muslim Exclusive organizations like ICMI. Gus Dur in 1999 became the President of Indonesia, through free and fair elections. He had to give up his party leadership, but it still it was a big victory for NU. Civil society groups and media who had been muzzled under Suharto flourished. He tried to remove discrimination of minorities and aspects of ethnic identity. He put substance into effective governance through his belief in social empowerment and the vital role of religious and cultural leaders in peacefully resolving tensions and conflicts at the

³⁶ "Islam and Political Movements In Indonesia" by Dilip Chandra in Satish Chandra and Baladas Ghoshal Ed. *Indonesia A New Beginning* (2002) p.128, n. 5.

³⁷ Ibid.

grassroots level. He also ordered a thorough investigation into cases of military excesses in certain Indonesian provinces during the New Order regime.³⁸

On the relationship between religion and ideology, that is, Islam and the state ideology, *Pancasila*, NU considers that ideology and religion are not interchangeable. Ideology derives its logic from human thoughts and history, while religion is believed to have derived its teachings from revelation. *Pancasila* is not contradictory to Islam, the first principle of which is *tauhid* (strict monotheism) according to Islamic belief. According to NU, *Pancasila* cannot be developed and implemented without absorbing the aspirations of the society, including the Muslim community, which it partly represents. NU demands a nationwide acceptance of *Pancasila* as an open ideology, where citizens can contribute their ideas and preferences to enrich the understanding and the implementation of *Pancasila*. The NU's constitution of 1984 clearly states that the participation of the NU in a 'national struggle' to build a just and prosperous national society is a necessary step.³⁹

NU's Interpretation of Islam

NU is a civic organization based on Islamic teachings, and a part of Indonesia's civil society. In achieving its objectives, which is "the implementation of Islamic teachings in Indonesian society" in harmony with the prevailing social and cultural conditions (called *prebumisasi*, or nativization of Islam), the NU promotes the accomplishment of common good for the whole society. NU in fact

³⁸ "Political Transition In Post Suharto Indonesia" by Baladas Ghoshal in Satish Chandra and Baladas Ghoshal ed. *Indonesia A New Beginning* p. 39-42.

³⁹ "Nahdlatul Ulama and Civil Society in Indonesia" by Mohammad Fajrul Falaakh in *Islam and Civil Society in South East Asia* Ed by Nakamura Mitsuo, Sharon Siddique, Omar Farouk Bajunid, Iseas 2001, p- 35,36.

refers to one of the substantial ideas of Shariah as the basis for social thought to promote common good- known as the idea of *rahmtan bil 'alamin'*(mercy on the universe). It is the minimum requirement for respecting and protecting human rights. NU adheres to the Shariah that formulates five basic Principles of common good (or public interest):

- Protection of religious consciousness and observances (*hifzh al-din*);
- Protection of life (*hifz al-nafs*);
- Protection of thought and freedom of opinion (*hifzh al-'aql*);
- Protection of property (*hifz al-amwal*); and
- Right to enter into marriage and the protection of reproductive rights (*hifzh al-nasl*)

These principles are taken from the literature on Islamic jurisprudence and are known as *kulliyat al-khams* (five basic necessities). These principles are taught within NU's intellectual tradition, transmitted through *pond on pesantren* (religious boarding schools). This concept was invoked at the deliberations of the religious committee during NU's 1994 Muktamar (National assembly), and understood as *mashlahah 'ammah* (public interests). Similarly at the 1997 national conference of *Ulama (Musyawarah Nasional 'Alim-Ulama)*, the concept was discussed and elaborated as embodying human rights principles in Islam (*huquq al-insaniyah fi al-Islam*).⁴⁰ NU also envisions the "three brotherhood" concept of *Ukhuwwah Islamiyah*, *Ukhuwwah Wathaniyah*, and *Ukhuwwah basyariyah*, that is, brotherhood among Muslims, brotherhood among citizens

⁴⁰ Ibid. p.36.

and brotherhood among fellow human beings, and of cooperative efforts (*harakah ta'awun*). NU also advocates tolerance of all ethnic groups and religious minorities in the country. It believes that ethnic and religious violence endangers the national integration and unity of heterogeneous Indonesian society.⁴¹

NU and Economic Development

NU was concerned with the economic conditions of the vulnerable Indonesian people during the economic crisis of 1997. NU's constituents consist of small and largely rural based entrepreneurs. NU is committed to help these constituents under the broad concept of *harakah ta 'awun* (joint efforts in the economy).

The constitutions of 1994 and 1999 enjoined distributive economies through the establishment of cooperatives. It regards integrating the small and medium enterprises as crucial to the continuation of Indonesia's economic growth and equitable distribution of economic wealth and opportunities. It remains critical of crony businesses (ersatz capitalism), cartel like businesses, and state backed monopolies. It wishes to improve the personal income of the majority of the population, thereby giving them a fair chance in the market-oriented economy.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 36,37.

NU and Civil Society

As mentioned before, NU is a civic organization based on Islamic teachings and a part of Indonesia's civil society. Other elements of civil society in Indonesia are various forms of local governance such as, *banjar* in Bali, *Kerapatan nagari* in Minangkabaw, *trah* (dynasties) in Java, *yayasan* (foundations), NGO's (*Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat* or LSM), churches, and *majelis ta'lim* (Muslim religious circles). These elements of civil society act as a link between the state and society. The New Order under Suharto virtually controlled all aspects of life. State dynamics were marked by bureaucratic authoritarianism and state corporatism. There were constraints on public participation in political decision-making. The common masses were restricted in gathering information about democratic practices and engaging constructively in political dialogue and civic action. NU faced difficult situations during the regime, primarily because of its being a predominantly rural-based organization. Nevertheless, under the limited openness of the regime, the NU developed and disseminated alternative public discourses. NU reinterpreted and revitalized Islam during the period. It adopted foreign ideas such as nationalism, modern education, family planning and reproductive rights, political party etc. it derived a strategy from its rich maxims (*qwa'id al-fiqhiyah*), namely *al-muhafazhah 'ala 'l-sshalih wa 'l-akhzhu bi'l-jadidi 'l ashlah* (meaning "preserving previous good traditions and selecting better new ideas). NU is also, in an ongoing process, striving to transform its classical religious discourse by expounding and emphasizing its democratic elements. Such elements are imbedded in *akhlaq al-karimah* (civil manners) in politics or civic virtues. These values are implemented

in conjunction with the promotion of civic competence at the local levels of governance throughout the country and include respect for civil and political rights, protection of vulnerable groups within society and efforts to achieve common good.⁴²

Muhammadiyah and Islamic Modernism

Muhammadiyah was formed in 1912 under the influence of Islamic modernist ideas brought to Indonesia by pilgrims and scholars returning from the Middle East. Early Modernists in Indonesia were immensely inspired by the ideas of the Egyptian reformist, Muhammad Abduh and his disciple Rashid Rida. Early on the movement had four objectives:

- Encouragement of piety and seriousness to carry out the religious obligations.
- Purification of Islamic belief (that is, rejection of animist or Hindu- Buddhist elements of Javanese culture)
- Social service to the community.
- Development of an expression of Islam capable of responding to the challenges of modernity and scientific advances.

Regarding Islamic thought they have argued in favor of *ijtihad* or rational, individual, interpretation of Scriptures and traditions and against *taqlid* or the uncritical acceptance of established interpretation as delineated by the four orthodox *Mazhab* or schools of Islamic jurisprudence. They have also

⁴² Ibid. p. 39.

established modern networks of schools, philanthropic institutions, orphanages and hospitals. Its membership mainly comprises of people from lower middle classes of small and medium sized towns and cities, from Muslim traders, white-collar professionals, clerks and civil servants.⁴³

Since its birth Muhammadiyah has been working both as an NGO (non-governmental organization) and a modern Islamic organization. Its main target has been community development. Throughout; that is the Old Order (1945-1965), the New Order (1966-98) and the order of Reformation (1998-); Muhammadiyah has firmly upheld and followed its basic objectives and concerns. Muhammadiyah also was instrumental in the formation and running of Masyumi as leadership of the latter mainly comprised of leaders from Muhammadiyah circle, an issue which NU found contentious and eventually led to its breakup from Masyumi.

According to Martin Van Bruinessen⁴⁴ during the 1950's and 1960's, Muhammadiyah was so heavily involved in active politics that it paid little attention to Islamic thought. It was the ban of Masyumi and general depoliticization imposed on Indonesian Islam under Suharto that caused a turn to Islamic thought. The ideas of the Muslim brotherhood then became a major focus of orientation for people of Muhammadiyah. Initially the Islamic socialism of Syrian brother, Mustafa al-Siba'i, had a strong appeal, reflecting

⁴³ "Islam and Politics in New Indonesia" by Greg Barton in *Islam in Asia: Changing Political Realities* Ed. By Jason F Issacson and Colin Rubenstein (1999). P.6, n.7.

⁴⁴ "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in post-Suharto Indonesia" by Martin Van Bruinessen http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/genealogies_islamic_radicalism.htm.

Muhammadiyah's social-democratic inclinations. Later al-Banna became the leading authority, along with the Pakistani Abu'l-A 'la Mawdudi. It was basically the non-revolutionary, Saudi-sponsored brand of Brotherhood that became most influential in former Masyumi and Muhammadiyah materials. The works of Fazlur Rahman and other liberal Muslim writers, Fritjof Schuon and neo-traditionalist Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Sayyid Naguib al-Attas; also greatly influenced the modernists. Ideas of Ali Shari'ati and Murtaza Mutahhari (famous Iranian thinkers) pertaining to the Iranian revolution, also fascinated many young Indonesians. Their ideas created a widespread interest in Shi'ism, especially among politically disaffected students.

Muhammadiyah and Community Development

Muhammadiyah remains committed to empowering society and promoting community development. It remains reluctant and unwilling of its central board to change its social and cultural orientation to a political one. Off-late, at its annual meeting (*Tanwir*) held in Semarang in July 1998, the participants from all 27 Indonesian provinces, reaffirmed their commitment to not permit reorienting the movement but nevertheless agreed to allow members of the movement to personally join and even establish a new political party on the condition that it has no formal connection whatsoever with the Muhammadiyah, either institutionally or organizationally. Consequently its general chairman Amien Rais resigned temporarily and set up the Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN). It continues to spread the programme of social and religious education within Muslim communities (*dakwah jemaah*), advocating a peaceful family life (Keluarnya

sakinah), and peaceful and prosperous village life (*qaryah thayyibah*).⁴⁵ All its activities are, in fact, initiated, planned, formulated, implemented and evaluated at the community level. The strength of Muhammadiyah's community based movement lies in its ethos found in the mechanism of modern organization. It believes that organization is a vital tool in all activities of life. It lays great emphasis on operationalizing and implementing plans and networks in society so that its members and community can evaluate them in general. It rather efficiently carries out socialization of ideas and programmes through its broad network spread even at grassroots levels. It is different from other NGO's in its transformative management and organizational experience. Although it pursues its cultural and social activities autonomously, it works in close coordination with the state. It however has been critical of government policies seeking to transgress its authority on policies inimical to its interests.⁴⁶

Muhammadiyah, Islam and Civil Society

Islam for Muhammadiyah is a source of motivation and inspiration. Islamic values like justice, equality, diligence, honesty, entrepreneurship etc. constitute Muhammadiyah's inner spirit and living ethos. Since its beginning, It has never considered Islam as political. Such a standpoint paves the way for Muhammadiyah to build a community that is autonomous, independent from the hegemony of state, democratic, critical, inclusive and transparent, regardless of

⁴⁵ "Muhammadiyah's Experience in Promoting Civil Society on the Eve of the 21st Century", by M. Amin Abdullah in *Islam and Civil Society in South East Asia* Ed by Nakakura Mitsuo, Sharon Siddique, Omar Farouk Bajunid, ISEAS 2001, p. 45.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

the nature of ruling government. In this way it has immensely contributed in establishing a civil society.⁴⁷

Institute Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) and It's Impact on Development of Islam in Indonesia

Over the past two decades as an Islam based on tolerance and inclusiveness has taken root as mainstream Islam in Indonesia, the fourteen National Islamic Institutes (IAIN) and thirty-three *Sedolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri* (STAIN-Islamic Colleges) have played a prominent role in this transformation. IAIN's approach to Islam emphasizes critical thought and objective enquiry; interaction with tolerance and understanding of and respect for other religions; a participatory and democratic approach to government and development; and respect for the humanistic, tolerant, egalitarian and open traditions of classical Islam. Based on this approach it has had a positive influence on the modernization of Islamic education at grassroots and national level. It advocates an increased role for women in decision making in family, community, and religious forums, It is also in favour of their participation in public service and calls for a greater access to educational opportunities for women. It desires a strong network of Muslim owned small and medium enterprises at the community level, including areas fringing major urban areas. It has also been working towards establishing greater tolerance among religions, and stronger non-governmental community for social control and dispute resolution mechanisms to resolve communal disputes and preempt communal strife.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ibid. p.46, 47.

⁴⁸ McGill "IAIN Indonesia Social Equity Project"
http://www.mcgill.ca/indonesia_project/impact/?view=printable

Moving towards the IAIN's own goal of transforming itself into centres of Islamic modernization, IAIN collaborated with Institute of Islamic studies and McGill University, a world renowned centre of classical Islam and comparative Islamic studies, and established the ten year IAIN-McGill University Islamic High Education Project Phase I and II at IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah (Jakarta) and IAIN Sunan Kalijaga (Yogyakarta). Through training and support for new programs, IHEP has strengthened the institutional capacity of the two IAIN to carry out their mission.⁴⁹

According to Greg Barton, the IAIN network in Jakarta and Yogyakarta was transformed also because of efficient leadership, especially under Mukti Ali as minister of Religious Affairs during the Suharto regime. Emphasis, during the period, was laid on synthesizing classical Islamic learning with modern Western critical thought. Many of the IAIN graduates went on to become active in civil society through joining established NGO's, setting up new NGO's or through becoming active in public life as journalists, academics and public intellectuals. Resultantly civil society was greatly strengthened by IAIN graduates, especially in the 1970's and 80's.⁵⁰

Students and their influence of Islam-“Campus Islam”

Liberal Islam was the dominant trend among committed Muslims in the student movement throughout the 1970's, but in the 1980's more radical trends appeared. Emergence of radical Islamism can be attributed to the suppression of student political activity after the student protests in 1978 and the banning of

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ “Islam and Politics in New Indonesia” by Greg Barton in p.19-20, n.7.

large student's associations (such as HMI) in early 1980's, by the then New Order regime of Suharto. Such measures in fact depoliticized campuses and individualized dissent. The Iranian revolution had a deep impact on students and the idea of a revolutionary Islam, defending the rights of the weak and oppressed (*mustad'afin*) and the allegorical interpretations of the Q'uran and other scriptures became the ideas that appealed to not only students but also some of their elders. A movement of self-conversion to Shi'ism began which by the end of century involved tens of thousands. Though initially strong among students, presently Shi'ism draws its following from various sections of the population.

Present Muslim student activists speak of a unitary and coherent movement, which they call the *Tarbiyah* movement. *Tarbiyah* means education, or perhaps indoctrination. Study circles (*halqah*) were convened in campus mosques (for example, the group discussions and 'mental training' sessions organized in the Salman Mosque at Bandung's Institute of Technology), or even at the homes of members. The teaching material consisted mostly of Muslim Brotherhood materials and the Writings of Maududi. The emphasis was on personal morality and piety, discipline, and an 'inner' rejection of the *pancasila* state and of un-Islamic practices in Indonesia. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood however remained the dominant influence. One network of discussion circles in fact named itself *Ikhwanul Muslimin* and presently claims to be the Indonesian branch of the Brotherhood. Brotherhood's influence was mostly mediated through its literature but there were also some personal contacts through

international Muslim youth organizations, for example Malaysia's Muslim youth movement ABIM.⁵¹

Most of the student groups were quietist and apolitical, that is, they were primarily concerned with individual moral self-improvement. Contrary to it "Salafi Islam" or extremely puritan Islam of Wahhabi *'ulama* in the Arabian Peninsula became perceptible on some campuses in the 1990's. The influence was mediated through the Saudi-financed Institute for Islamic and Arabic Studies, LIPIA, in Jakarta, and through Indonesian students who studied religious subjects at Saudi universities or with Saudi or Yemeni *'ulama*. They organized a growing network of discussion circles to spread their version of true Islam rejecting involvement in worldly politics.⁵²

Mainstream Islam and September 11 Attacks

The general reaction from Indonesia's Islamic community, to the September 11 attacks on US cities, was that of measured condemnation. The attacks were condemned as being barbaric and evil. However American government, or rather, its policies were pointed out to be partly responsible for the attacks. Especially, US policy towards the Islamic world in general and Israeli Palestinian conflict in particular was increasingly, perceived to have called upon the attacks. America's accusations, that Islamic terrorists were behind the attacks, also came under severe criticism from various quarters of the Muslim community.

⁵¹ "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia" by Martin Van Bruinessen, n.16.

⁵² Ibid.

The consequent US military campaign in Afghanistan was opposed by Indonesians from all streams, from traditionalist Islam to secular to radical currents. Militant Islamic groups were more vociferous and took to the streets in protest, issuing warnings to US citizens, tourists and institutions to pack up their bags or face serious repercussions. Attacks on Afghanistan were symbolized to be Attacks on Islam. The image of Islam in Indonesia as a moderate and secular force deteriorated. Police inaction and incoherent government response added fuel to fire. The voice of mainstream groups within the Islam community was muffled.

Nevertheless, Chairman of Muhammadiyah, Ahmad Syafii Maarif, not only rejected the Taliban call for a worldwide *jihad*, but also warned the Indonesian Muslim to not “to show emotional ties to the Taliban”. He called the call for *jihad* by MUI, as unwise and inimical to Indonesia’s interests. Amien Rais, responding to MUI’s call for jihad, urged upon Indonesians to abstain from resorting to *jihad* hastily and without thinking. He said “I personally don not want to join the bandwagon and inflame the spirit of jihad, unless the US launched indiscriminate attacks on Afghanistan without distinguishing civilians and military targets, and extended the war to other Muslim countries”. Maarif also termed the attacks and violent protest against US interests in the country as ‘barbaric’ and ‘uncivilized’. Rais termed the attack as ‘*haram*’ (strictly forbidden) under Islam. Rais urged the Muslim community to shun violence and not sacrifice the larger national interest of the country.⁵³

⁵³ “Indonesia and the September 11 Attacks: Domestic Reactions and Implications” by Rizal Sukma, in *The Indonesian Quarterly*, Vol.XXX/2002, n. 3, p. 276.

It was however with the strong criticism by President Megawati of American attacks on Afghanistan, that the radical groups subsided their protests, and the mainstream Islamic organizations began to regain their dominance in public discourse. NU chairman Hasyim Muzadi and the President of State Institute of Islamic Studies, Azyumardi Azra, called upon Indonesian Muslims to focus more on Indonesia's national problems than worry about Afghanistan. Demands for diplomatic relations breakup were also dismissed as irrational and unrealistic. By November 2001, mainstream Islamic forces were more or less successful in their attempt to counter the views of the radicals. In spite of continued US campaign in Afghanistan, the radical groups carried out no major protests. The resurgence of mainstream groups was further strengthened when top leaders of NU and Muhammadiyah Syafii Maarif and Hasyim Muzadi, met on 2nd January 2002 to forge a common platform between them, in addressing serious challenges facing the Muslim community in particular and Indonesia in general. They also stressed upon the need to pay attention to the threat imposed by radical Islamic groups, and ensure that a moderate and tolerant Islam continues to be the mainstream Islam in the country.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Chapter III

RADICAL ISLAM IN INDONESIA

Fundamentalism has always been a part of any religious tradition. There have always been some followers who choose the strictest and the most rigid interpretation of scriptures, just like those who choose the loosest interpretation of it. Moreover, having a high commitment to religious doctrines, some zealous followers fall into militarism. Islamic militarism in Lebanon and Palestine, Zionism in Israel and the militant Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland are some of the examples. Rational forces, science and technology and material satisfaction do not tend to marginalize, let alone eliminate, religious fundamentalism. Thus modernization does not end religious adherence.

In Indonesian society, there has been a struggle mainly in the nature of a conflict between the secular ideology of *Pancasila* and the secular nationalists on one hand and the Islamic state protagonists on the other, who believe that Islam should be the state ideology, and that Muslims should be obliged to follow the *Shari'a* or Islamic law. Thus since its birth as an independent nation, Indonesia has been divided over the question of the legal status of Islam. The then Muslim leaders had demanded to add a phrase; "with the obligation of the Muslims to follow *Shari'a*" (Later known as the 'Jakarta Charter')⁵⁵; that would have obliged the Muslim Indonesians to live by the *Shari'a*. They however, had to give up their demand in the interest of the national unity, when they discovered that non Muslims and nominal Muslims felt threatened by it. The Jakarta Charter (*Piagam*

⁵⁵ "Islam and Political Movements In Indonesia" by Dilip Chandra in Indonesia: A New Beginning. Ed by Satish Chandra and Baladas Ghoshal, New Delhi (2002) p.36.

Jakarta) was discussed again in parliamentary debates on a new constitution in 1959 but was shelved when no majority could be found to support it.

Shari'a is based on the teachings of the Koran. *Shari'a* in its widest application offers guidelines on the Islamic rituals of daily life, such as praying five times a day and wearing of head scarves for women. It also offers means to resolve social and economic conflicts, and through *hudud* (Islamic Criminal Code), deals with criminal offences like theft, adultery, murder and rebellion. In Indonesia *Shari'a* covers Islamic rituals and mostly social issues through a network of 330 religious courts across the country, which adjudicate on marriage, inheritance and other domestic disputes.⁵⁶

PPIM, *Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat* (Centre for the Study of Islam and Society) UIN, Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 2001, carried a research in sixteen Indonesian provinces to understand the religious phenomena in Indonesia. It confirmed the strengthening attachment of Muslims to Islam. Execution of *Santri* religious rituals increased, the *abangan* practices decreased. An year later in 2002, the PPIM carried out a similar research in all the Indonesian provinces and found that strengthening of religious attachment coincided with the increasing tendency of fundamentalism. Thus an increasing number of people agreed on the application of Islamic government.⁵⁷ Similarly a study by the Jakarta based centre for Islamic and Community studies in 2002 found that more than 61% of the respondents approved the implementation of *shari'a*, though that number declined significantly on the issue of draconian

⁵⁶ "The Case for Islamic Law" John McBeth. *Far Eastern economic Review*, Vol: 165; no: 33, August 22, 2002. pp. 12-13.

⁵⁷ "Indonesian Fundamentalism" by Jamhari <http://www.ppim.net/article:cfm?Article=12>

punishments such as the stoning to death of adulterers and amputation for thieves.⁵⁸

A Background of Radicalism

The roots of most Muslim radical groups, present in Indonesia can be traced to two relatively 'indigenous' Muslim political movements, the Darul Islam movement and the Masyumi Party, and to a number of more recent transnational Islamic networks.

Darul Islam Movement

The attempts of the Dutch to return and re-establish their control over Indonesia was met by stiff resistance. The *Ulama* Declared *jihad* and Muslim militias, often led by *Ulama*, played an important part in the struggle for Independence. In West Java, Muslim militia broke with the Republican government after it had established an unfavorable agreement with the Dutch (the Renville agreement, Java 1948) and had ordered its armed forces to withdraw to Central Java. Under the charismatic radical Muslim politician, Kartosuwiryo, the breakaway militia continued their struggle against the Dutch and gradually established their own rudimentary government and state apparatus that recognized no legislation but the *Shari'a*. This Darul Islam movement, or the Islamic state of Indonesia, as it called itself, remained a serious competitor to the Republican government and became a major embarrassment to it even after

⁵⁸ John McBeth, n.2, p. 12.

complete independence. Rebellious movements in Aceh and South Sulawesi also joined the movement. The reasons for doing so were different but all agreed that Indonesia should be based on *Shari'a*.⁵⁹

The Darul Islam insurrection persisted until the early 1960's, when its major leaders were either killed or captured. The movement however lingered on and persists even today. Intermittent signs of its existence have suggested its connections with the intelligence services and the army. For example, after the alleged communist coup of 1965, West Javanese Darul Islam veterans were reportedly taken to the estates in Subang district to kill 'communist' state workers. Even Ali Moertopo, considered as the real architect of Indonesia's New Order, is widely believed to have cultivated a group of Darul Islam veterans and allowed them to maintain a network of contacts as a secret weapon to be unleashed at a convenient moment. In 1970's and 80's acts of arson and bombing of churches, nightclubs and cinemas were attributed to *Komando Jihad*. *Komando jihad* leaders who were arrested proved to be Darul Islam veterans. These activists genuinely believed in the long-term aim of an Islamic state and destroying communism. The *Komando Jihad*, later referred to as Terror Warman (Warman being the name of one of its leaders) and TII/NII, "the Islamic state/army of Indonesia, remained active till mid 1980's. In early 1980's two Arab teachers, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, running a *pesantren* in Ngruki,(Solo) were arrested for promoting Darul Islam propaganda. These teachers were in fact well connected in Masyumi / DDII circles. The teachers and

⁵⁹ "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in post-Suharto Indonesia" Martin Van Bruinessen. http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/genealogies_islamic_radicalism.htm

their associates were linked to *Komando Jihad* activities and detained for several years after which they took refuge in Malaysia. In 1984 there was a wave of violent incidents due to the repression of a riot in Jakarta's harbour, Tanjung Priok. The violence included the bombing of Borobudur, and of several branches of a major bank, owned by one of Suharto's Chinese business partners. The trials, which followed, implicated alleged NII/TII activists. Some of its members fled to Malaysia. From Malaysia, it is believed that dozens and possibly hundreds and even thousands of Indonesians traveled to Pakistan and Afghanistan, in order to engage in *jihad* and receive guerrilla training.⁶⁰

Establishment of an Islamic state however remained the movement's chief motive. Moreover it was a political and not a religious movement. Its followers adhered to Salafi Islam but there was no clear connection between its puritan conception of Islam and political action. It also maintained close relations with Malaysian Muslim radicals. The Islamic ideal was quite un-ideological and did not entail a clear vision of the nature of their Islamic state.

Masyumi

During the Japanese occupation (1942-45) all Muslim organizations were merged in the Japanese created umbrella organization Masyumi (*Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia*). Initially Masyumi even after break up of NU from it in 1952 remained a communalist reformist organization that adhered to western ideas of democracy. In late 1950's Masyumi became antagonistic of Sukarno's policies, especially his cooperation with the communists. Masyumi was also suspected of

⁶⁰ Ibid.

collusion with the Darul Islam movement. It also refused cooperation to Sukarno's concept of 'Guided Democracy'. In 1958, several Masyumi leaders took part in a CIA-supported regional rebellion against Sukarno. In 1960 Masyumi was dissolved and in 1962 its leaders were imprisoned for political offences. After 1965-66 and Sukarno's ouster from power, Masyumi leaders were released from prison but not allowed to play political roles. A new party, Parmusi, was established but without the backing of Masyumi leaders it remained in backstage.

Most prominent Masyumi leaders decided to devote their energies to *dakwah* (da'wa) rather than politics. Consequently, the *dakwah* council (*Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* or DDII) was established by Mohammad Natsir, a charismatic Muslim puritan leader in 1967. The DDII believed in the superiority of western-style democracy over forms of rule adopted by Sukarno and Suharto. Simultaneously it also viewed Christian missionary efforts as a threat to Islam. The DDII established close links with the Islamic World League (*Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islami*, established in 1962).⁶¹ Another important group of Masyumi personalities, renouncing opposition to Suharto's 'New Order', joined the political machinery Golkar. It is widely believed that this group 'penetrated' the ranks of Golkar and managed to give it a more Islamic context. In the early 1970's, Golkar remained dominated by nominal Muslims and secularists. Gradually by early 1990's, they became a minority and a conservative brand of Islam, patronized by Suharto, established itself as the leading discourse.

⁶¹ Ibid.

In 1990's, Masyumi represented a wide range of reformist Muslim attitudes, ranging from liberal and modernist to puritan and conservative. The most puritan stand within Masyumi was the association *Persatuan Islam* or *Persis*, which militated uncompromisingly against local beliefs and traditional practices. *Persis* relied heavily on a literal reading of the Q'uran and authentic *hadith*, and on many issues it adopted positions that were close to those of the Wahabbi's. *Persis* never showed much interest in social and political teachings that could be derived from Islam but concentrated on its strict application in personal life. Thus, persis carried on a struggle for the purification of rituals and beliefs.⁶²

Radical Islam in the Suharto Era

The indigenous radical groups that existed during 'the Sukarno and Suharto' periods primarily wanted to establish an Islamic state. These radical groups, widely believed to have been engineered by certain army generals in order to discredit Islam, failed in their cause because they were either crushed by the army or they failed to gain support from mainstream Muslims, the main believers of Islam in Indonesia.

According to Robert Hefner during the last years of the Suharto New Order Indonesia was the "most vibrant centre for New Muslim political thinking the modern world has seen".⁶³ The coalition that brought about Suharto's resignation quickly fell apart into diverse alliances of Islamist and secular

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ "Islam in Modern Indonesia"-A Conference Cosponsored by the United States-Indonesian Society and The Asia Foundation February, 2002, <http://www.usindo.org/Briefs/Islam%20in%20Indonesia.htm>.

nationalist groupings. In a vacuum of central power rivalries flourished, resulting in ethno religious tensions and clashes. In Maluku, Central Kalimantan, Poso (Central Sulawesi) and a few other regions the conflicts got out of hand. Moreover the rival elites brought into play the organized political-cum-criminal syndicates known as *preman*. These gangster groups usually adopted the ideology of their patrons to assume an air of public service, and by the end of the New Order the popular ideology was Islam. This set the stage for gang warfare between Islamist, Christian and nationalist groups.

According to Azyumardi Azra, rector of the state Institute of Islamic studies (IAIN), many new groups, that were unknown before, have emerged. Further "there are reports... their leadership have been close to certain army generals [and] some observers assert that they have been sponsored, or at least helped, by certain circles of the Indonesian military."⁶⁴ For example, he names Habib Rizq Shihab, leader of the FPI, Jafar Umar Thalib, leader of the Laskar Jihad and Abu Bakar Baas'yir of the MMI. According to him these groups share a literal interpretation of Islam and claim that Muslims should practice only 'pure'. Islam as practiced by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, or *Salaf*. They can thus be included among Salafi activist movements that attack discotheques and other "places of violence". They also take a militant view of jihad as 'holy war' against perceived enemies of Islam rather than the mainstream view of jihad as meaning "exerting oneself to the utmost" in Muslim activities, with war as a last resort. Professor Azra also names some other groups in existence since the Suharto period, which was less radical. Of these, the most important is the Hizb-

⁶⁴ Ibid.

al-Tahir (Party of Liberation) established in Lebanon and first introduced in Indonesia in 1972. Its objective is to re-establish the Caliphate, a universal Islamic political entity, as the most effective way to achieve Muslim unity.

KISDI (Komite Indonesia Untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam)

KISDI, the Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the World of Islam, was a form of Muslim street politics that became prominent during the 1990's and appeared to enjoy the connivance if not the support of the Suharto regime. It claims as its founding year to be 1987 but in fact its first public appearance was in 1990. Its founders belonged to the most 'hard-line' wing of DDII, were firm believers in Western Jewish and Christian conspiracy to weaken or destroy Islam and were generally hostile to non-Muslims.⁶⁵ During Suharto's last years, they came to dominate the streets. It came to the fore for the first time when there was a mass gathering (*tablig akbar*) in solidarity with Bosnian Muslims in front of the Al Azhar Mosque in elite Kebayoran in South Jakarta in mid February 1994. The gathering decided to send volunteers to wage a holy war (*jihad*) in Bosnia-Herzegovina and to raise funds to build a mosque in Sarajevo, to be named the Haji Mohammad Soharito Mosque. Fund raising continued for three years, using an account at Probosutedjo's Bank Jakarta. According to well-informed sources, the mosque was never built. Millions of dollars of Indonesian Muslim's donations that were channeled to the Indonesian Embassy in Budapest allegedly disappeared into the personal bank of a diplomat.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ "Genealogies....." Martin Van Bruinessen, n. 5.

⁶⁶ "Radical Islam: Suharto proxies or al Qaeda?", <http://www.angelfire.com/rock/hotburrito/Suharto/laks240902.html>.

Later, the group has been alleged to take up the causes of oppressed Muslims in Kashmir, Chechnya and Algeria. During the 1990's, KISDI also moved into protest actions against news media that carried reports they considered as unfriendly to Islam. In fact, their actions against the Catholic-owned but religiously and politically neutral newspaper *Kompas*, resulted in a financial settlement. By late 1990's KISDI was even accused of running a sort of protection racket and extorting money with the threat of demonstrations. KISDI has also been the most vocal of groups posturing against Christians and Jews. The labels 'Jews' or 'Zionists' came to be refer to a whole range of perceived internal threats such as secularism, cosmopolitanism and globalization. Various conspiracy theories modeled on *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, with a Chinese-Catholic-Zionist conspiracy aiming at the destruction of Islam in Indonesia, came into circulation.

Islamic Fundamentalist Groups

Jamhari⁶⁷ identifies some groups to be fundamentalists. Among them the major groups are MMI (*Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia*), FPI (*Front Pembela Islam*) and FKAJ (*Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah*). Similarly Martin Van Bruinessen⁶⁸ also identifies some vigilante-style groups that emerged after Suharto's fall and surpassed KISDI in militancy. He believes this to have happened primarily because of financing by military or civilian circles engaged in a struggle to retain or gain economic and political power. Nevertheless a few of these groups are rooted in the Islamic movements of the preceding decades. He

⁶⁷ "Indonesia Fundamentalism" by Jamhari n.3.

⁶⁸ "Genealogies....."by Martin Van Bruinessen, n. 5.

particularly identifies MMI, FPI and Laskar Jihad. Professor Robert Hefner⁶⁹ also describes MMI and Laskar Jihad as “Heirs to a tradition of radical politics and religion that... has always operated on the fringe of Indonesian society”.

Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), Indonesian Mujahiddin Council

The MMI gives a different emphasis to its *shari'a* discourse, associating it with the Jakarta Charter and the historical struggle of the Darul Islam movement. It appears to be a front of various groups that have had some relation with the Darul Islam underground. Its chief organizer is Irfan S. Awwas and its chief religious authority or *ahlal-hall wa'l 'aqd* is vested in Abu Bakar Ba'asyir of the *pesantren* of Ngruki, the alleged founder of the *Usroh* movement and who in 1978 had been arrested in connection with the *Kommando Jihad* trials. According to Robert Hefner, Ba'asyir is accused by Malaysian and Philippine intelligence sources as leader of *Jemaah Islamiyah*.⁷⁰ According to Azyumardi Azra, Ba'asyir is also known to have close links with the KMMM, Malaysian Military Muslim group. The cleric is described by Sidney Jones of the International Crisis Group (ICG), a Brussels-based think tank, as “the social linchpin of the network, the person who connects everybody else” and a master politician.⁷¹ In fact, the widely read and influential Islamic newsmagazine *Sabili* named him Man of the year 2002. The Malaysian and Singaporean police authorities, on the other hand, perceive Ba'asyir as the regional al-Qaeda commander, organizing terrorist

⁶⁹ “Islam in Modern Indonesia”, A Conference... n. 9.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ “Landing the Big Fish” by Dini Djalal, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Vol:166, no: 8, February 27, 2003.

actions all over Southeast Asia. The publicly available evidence does not however support this claim.

According to Jamhari,⁷² unlike FPI and Laskar Jihad, MMI has chosen political and academic channels as a vehicle for the goal of establishing *Shari'a* in Indonesia. Seminars, books, pamphlets, Internet, lobbying politicians in parliaments, and the like are among their activities. Although MMI was established as a joint office for all people or parties who share the same agenda, in reality it is considered, even by other fundamentalist groups, as being a distinct group with its own agenda. The MMI held its first congress in Yogyakarta in August 2000. It was attended by about 1500 people, including several prominent guest speakers, such as the historian Deliar Noer, the Madurese *Kyai* (traditional *'alim*) Alawy Muhammad, and the chairman of the Justice Party, Hidayat Nur Muhammad. The entire congress focused on the implementation of the *Sahri'a* in Indonesia and the shape that an Islamic state should take; several of the speakers even called for a new caliphate.⁷³

Regarding its activities, MMI has been very concerned about the conflict in the Moluccas, which it perceives to be an international conspiracy against Indonesian Islam. It is also believed to have sent members to the Moluccas to take part in *Jihad*. Lately in 2002, MMI's *amir* Abu Bakar Ba'asyir was arrested accused of attempting the murder of Megawati. Besides, the police claim that Ba'asyir may have approved the October 12, 2002, Bali bombing that killed 202 people and also signed off on a series of bombing attacks during the run-up to

⁷² "Indonesia Fundamentalism?" by Jamhari n. 3, p.

⁷³ "Genealogies....." by Martin Van Bruinessen n. 5, p.

Christmas 2000. Officials also fear that he may be planning new attacks from the prison. Ironically, according to Dini Djalal⁷⁴, Convicting Ba'asyir will be a formidable task. Even if it can be proven that Ba'asyir approved of general violence, if not a specific attack, it is unclear to authorities whether inspiring hate is a criminal offense. ICG's Sidney Jones even doubts the competence of prosecutors.

Front Pembela Islam (FPI, Front for the Defence of Islam)

The FPI was founded in 1998 and said to be funded by rich anti-reformist generals intent on protecting the vested interests of the elite. Declared in South Jakarta on the day of Independence Day; August 17, 1998; FPI is firmly based on the doctrine of *ahlussunah wal-jama'ah* and its main agenda is *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (to propagate the good deeds and prohibit the bad ones).⁷⁵

FPI's leader Al-Habib Muhammad Rizieq bin Hussein Syihab, is a Jakarta born Hadrami Sayyid, who studied in Saudi Arabia. He and several other members of Jakarta's *habaib* (sayyid) community play leading roles in it. The rank-and-file appear to be mostly poor and of low education, from the circles where *habaib* are held in great respect. Thus one of FPI's functions appears to be to give the *habaib* community some leverage with the political elite.⁷⁶

FPI portrays Islam as a violent and fierce creed. Al Habib while contrasting FPI with mainstream Islamic groups admitted that, "NU is wiser, more polite and softer. Muhammadiyah is critical, intellectual. FPI is more physical; we fight immorality NU plants the seeds of the paddy, because it has the seeds. FPI

⁷⁴ "Landing the Big Fish" by Dini Djalal, n. 17, p.

⁷⁵ "Indonesian Fundamentalism" by Jamhari, n. 3, p.

⁷⁶ "Genealogies....." by Martin Van Bruinessen, n. 5, p.

doesn't have the seeds, we only have the sickle. Our job is to clean up the mice, the pests that ruin the paddy. It's just a division of labour. There is no competition between us".⁷⁷ Thus, FPI is widely perceived to be more like a racket of mobs for hire than a genuine Islamic movement. It is more off a pressure to remove the *maksiat*, the religiously bad things, such as prostitution, pubs and liquor stores. Consequently they have carried out numerous raids on bars and brothers, and vandalized other entertainment venues, over the past three years. They have also ransacked the offices of the National Human Rights Commission, which they felt had not been objective in its investigation of the Tanjung Priok Massacre (where the army had shot hundreds of Muslim demonstrators). They have continuously been voicing resentment toward perceived threats to Islam and 'sweeps' for US nationals in Central Java. Their threats addressed to Americans in Indonesia have increased, after US's war against terrorism in response to the September 11, 2001 incident and especially, after its incursion into Afghanistan to topple the Taliban regime. FPI made its debut in Nov. 1998, when in a pitched street battles with strong religious overtones it attacked Christian Ambonese security guards in the Ketapang neighbourhood of Central Jakarta. Later on thousands of FPI militants occupied the Jakarta City Hall, demanding closure of all bars, discotheques, steam baths, and nightclubs during the fasting month of Ramadan.

A keystone of FPI demands is also reformation of Islam by imposing Islamic Law in Indonesia, in an attempt to appeal to fellow Muslim citizens. They strive for the formation of positive laws for Muslims in accordance with the

⁷⁷ "Indonesia: Defending Islam against itself" by Bill Guerin, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/SoutheastAsia/KJ09Ae01.html>

Qu`ran and the Sunnah. They are not reluctant to take the law into their own hands to protect Muslim values and interests. Al Habib has said that FPI will not recognize a female president as, according to him, under *syari`a* a woman cannot be a president. Two months after Megawati was sworn in as president, Al Habib while being interviewed by a local media consultancy firm, said: “when a policy is issued to castrate the rights of FPI, or oppress Muslim people, we will fight. So we warn the government not to try to oppress Muslims. As long as they do not, FPI will have no reasons to act. But if the government acts against Muslims, then we will take real action! So we will watch the behavior of the government. You can say that FPI is practicing social control towards Megawati’s government and the policies it makes. So we would like to warn the present government under Megawati; Don’t mess with Muslim people or try to oppress them! We will be watching! This is a warning!”⁷⁸

However, Bill Guerin feels that, FPI strives for publicity, however bad, to make up for the fact that it is extremely small in numbers, irrespective of its claim of having thousands of ‘warriors’ ready to take up arms.

Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah Wah Jama’ah (FKAWJ)

FKAWJ was declared on February 14th 1999 and is based in Yogyakarta. The main figure behind it is Ja’far Umar Thalib. FKAWJ is closely linked with Jama’ah al-Turath al-Islami, a semi clandestine group also based in Yogyakarta. Like FPI, they too support the application of *Shari’a* in Indonesia but

⁷⁸ Ibid.

they do not support the creation of an Islamic state. Their main concern is to restore the respect of Islam and improve the Islamicity of individuals. They called for *Jihad* in Ambon to help Muslims fight against Christians. According to Jamhari, they formed the Laskar Jihad in 2000 and sent its ‘warriors’ to Maluku on the precept that *jihad* is a necessity to protect the nation from the RMS rebellious group, who were behind the attack against Muslims.⁷⁹

FKAWJ is controlled by a sixty-member board of patrons (*dewan Pembina*), of which Ja’far is chairman. FKAWJ doctrine is notable for its narrow Islamism and exclusivism. Thalib claims that NU and Muhammadiyah are not genuinely *ahlussunnah wal jamaah* (*followers of Sunni tradition*) as they have deviated from the Qu’ran and example of the prophet Muhammad and have doctrines, which have non-Islamic sources. FKAWJ also rejects democracy as ‘incompatible with Islam’ and refuses to support any political party, including the more Islamist parties. According to Thalib “in democracy people who don’t understand anything, and they are the majority, elect their leaders without any educated considerations at all. They only elect those that give them money or say what they want to hear”.⁸⁰

Thus religious minorities and nominal Muslims have been able to “thwart the application of Islamic law” in Indonesia. It calls for democracy to be replaced by a council of experts (*ahlu halli wal aqdi*) dominated by Islamic scholars who are learned in Islamic law. Its attitude towards women also places FKAWJ, outside the mainstream. Women are not permitted to hold leadership

⁷⁹ “Indonesian Fundamentalism” by Jamhari, n. 3.

⁸⁰ “Inside the Laskar Jihad” by Greg Fealy, <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edit65/fealy.htm>

positions in FKAWJ and cannot join the Laskar Jihad, its paramilitary division. According to Thalib, FKAWJ's main responsibility towards women is "to educate them and then marry them to pious men who are capable of preventing them from falling into sin. Men's role is to supervise women and ensure that their behaviour is properly Islamic".⁸¹

Laskar Jihad

Laskar Jihad is the paramilitary division of the FKAWJ. It was formally established on 30 January 2000 in Yogyakarta in response to what FKAWJ saw as deliberate persecutions of Muslims in Maluku. FKAWJ dispatched a team of researchers to Maluku in late 1999 to gather data on the conflict. The research group found evidence that Protestant Churches had plans to form a breakaway Christian state comprising Maluku, West Papua and North Sulawesi. Remnants of the former Republic of the South Moluccas (RHS) based in the Netherlands were actively involved in this movement. Their plan was to wage war on Muslims in those provinces so as to force them to migrate to other areas. The plan according the report was that of 'religious cleansing'. Based on the report, FKAWJ declared Christians who were attacking Muslims to be *Kafir Harbi* or "belligerent infidels". *Kafir harbi* are seen as the most dangerous category of unbelievers and Islamic law obliges Muslims to wage war against them. This labeling of Christians in fact gave Laskar Jihad the religious license to kill Christians in these provinces. Muslims killed while fighting *Kafir harbi* Christians, were declared martyrs.⁸²

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸²

Laskar Jihad's membership and notoriety grew quickly in its early months. Majority of its membership was drawn from poorer, less educated sections of the Islamic community. It promotes its views via the media and publishes a magazine, *Salafy*. It also has a regularly updated website run from FKAWJ's Jakarta office (www.LaskarJihad.or.id). Laskar Jihad has access to substantial funds. It claims to have offices in all major towns in Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi and Kalimantan. In Maluku, it owns a hospital as well as a sizeable arsenal. Its spokesman claims that most of its funds are contributed by sympathetic members of the Indonesian public. According to its leader Ja'far Umar Thalib. Majority of its financing comes from overseas, in particular New Jersey (USA), Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Singapore. Allegations, denied by Ja'far, that the Suharto family and their allies have been funding such groups so as to destabilize post Suharto New Order governments and prevent them from investigating crimes committed by Suharto and his cronies, have also surfaced. Further military connections have shown that Laskar Jihad has been able to build on alliances forged between conservative Muslims and TNI factions during the last years of the Suharto period. Laskar Jihad since its formation has also enjoyed the active support of other conservative Muslim groups. Organizations such as KISDI, DDII and FPI have backed Laskar Jihad's activities with rallies, demonstrations, and endorsements in media publications. Prominent conservative Muslim activists have even acted as advisers to the group; for example, Eggy Sudjana is one of Thalib's legal representatives. Laskar Jihad has also succeeded in pushing more mainstream leaders into supporting the call

for *jihād*. They have successfully used media campaigns to create a condition in which moderate Muslim leaders have felt forced to choose between endorsing Laskar Jihad's position and being perceived to desert the interests of Indonesian Muslims.⁸³

According to Michel Davis⁸⁴, Laskar Jihad employs tactics designed to undermine any prospect of reconciliation between Christians and Muslims. For example, the group is believed to have used snipers in Kota Ambon to target civilians and thus reinforce the atmosphere of fear and suspicion, which pervades both the Muslim and Christian communities in the town. Thus Laskar Jihad aims at keeping the two communities polarized. This is probably because Laskar Jihad's emphasis on violence derives from basic self-interest: no conflict, no Laskar Jihad. Thus only the maintenance of hostilities legitimizes the group's position within Molucca's Muslim community. Ensuring that the parameters of life for Moluccan Muslims are shaped (and narrowed) by constant interreligious violence helps Laskar Jihad to overcome any reluctance on the part of their local co-religionists to define their loyalties and responses to the conflict solely on the basis of their faith.

Besides Maluku, the group is also active in Indonesia's eastern region of Papua. According to a Papuan human rights group, over 2000 Laskar Jihad extremist fighters have established themselves in at least twelve different military training camps in Papua (formerly Irian Jaya). It is particularly active in the highlands on the north of the island, along its border with Papua New Guinea. In

⁸³ "Laskar Jihad and the political position of conservative Islam in Indonesia" by Michael Davis, <http://www.angelfire.com/rock/hotburrito/laskar/iscas010402.html>

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

2002, they established an office in Sorong. They have been stockpiling weapons. A number of Pakistani and Afghan mujahideen have also come to join the group. Presence of Laskar Jihad on the island and its apparent close connection with the army has prompted fears that the group will be used as a militia by the military to suppress the separatist OPM (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka*, Organization for freedom of Papua) movement. Gradually the group has formed links with local authorities, police and army units and with the pro-Jakarta militia *Satgas Merah Putih*, which too opposes Papuan calls for independence from Indonesia. Majority of the Papuan Muslims however reject the Jihad's presence as a dangerous destabilizing factor in an already extremely tense region. Laskar Jihad enjoys the support and protection of senior elements in the police, military and government. For example the government has been reluctant to expend political capital on attempts to resolve the conflict in Maluku.⁸⁵

According to Robert Hefner, Laskar Jihad is distinguishable from other conservative movements in the "firm belief that the United States and Israel are leading a world-wide conspiracy to destroy Islam". Ja'far's fiery sermons stress the need for *jihad* to cleanse society of un-Islamic influences. He believes that unbelievers in Indonesia must accept the role of protected minorities and not be allowed to exercise authority over Muslims. He has clarified that "the equal citizenship sanctioned by the Indonesian constitution is utterly antithetical to Islam".

The possible connections between the Laskar Jihad and Al Qaeda are also not clear. Osama bin Laden led, Al Qaeda is held responsible for the

⁸⁵ "Islam in Modern Indonesia....." n. 9.

September 11, 2001 attacks on US cities. Indonesian intelligence chief General Hendropriyono confirmed reports of al Qaeda training camps in Indonesia to assist Laskar Jihad Fighters In Maluku and Central Sulawesi. He however subsequently backed from his assertion.⁸⁶

The Laskar Jihad has been strongly influenced by the most puritan form of Wahhabi Salafism. It does not believe that Islam enjoins a specific economic and political system- a major difference with Muslim brotherhood-inspired movements-but is inclined to place the *Shari'a* above human-made law. It, in accordance with Wahhabi view, believes that democracy is *Kufr*, sinful. It also rejects Megawati's presidency because of her gender. Laskar Jihad claims it does not take part in the struggle to conquer the state and turn it into an Islamic one because it considers the struggle to improve each individual member's quality as a Muslim more important. Its relation with the Dewan Dakwah (DDII), especially the more conservative leaders of this Saudi influenced body, are cordial. After the *Laskar* had executed one of its members for having an illicit sexual relationship, the first instance of a *hudud* punishment in modern times in Indonesia; it was congratulated by the DDII for upholding the *Shari'a*; the young man who had agreed to this punishment, was posthumously given the "*Shari'a* award".⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ "Genealogies....." by Martin Van Bruinessen, n. 5.

Chapter IV

PROSPECTS FOR A SECULAR INDONESIA

The Indonesian archipelago – stretches from the Asian continent in the north to Australia in the South and consists of more than 12,000 large and small islands. Of these, some 300 are inhabited by an ethnically, linguistically and culturally heterogeneous population of some 200 million people. Almost two-thirds of the total population lives on the island of Java, which, however, only occupies some eight percent of the total land area. Thus while the Javanese are crowded together on their extremely densely populated island, the remaining third of the population is thinly spread across many almost empty islands. Culturally, Indonesia is home to more than 360 different ethnic groups. In the jungles of the inner parts of the larger islands people still live as nomadic hunters and food gatherers. Among these, some groups such as Kubu on Sumatra and Punan on Kalimantan belong to the oldest inhabitants of the islands, who are believed to have migrated into the archipelago some 8-10,000 years ago. Theologically, over the course of millennia, all the major world religions have at one time or another taken and flourished. However, there has always been an 'original Indonesia', animistic cosmology according to which every living being has a soul and which postulates the existence of a large number of spirits that affect human beings. All these various belief systems have influenced each other in many different ways and created a great number of original forms of religion, many of which are still alive and flourishing.

In Bali, Hinduism still flourishes, while in many of the outer Islands, such as Flores, Sumba & North Sulawesi, Christianity has strong footholds. Indonesians, generally show a great degree of tolerance towards other forms of belief. *Pancasila* as an ideology and through its incorporation into the constitution furthermore gives all the officially recognized religions (Islam, Buddhism, Christianity – Catholicism and Protestantism and Hinduism) an equal position. What is not accepted, however, is atheism, which is here equated with communism, the ideology of which has been banned ever since the traumatic experiences connected with the coup d'etat of 1965¹.

Under the influence of Indian culture, over the centuries, in the Western parts of the archipelago, especially Sumatra and Java, a number of more or less powerful and long-lived Hindu Buddhist Kingdoms emerged. The mightiest of these, the legendary Majapahit, succeeded, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, for the first time ever in uniting large parts of the archipelago. The Majapahit Empire slowly dissolved during the latter parts of the fourteenth century, and about that time Islam began to make its presence felt, first in the northwestern parts of the archipelago and then spreading slowly from there. Islam entered the region through coastal trading centers and penetrated the interiors, in a process that lasted a couple of hundred years. Thus, the old Hindu – Buddhist civilization of the interior was able to withstand the advance of Islam for a long time and even after formal conversions, many of the earlier forms of belief continued to be practiced. As a result of the many centuries of Hindu-

¹ "Indonesia & Malaysia" by Sven Cederroth in *Islam Outside the Arab World*. Ed. By David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg Curzon Press, 1999.

Buddhist dominance during which various forms of mystical speculation had played a prominent role, pre-Islamic elements also found a fertile ground in Islam, especially in the interior kingdoms, whereas in the coastal areas a more pietistic, pure form of Islam became dominant. In the old Hindu-Buddhist core areas, Islam therefore took on a syncretic character in which elements from different religious traditions were mixed and fertilized with each other. Resultantly a new and uniquely Javanese religion, the Agami Jawi, developed. The cleavage thus created between a more purely Islamic coastal population and syncretistic groups in the interior still persists today.

Islamic Transition in Indonesia

Islamic syncretism in Java can be seen as an example of how earlier patterns of belief and local customs have been woven together with Islamic beliefs and practices into a uniquely Javanese interpretation of Islam. This form of Javanese Islam deviates quite considerably from what has been prescribed by the Qu'ran, the *Sunna* and the *Shari'a*.

When Islam replaced Hindu-Buddhism as the official religion, its was as a pawn in the power struggle between various petty kingdoms. Before the arrival of Islam, mystical speculation had played a prominent part in the court, and the acceptance of Islam did not abolish this practice – it just meant that it took on an Islamic character. *Adat*, the old customary law, rather than *Shari'a* the Islamic law, continued to determined relations between people and regulate right versus wrong. This old court culture *Priyai* is still alive and has had a decisive influence on the shaping of the modern Indonesian state. Among ordinary Javanese too,

such as the farmers in the thousands of villages, a form of syncretic tradition exists. This little Tradition in Java known as *abangan*, consist of a balanced integration of animistic and Hindu elements, which have been thinly coated, with a varnish of Islamic beliefs. It contains many unique elements, one of the most apparent being animistic beliefs about the world as animated and inhabited by a large number of spirits of various kinds. May synergetic Javanese, *Priyai* as well as *abangan*, have increasingly over the years, been experiencing a great threat emanating from more orthodox Muslims who have been criticizing their behaviour and inducing them to adopt other, more proper Islamic customs. Consequently many mysticist groups have joined together and formed mystical groups. In 1984, the number of registered mystical groups was around 353. One group, Sapta Darma, claims to have 10 million members. Nevertheless towards end of the 19th century, orthodox Muslims were able to influence the development of Indonesian Islam in a more significant way. This was primarily because, improved communication with the Arab world made it possible for a growing number of Indonesians to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca. There they met Muslims from all over the world and were exposed to more orthodox interpretations of the religion. The exposure to the surrounding world went hand in hand with the growth of a new social class, mainly consisting of merchants in the cities. Pietistic Islam, with its emphasis on individual responsibility, found more favor with the merchant class. Even in rural areas, pietistic Islam gained new adherents, above all among the leading landowners. This group was less radical and more bound to traditional mode of life than were the merchants. The two tendencies within

orthodox Islam became organized in two movements, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama². The two organizations have represented the views and aspirations of the Indonesian masses since then, in spite of having faced, at times, grave challenges from extremist groups, demanding the incorporation of *Shari'a* as national ideology, the two groups have persistently stood for *Pancasila* ideology and policies of government promoting religious tolerance and secularism. They also claim wide membership and support, penetrating even the grass root levels of Indonesian society. Even after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on U.S. cities, whence Islam came to be viewed as a religion of terror (in some quarters), both N.U. and Muhammadiyah patronized Islam to be a tolerant religion and a binding force in Indonesian society and thus urged upon Indonesian Muslims to refrain from being part of a worldwide *jihād* (called upon by various Islamic radical groups in Indonesia and worldwide) against American interest. They also urged the masses to abstain from violence and act in accordance with the pursuit of Indonesia's long-term national and strategic interests. Nevertheless, Indonesia over the past decade has witnessed a revival of radical Islam and separatist tendencies. According to Azyumardi Azra³, the increase in radicalism is basically the outcome of the "government failure to enforce the law and solve social ills such as ethno religious conflicts, increased crime, rampant corruption, widespread drug abuse and the like", and the "abrupt decline of central government authority together with the

² *ibid*

³ "Islam in Modern Indonesia": A conference Co-sponsored by the United States – Indonesia Society and the Asia Foundation. Feb, 7, 2002, <http://www.usindo.org/Briefs/Islam%20in%20Indonesia.htm>

demoralization of police”. He further maintains that especially after the September 11, incident and subsequent U.S. attacks on Afghanistan; mainstream Muslim organizations have been overshadowed by media attention to radical groups. Consequently, according to him, the mainstream organizations have become more assertive and of late, have agreed to carry out joint activities to control terrorism.

The Quest for a Modernist Islamic Faith

Although Muslim intellectuals had been be- set by the question of the separation of Church and State since the establishment of formal Islamic organizations during the first three decades of the past century, those organizations themselves did not feel an acute need to respond explicitly to the idea of a secular state until the late 1990s. One reason was that those in favor of the idea never declared their ideology in clearly defined terms. They merely expressed a general need for a modern state viable for all sections of the society. Even when the need to decide the nature of the newly independent state arose in 1945, these nationalists – as distinguished from the Muslim ideologues – agreed to soft – pedal their secular aspirations by accepting a compromise with their Muslim counterparts in the form of *Pancasila* state philosophy⁴.

In the early 1970s, Nurcholish Madjid, a Muslim intellectual, formally educated in the traditional *pesantren* way, on subsequently graduating from the state Islamic University, called for a radical restructuring of the creed. He spelled out the idea of secularization of no sacral teachings of Islam developed

⁴ “Islam, the State and Development in Indonesia” by Abdurahman Wahid, in *Islam in South and South East Asia*, Ed. By Asgar Ali Engineer (1985) p. 98.

throughout the ages. He argued that except for the essential beliefs constituting the central faith of Islam, all teachings should be reviewed to accommodate the dynamics of human behavior. He accepted the theologically acknowledged central position of man in the life of the universe as the basis for his desacralization of the unsacred beliefs of Islam. Madjid believed it to be the way to secularize life without becoming a secularist. Further secularism and secularization of Islam are not identical, since in the very idea of secularization the basic adherence to Islam is still preserved. Thus the restructuring only makes Islam relevant to the contemporary world and does not abrogate its right to regulate human life. A bitter backlash from the militant Muslim modernists however forced him to accommodate his views closer to the general trends of Islamic thought. Nevertheless, he was able to deflect the attacks of powerful critics and continued to enjoy the confidence and intellectual respect of tens of thousands of young Muslim university graduates and professionals beset by the problem of reconciling their basic religious beliefs with the demands of the professional roles assigned to them in a society undergoing a process of modernization⁵.

The main point of contention between the puritan Muslim modernists and those who try to accommodate the demands of modernization lies in the methods of treating the very sources of Islam, the Qu'ran and the traditions of the prophet. For the puritan modernists, the two sources comprise the bulk of teachings to be implemented fully or partially in a literal way, whereas for accommodating intellectuals, the Quaranic verses and the traditions of the Prophet have the main

⁵ *ibid*, p. 102

function of providing an inspirational centre for the responses Muslims must formulate in various individual or collective situations. A possible reason for the increasing militancy of religious views of the puritans is a sense of being threatened by the loose and flexible methods of interpreting basic sources of Islamic faith. Further, the contention also relates to the attitude taken towards interpreting the Islamic heritage. According to the puritans, the reigns of the Prophet and his subsequent first four righteous Caliphs represent a golden age to be emulated in its entirety a period in which there was no separation of the power of the state from that of the religion. Thus Islamic laws should be the base of the state. According to the modernists, on the other hand, the past heritage of Islam should be recast in an entirely new context. The development of human history imposes its own laws besides the laws formulated by Islam. One of the impacts of this development is the need to separate the power of religions establishments from that of the state. Thus the subjective nature of Islam should be blended with scientific findings. Only through this can Islam redefine its own priorities, reformulate its worldview and restructure its teaching process needed to place Islam in the mainstream of human development. Furthermore, the discipline of tolerance towards ideologies alien to Islamic teachings when extended to religions attitudes, transforms itself into tolerance toward internal developments within Islam itself⁶.

⁶ ibid

Pancasila and Islam

Pancasila pronounced ‘Panchaseela’ is the philosophical basis of the Indonesian state. It comprises of five inseparable and interrelated principles. They are⁷:

1. **Belief in one and only God:** This principle reaffirms the Indonesian people belief that God does exist. It also implies that the Indonesian people believe in life after death. It emphasizes that the pursuit of sacred values will lead people to better life in the hereafter.
2. **Just and Civilized Humanity:** This principle requires that human beings be treated with due regard to their dignity as God’s creatures. It emphasizes that Indonesians should not tolerate any physical or spiritual oppression of human beings by their own people or by any other nations.
3. **The Unity of Indonesia:** This principle embodies the concept of nationalism of love for one’s nations and motherland. It envisages the need to always foster national unity and integrity. *Pancasila* nationalism demands that Indonesians avoid superiority feelings on ethical grounds, for reasons of ancestry and color of skin.
4. **Democracy guided by the Inner Wisdom in the Unanimity Arising out of Deliberation amongst Representatives:** *Pancasila* democracy calls for decision making through deliberation, *musyawarah*, to reach a consensus, or *mufakat*. This implies that democratic right must always be exercised with a deep sense of responsibility to God Almighty according to one’s own conviction and religious beliefs with respect for humanitarian

⁷ “Pancasila the State Ideology” <http://www.i2.co.id/travel/pancasila.asp>

values of man's dignity and integrity, and with a view to preserving and strengthening national unity and the pursuit of social justice.

5. **Social Justice for the Whole of the People of Indonesia:** This principle calls for the equitable spread of welfare to the entire population, not in a static but in a dynamic and progressive way. Thus all the country's natural resources and the national potentials should be utilized for the greatest possible good and happiness of the people. Social justice implies protection of the weak. But protection should not deny them work. On the contrary, they should work according to their abilities and field of activity.

According to Abdurrahman Wahid⁸ the issue of a state philosophy was resolved in such a generalized way that eventually it came to be interpreted loosely in different ways for different purposes. The five principles could provide the formulation for keeping Islam free from a direct relationship with the state, without ever saying so. Resultantly the Islamic movements of that time perceived no unacceptable contradiction between the state philosophy and their own politico religious aspirations – *Pacasila* caters to the yearnings of the Muslim majority for a clearly pronounced religious participation in politics. At the same time lack for meaningful discussions on the merits and dangers of separating state power from religious authority has made it impossible for successive governments to adopt a clear policy on this matter. Governments have thus been forced to maintain the status quo of non-commitment to secularism. Such a statement induced various Islamic organizations to pronounce their own cultural

⁸ "Islam, the State and Development" n. 4, p, 98.

views of rejecting the atheistic ideology of secularism, believed to have been introduced by capitalist and socialist ideologies, something alien to the nature of the Indonesian people and contradictory to the teachings of Islam. Various developmental policies, perceived to be secular continue to be opposed vehemently by the Islamic mass media.

Professor, Dr. Bassam Tibi⁹, meanwhile, asserts that *Pancasila* has made it possible to overcome the tension between Islam and a secular national state in Indonesia and has demonstrated a successful pattern for harmonious unity of culturally, ethnically and religiously differing communities. The adepts of *Pancasila* are a synthesis of cultural pluralism and secularism. He views *Pancasila* as a secular as well as an equality definition of monotheism since religion is defined as ethics and separated from the state. President Sukarno defined this pluralistic monotheism like this: - "It's the principle of belief in one God. It means that all Indonesians believe in God in the sense that. Christians believe in God in harmony with the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Muslims in line with the teaching of Muhammad, the Buddhists practice their religion as prescribed in their holy scriptures. But we all together believe in one God. The Indonesian state is a state where every believer can worship God according to his own choice of religion. The Indonesian people believe in God in a refined manner that is without the egoism of any one religion". This *Pancasila* definition of Monotheism is a clear cut deviation from the traditional Islamic *Dhimmi* principle. *Pancasila* places Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Buddhists at an

⁹ "Indoensia, a Model for the Islamic Civilization in Transition to the 21st Century" by Prof. Dr. Bassam Tibi <http://www.arches.uge.edu/ingodias/tibi.html>

equal level. Thus it is not only a revolution in Islamic thinking but also a translation of the mystical ideas of the great Sufi Muslim Ibn Arabi into a political program. The Sufi Islam's tolerance and its rejection of any dogmatism becomes a basis of political reality in Indonesia.

Thus the conflict in Indonesia is not the one between local traditionalism and secularism introduced from outside. It's more a conflict between *santri*, an Islam clinging to the letter, and *Abangan* Islam, the more flexible Islam, which emerged from a synthesis between pre-Islamic cultures and Islam. *Abangan* is secular but still original; *Pancasila* is the highest expression of freedom of religion. It does not mean a rejection of religion but a freedom of religious pluralism.

Civil Society, Islam and Democracy

In Indonesia, the likelihood of Islam making a negative contribution is greatly outweighed by its likelihood of making a positive contribution. The positive contribution is further likely to be in the development and growth of civil society and democracy. A general aspect of civil society is the contribution of voluntary associations performing tasks or providing services that otherwise would not get done by governmental agencies. Thus Muhammadiyah's program of school, hospitals orphanages and so forth and the NU's *Pesantren* network and charitable foundations, are making a clear contribution as voluntary agencies to the strengthening of civil society. Another aspect about religion's (contextually

Islam) contribution to civil society is that of moral leadership. Thus figures like Abdurrahman Wahid and Amien Rais have, especially in recent years, played an important role in shaping public opinion and quelling violence. Hence the contribution of Islam; through voluntary associations to broader social service and in terms of moral leadership to moderating and guiding society; both represent contributions to the building of civil society in Indonesia. Another potential for the mainstream Islamic organizations (Muhammadiyah & NU) is to encourage a sensible understanding of democratic processes, a desire for reform and a moderate and sophisticated approach to achieving the reform¹⁰.

Central to the progress towards democratization have been the reform of electoral laws and the creation of electoral apparatus to facilitate democratic elections. The framework for this apparatus was set down in a special session of the MPR or People's Consultative Assembly held in November 1998. The department charged with controlling the press has been disbanded. There is no censorship and the press is regarded the freest in Asia. Opposition groups once barred from the country, such as Tapol, are allowed to operate freely. Legislation is also being drafted to implement the obligations Indonesia has accepted under ILO conventions¹¹.

Civil service organizations recognize that their skills in policy development in many areas touching on democratization, governance and human rights, land issues, decentralization, control of corruption, legal reform, civilian control of the

¹⁰ "Islam and Politics in New Indonesia" by Grey Barton in Jason. F. Issacson & Colin Rubenstein Ed. **Islam in Asia**.

¹¹ "Indonesia's Dangerous Transition: The Politics of Recovery and Democratization", by Dr. Stephen Sherlock, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Group, 28 April 1999, http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/1998-99/99rp_18.htm

military and police, performing watching functions, reform of the judiciary, labour reform – need to be improved if they are to move from confrontation and advocacy to active engagement with the legislature and Government to bring about needed reforms. Thus strengthening of civil society is a priority for both government and international donors.

Communal Violence as a Challenge to Secularism

Religious tensions in the eastern provinces of Maluku and West Kalimantan and the secessionist movement in Aceh have communal aspects, which are posing a threat to not just prospects of secularism but also integration of the Indonesian archipelago.

In Maluku, especially in the provincial capital of Ambon, indigenous people have clashed with transmigrant. Bugis and Makassar people from South Sulawesi. The Christian Maluku people and the Muslim trans-migrants had lived together in reasonable harmony for many decades, but recent years have seen an acceleration of migration into the province. The trans-migrants began to predominate in sectors such as petty trading as well as in cab driving and labouring, traditionally important sources of employment. Growing resentment was worsened when the appointment of a Muslim governor in the 1990s led to a perception that Muslims were being favored in government jobs and that Islamic practices were being enforced inside the administrative service. There was

serious outbreak of violence in 1997, when the onset of the Asian Economic Crisis (1997) sharpened competition over economic opportunities. The upsurge was suppressed, only to break out again during the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan in January 1998. While the situation was soon brought under control there have been several serious outbursts of violence and loss of life since then. The fighting has produced about 53,000 largely Muslim refugees. Forty thousand have gone to the island of Buton, off South Sulawesi. Another 13000 have become refugees in remote Tual, southeast Maluku. Many Christians have also become refugees in Maluku province, for example in the majority Muslim island of Banda, there are now practically no Christians left. The government has been unable to offer any solution to the conflict beyond appealing to the rival communities to reconcile¹².

The picture in West Kalimantan too has been similar, where indigenous Christian Dayaks have clashed with Muslim transmigrants from the island of Madura in east Java. Here the picture has been complicated by the fact that local Muslim Malay people have often sided with the Dayaks. From 20,000 to 40,000 Mudurese were displaced from their homes. Indigenous community leaders refused to allow them to resettle. West Kalimantan is the first place in Indonesia where the government has cooperated with ethnic cleansing, by not allowing the Mudurese to return to their homes. They were eventually resettled with government assistance in a special reservation at Tebang Kacang near Pontianak.

¹² ibid

The region of Aceh in West Sumatra was one of the first areas to be converted to Islam from the sixteenth century. It has long had a sense of distinct identity and was the site of repeated rebellions against Dutch rule. Since the time of Indonesian's independence there has been sporadic support for the regions independence, peaking in an uprising in 1953, which was crushed by the army. The movement revived in the 1980's and 1990's, with growing resentment that local people were not benefiting from the exploitation of the regions rich oil & gas reserves. After Suharto's fall, the movement has been able to operate more freely.

According to Franz Magnis – Suseno, SJ,¹³ inter-religious conflict is not unavoidable. The overwhelming majority of Indonesians of every creed, including their formal & informal leaders, want peace & tolerance. But in order to achieve this reconciliation is not enough. The underlying causes have to be addressed. Also problems between the religious communities have to be addressed. Christians would insist on their right to build churches where there is community. The responsible majority community can rightly expect the churches not to be built in a provocative, insensitive way (i.e. a luxurious church in the midst of a poor Muslim neighborhood). Muslims would insist that the question of “Christianization” (Christians would say: proselytism) is taken up. Muslims have since long demanded regulations regarding religious preaching, which Christians up to now have categorically rejected because, in view of the misuse of the decree in building permits for religious buildings, they are afraid that such

¹³ “Religious Freedom in Indonesia: Situation and Prospects” by Franz Magnis – Suseno, SJ, <http://www.sedsoorg/english/suseno.htm>

regulations would be used to rescind religions freedom. Thus religions freedom cannot be understood completely out of the socio-cultural context of its application.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS

Indonesian Muslims view the concept of a democratic state in a perspective, deviating significantly from Western notions. For example, the Western democratic model of a state envisages a secularization of politics in which the relationship between Church and state is clearly separated. This precisely is the point of departure for Indonesian Muslims from the Western notion as they believe that religion, in the context of Indonesian society, cannot be segregated from political processes of the state. They believe that state should provide religion with the space or opportunity to influence the political process, in particular, those policies requiring a spiritual perspective. Consequently they envisage the *kiais* or *Ulama*'s or religious leaders to play an active role in political processes. This view is based on their assumption that *kiais* are better suited at understanding and interpreting religious doctrines, than the followers. They further perceive a state to be progressive if there is a good relationship between, the government officials and religious leaders, or between the *Umaro* and *Ulama*. They base this perception on the *Hadith* (Prophet Muhammad's tradition) according to which "the worst among the *Ulama* are those who go and see the *umaro*, while the best among the *umaro* are those who come and see the *ulama*".

Majority of the Indonesian Muslims, however acknowledge the fact that the relationship, as mentioned in the *Hadith*, cannot be fully realized in Indonesia. Thus, it is impossible to formally give a special space to the religious leaders in

political institutions. Nevertheless they want the government to consider the religious leaders as spiritual leaders who can contribute spiritually to the process of development. Thus the process of development is not strictly separated from the values of religion.

Young elites from mainstream Muslim organizations believe that the values of *Pancasila* do not contradict with the values of Islam. For example, the concept of *Tauhid* (the doctrine of oneness) under Islam, which acknowledges monotheism, corresponds to the first principle of *Pancasila* i.e, “The Only One God”. Thus *Pancasila* is suited to Islam. Further, they realize that as the establishment of an Islamic State is inimical to Indonesia’s national interest, therefore, *Pancasila* as an ideology, which tolerates and gives freedom to the Muslims to perform the teachings of Islam, is a viable option. They thus respect the holders of other religions. Further, they believe that *Pancasila* is the ideal ideology for Indonesia because it is acceptable to other religions as well. A national ideology, derived from Islam, may not be acceptable to other religions communities.

In Muslims Indonesian politics, years of struggle against Suharto’s dictatorship had deepened the mainstream’s commitment to democracy, constitutional law, civil independence and peaceful reformation. Important in this regard have been the ideas and actions of Norcholish Madjid. Amien Rais, Abdurrahman Wahid and other mainstream Muslims who even during phases violent repression have held firmly to their calls for “*Reformasi Damai*” (Peaceful Reformation). Nevertheless there is still a bitter divide between political reformers

committed to a secular of (more precisely) “nonconfessional” nationalism, such as Wahid and most of the military, and those who would give a more Islamic cast to Indonesian democracy. Resultantly there is no single dominant Islamic grouping in Indonesia. There is also no consensus on the role of Islam in the state. The divide between modernists and neo-traditionalists has been further complicated by the presence of conservative Islamists and more significantly, pious Muslims committed to a more-or-less secular nationalism. The central leadership over the years has however, remains committed to a pluralist *Pancasila* Indonesia. They attribute *Pancasila* as the glue that holds Indonesia together.

Regarding radicalism, Azyumardi Azra, rector of the State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN), maintains that it is simplistic to think of Indonesian Islam as the same as Islam in the Middle East. Although there are up to 100,000 Islamic schools (*Pesantren*) in Indonesia, links with the West remain strong, especially among the leading elites. While there are many versions of Islam with competing interpretations, it is invariably the liberal and tolerant version that remains the dominant one. Thus a vast majority of Indonesian Muslims remains tolerant and inclusive. In 1999, the majority of votes went to secular parties. Religious parties, which called for introduction of Islamic law, polled a miserable 1.7%.

Radical Islamic activism, of the Wahhabi variety, remains confined to Aceh only. The radical Islam of Aceh has not proliferated to other parts of Indonesia. Thus its austere variety of Islam has remained localized. The economic crisis of

1997 combined with the political uncertainty following President Suharto's resignation, markedly increased social tensions. Resultantly the violence in Ambon, to an extent, was attributed to the rivalry within the ruling elite that took on religious connotations. The transmigration policy followed by Suharto also played a role in exacerbating tensions in Aceh, West Kalimantan and Ambon after his fall from power. Ethnic and religious mobilization by rival elites was also the dominant factor behind scapegoating of Chinese minority in Jakarta in mid - 1998. Thus all inter-ethnic and inter-religious violence of the past few years was provoked by power struggles between rival elite factions, or deliberated by certain factions with the aim of destabilizing Wahid's and later Megawati's government. Most of the violence was and is believed to have been financed and felicitated by military and civilian interests. This however does not mean that the radical groups are mere puppets, tools in the hand of unscrupulous political manipulators. At least some of these groups are rooted in movements that have existed before, as Masyumi and the Darul Islam movement. Thus there is no conspiracy at the center directing these radical groups but rather a breakdown in governance at the center and an inability or unwillingness to prevent the excesses of individual players.

Political violence in the post Suharto era also has undergone a transformation. What differentiates past instances of violence from the current ones are absence of any intense ideological rivalry. The emerging Islamic parties are involved in political violence almost by default, due to failure to control their party members. Also, during the 1950's none of the parties had a paramilitary

wing. Now according to findings of Greg Fealy, a lecturer in Southeast Asian Politics and History at Australian National University, every party, Islamic or otherwise, has an auxiliary paramilitary wing, from well trained cadres to ordinary hooligans – for example, Laskar Jihad is the paramilitary wing of FKAWJ. Further economic hardships, especially after the 1997 crisis, have strengthened the level of aggression and frustration in Indonesian masses. Thus with 40 million unemployed and 1.3 million internally displaced people, Indonesian society is more prone to fall prey to Islamic fundamentalist militantism promoted globally by Al-Qaeda and others.

The events after the September 11 attacks on American Cities, led to an increase in Anti-American rhetoric. The American crusade in Afghanistan has led to an increase in activities of the militant conservative Muslim groups. For example, Laskar Jihad has chosen to concentrate on reigniting the conflict between Christians and Muslims in the vicinity of Paso, Central Sulawesi. Laskar Jihad remains the most flamboyant and militant of the Islamic organizations. The recent bombing of two nightclubs in Bali on 12th October, 2002 also brought to light another fundamentalist group Jemaah Islamiyah (J.I). It is believed to be a regional organization with operational cells in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Philippines. Indonesian cleric Abu Bakar Ba'asyir is one of its founding members. The organization is believed to have links with Al Qaeda and is perceived to be active in Indonesia, recruiting members from among the hardcore Islamic and weak sections of the Indonesian society. Thus the events after the September 11 attacks have made a section of Indonesian Muslims more

fundamentalist in their approach to radicalism in particular and Islam in general. Consequently U.S. and Western interests in Indonesia are facing an ever increasing threat.

Indonesia lacks the equivalence of an internal security act that would allow the authorities greater latitude in dealing with suspected terrorists. Also the government and secular forces have been unable to mobilize the latent source of support that exists among mainstream Muslim groups to regain control of the political and ideological agenda. By not confronting the radicals, successive governments are allowing them to seize the political agenda. Thus the political space for radical and fundamentalist Islam is expanding.

Thus Indonesia represents a model for religions and ethnic-culturally different societies, communities to live together in peace and mutual respect. Fundamentalism, which exists, can however, be treated in contrast to the Arab-Mediterranean region – as quantity negligible. In general the insignificant group of fundamentalists is usually made up of Indonesians who have studied in the Arab centers of Islamic civilization and who arduously want to imitate the letters rigorous Islamic version.

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