Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations

The Diverse Voices of Political Islam in Post-Suharto Indonesia

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ABSTRACT *Since the resignation of Suharto as president of Indonesia in May 1998, the country has suffered from chronic instability on various fronts. Economic disruption resulting from the Asian economic crisis of 1997 continues. Food shortages have been widespread throughout the archipelago. Social instability has been rife, especially in densely populated areas where communities have had to compete for scarce resources. Inter-religious conflict has exploded, especially between Muslim and Christian communities, reflecting a common outcome of economic and social instability. This paper will focus upon Indonesia in the period May 1998–July 2001 and will draw upon wide-ranging print and electronic media reports as well as secondary scholarship. Particular attention will be devoted to the political stage and to the changing role of Islam in that context. We will consider the different voices being heard among the Muslim community, the key issues of debate that have preoccupied Muslim political leaders and the ingredients which have contributed to a surge in Muslim–Christian conflict in Indonesia during the period being examined.*

A Context of Islamic Revival

During the last years of the New Order regime, President Suharto and his government launched a programme of controlled Islamization in an effort to harness the momentum for change which was sweeping the Islamic community within Indonesia. Central events in the early 1990s were the establishment of the Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association (ICMI) in December 1990, Suharto's very public pilgrimage to the Islamic holy sites in Arabia in June 1991, the launching of a state Islamic bank adhering to Islamic banking practice and the launching of a newspaper, *Republika*, which served as a mouthpiece for the government Islamization campaign (Abdillah 1997, 47–9).

The Islamization programme did not generate the spread of Islamic awareness; it merely reflected it. During the 1990s Islamic revival affected all levels of Indonesian society. As Schwarz (1994, 174) observed, 'No longer is Islam seen as the opiate of the uneducated and economically deprived.' This revival has taken various forms.

Islamic influence is discernible in marketing, with increasing commercial advertising making use of Islamic symbols and motifs to appeal to a specifically Muslim audience. For example, a recent television advertisement for noodles took pains to point out that the noodles in question adhered to the requirements of Islamic law (ḥalāl), and suggested that rival products might not be ḥalāl by being made with pork by-products. Similarly, a toothpaste advertisement on television carried a reference to a Ḥadīth account reporting Muhammad cleaning his teeth.

On another plane, six Indonesian banks announced that they would be converting to

Islamic banks, adhering to Sharīʿa rules about non-payment of interest. In place of an interest-based system, the banks planned to give dividends on profits (*Tempo Interaktif*, 18 January 1999).

The country also witnessed a rapid expansion in enrolments at private Islamic colleges. For example, the Yayasan al-Hikmah in Jakarta, which at its establishment in 1970 set as its goal 'the formation of pure Muslims', saw a surge in enrolments reach by 1999 a total of 3000 children drawn from all over the archipelago as well as Malaysia and Singapore. This college comprises a range of programmes in *Daʿwā* and Islamic Studies, Qurʾān recitation, Islamic law, courses for Muslim women and courses in Arabic language. A high proportion of its staff have graduated from Arab and Pakistani Islamic universities, and there is a strong Middle Eastern flavour to its staff, courses and general ambience. In addition to conducting teaching programmes, the foundation is establishing *pesantren* Islamic schools in Javanese rural areas.

Recent years have also witnessed a considerable increase in media discussion of Islamic perspectives on key social and political themes. For example, in the lead-up to the June 1999 general elections in Indonesia, some media outlets explored Islamic models for holding elections, going back to the early Caliph ʿUthmān (*Forum*, 19 April 1999). This search among the sacred scriptures for guidelines for modern-day issues is characteristic of Islamic revivalist thinking, whether of a modernist or a radical Islamist kind.

Islamic revivalism has not only made its mark on orthodox scripturalist thinking. Ṣūfism has also been undergoing a revival (*Panji Masyarakat*, March 1999). Courses on Ṣūfism have been developed and offered by the Indonesian Islamic Media Network, together with the Yayasan Paramadina. These courses have attracted large numbers, especially drawing executives and professionals who can pay the substantial fees charged. The courses in question discourage what is portrayed as 'negative Ṣūfism', i.e. that mystical approach which emphasizes withdrawal, hunger, deprivation and asceticism. In contrast, the courses encourage 'positive Ṣūfism' as consistent with the teachings of the leading twentieth-century Ṣūfi thinker Hamka, i.e. engaging with the world and prioritizing intellectual pursuits. In a similar vein, the Ṣūfi study centre Yayasan Tazkiya Sejati, established in 1997 to offer courses in Ṣūfism, has attracted considerable interest and support, especially from professional women.

Any consideration of revivalism in Indonesia in the late 1990s needs to acknowledge the key role played by the activist Muslim press in demanding that ex-President Suharto be held to account for the excesses of his rule. This tone of assertiveness was very absent during the New Order years, during which the Suharto regime kept a tight rein on the Indonesian press, revoking publishing licences on occasions when certain organs of the media were critical of the regime.

The Emergence of Political Parties

Within a week of taking over from Suharto, President B. J. Habibie gave permission for the formation of more political parties. In a flurry of resulting activity, over 90 new political parties emerged during the second half of 1998. Many of these were Islamic parties; in all, 29 Islamic political parties emerged between May 1998 and January 1999. Of these, thirteen opted for Islam as the party philosophy, two chose both Islam and Pancasila (the religiously pluralist state philosophy) for the party philosophy and thirteen chose Pancasila alone as the party philosophy.

Table 1. Results of the June 1999 parliamentary elections

Party	Percentage	Seats (total 500)
Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P)	37.4	154
Golkar	20.9	120
National Awakening Party (PKB)*	17.4	51
United Development Party (PPP)*	10.7	58
National Mandate Party (PAN)*	7.3	35
Crescent Star Party (PBB)*	1.8	14
Justice Party (PK)*	1.3	6

The 7 June 1999 General Elections

In the general elections for the House of Representatives (DPR) on 7 June 1999, the total vote for all predominantly Muslim parties was 41%, translating to 170 of the 500 DPR seats. This reflects a significant rise on the previous two elections, when the only Muslim party with a primarily Muslim profile, the United Development Party, received 16% (1987) and 17.1% (1992), respectively (Abdillah 1997, 209)—though it should be noted that these two elections are regarded by many scholars as having been neither free nor fair. The electoral outcomes for the seven leading political parties are shown in the Table I, with those parties identifying themselves as predominantly Islamic being starred. However, as later discussion will show, these figures conceal powerful tensions existing within the ranks of the various Indonesian Muslim parties.

20 October 1999 Presidential Elections and the July 2001 Crisis

After the June 1999 DPR elections, attention was turned to preparations for the presidential elections of 20 October 1999. Incumbent President B. J. Habibie withdrew after receiving a vote of no confidence from the parliament just prior to the elections. This left only two candidates for the presidency: Abdurrahman Wahid, leader of the PKB, a traditionalist Muslim party, and Megawati Sukarnoputri, leader of the PDI-P, a nationalist non-sectarian party. Fearful of the possibility of having a nationalist female president, Muslim parties combined behind Abdurrahman Wahid and his considerable credentials as an Islamic scholar ensured his victory.

Supporters of Megawati launched violent protests, claiming that the democratic process reflected in the outcome of the June 1999 elections had been subverted. However, Megawati was quickly appointed as vice-president under Abdurrahman Wahid, and the protests subsided. The team of Wahid–Megawati was widely acclaimed as the ideal combination of Islamic and nationalist visions for the state in the post-Suharto era.

In the event, the new leadership team was not to be of long duration. Abdurrahman Wahid's leadership style and enigmatic nature were to lose him the support of most Muslim parties, and two scandals during his presidency were to trigger a process which led to his impeachment as president in July 2001. The new team of Megawati as president and Hamzah Haz, leader of the PPP, as vice-president, generated further hope that nationalist and Islamic cooperation at the highest level might re-establish stability in the strife-torn country.

Thus it can readily be seen that Islam had resurfaced as a powerful force within politics and society. The public discourse, as reflected in the media and educational

arenas, was increasingly embracing Islamic themes. Furthermore, on the political stage, Islamic parties had emerged as the key challengers to the PDI-P and Golkar, which were essentially nationalist and non-sectarian.

However, the Islamic voice within the political arena was far from united. Intra-Muslim tensions were quick to surface, reflecting a long history of Muslim political disunity in Indonesia. We would thus be well served by turning our attention to an examination of these competing Muslim voices.

Key Actors on the Islamic Political Stage

A typology of Indonesian Islamic viewpoints would greatly help our goal of understanding the contemporary Islamic political scene in Indonesia. However, categories are subject to debate, and labels are used in different ways by different scholars. The long-established division between modernists and traditionalists has been challenged by much recent scholarship, which considers variously that three or four broad categories have emerged (Abdillah 1997, 19). The materials examined for this present study suggest a fourfold typology, which still affirms a core division between modernism and conservative traditionalism, but which adds the categories of neo-modernism and radical Islamism. Tendencies to reformist thinking are not the exclusive preserve of any single category, but rather manifest themselves within each of the four groups, as will be seen from the discussion which follows.

Neo-modernist Liberals

The first stream of Islamic thought which we will consider is that of neo-modernist liberalism. This stream emerged in Indonesia in the late 1960s and 1970s, with its leaders drawn from graduates of the traditionalist *pesantren* or *madrasah* schools (Barton 1997, 328). Jalaluddin Rakhmat, a leading Indonesian scholar of Islam, points to certain specific viewpoints shared by Indonesian neo-modernists. They tend not to see Islam through the lens of Sharīʿa law, but rather in terms of universal values. These values need to be agreed by non-Muslims as well as Muslims, in the view of neo-modernist liberals. Furthermore, this viewpoint does not give priority to struggling within the political arena for the implementation of Sharīʿa law as the basis of the state. Neo-modernists are more inclined towards a Western-style democracy than other Muslim groups, and may cooperate with secular groups. Their public discourse gives greater emphasis to human rights and women's rights (*Tempo Interaktif*, 11 December 2000). Thus debate over whether women should wear the *ḥijāb* is not considered as important as ethical lifestyles. On the question of scripture, the neo-modernists consider that the Qurʾān and Sunna should be open to new and evolving interpretations; Saeed (1997, 287) describes their approach to the Ḥadīth literature as 'sceptical', viewing it as important but lacking in authenticity. Overall, the neo-modernists are more concerned with the essence of Islamic teaching than its form.

Neo-modernist views are best exemplified by several key personalities. The most prominent is Indonesia's fourth president, Abdurrahman Wahid. One of Indonesia's leading newspapers considers him to be a neo-modernist liberal because for him 'Islam is merely a source of inspiration and motivation, and is not itself a social system which should be applied in its entirety' (*Suara Pembaruan Daily*, 12 October 2000).

Another leading neo-modernist is Nurcholish Madjid, a prominent thinker who has carefully avoided becoming directly involved in politics, but whose statements on

political matters carry a powerful influence. Hefner (2000, 115) captures the sense of dynamic fusion of Nurcholish's neo-modernist discourse in stating that it 'was not based on the jurisprudential cadences of Islamic traditionalism or the abstract idealism of Islamic modernism. Madjid's writing was representative of a new genre of Muslim scholarship that combined Qur'ān-inspired commentary with practical political analysis and sophisticated social theory.' Nurcholish directs the Yayasan Paramadina foundation, which he established in 1986. With the fall of Suharto in May 1998, Nurcholish called on Amien Rais, Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Sukarnoputri, all leading contenders for the presidency, to combine forces for the good of the nation in initiating an era of reform. Nurcholish indicated that he himself was not interested in leading the political and social reforms that he considered necessary (*Republika Online*, 18 May 1998).

Other leading Muslim thinkers who fall into the neo-modernist group are Harun Nasution (d. 1998) and Azyumardi Azra, both of whom served as rector of the prominent Jakarta State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah).

Modernist Reformists

The second stream of Islamic thought which deserves separate discussion is that of the modernist reformists. This group, descending from the modernist revolution in Islamic thought which emerged in Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century, is very critical of traditionalist Islam on two counts: first, for what is seen as syncretistic practices among some traditionalists, which modernists consider to cause decay in the faith, and secondly, for the traditionalist penchant for *taqlīd* or uncritical following of the dictates of religious leaders at the expense of creatively engaging with the Islamic scriptures (Barton 1997, 324). Modernists tend to draw their support from urban populations, and regard Western liberal thought—and that of Muslim neo-modernist liberals—with suspicion, as they consider the latter to be selling out on important aspects of the faith. They are committed to consolidating Islam as a powerful political force, but are committed to constitutional processes. They are often divided over the degree to which Sharī'a should have a place in state law.

The voice of this group is articulated in various ways in Indonesia. The leading individual politician who belongs to this group is Amien Rais, described by Abdillah (1997, 20) as 'a modernist, whose views can be accepted by the revivalists'. Rais is presently chairman of the People's Consultative Assembly, as well as head of the PAN, and former leader of the Muhammadiyah modernist organization, which is not a direct participant in the political process. In addition to Rais, the voice of modernist reformism is heard through the PAN and the Muhammadiyah, but even more significantly in political terms through an important inter-party alliance formed within the DPR known as the Poros Tengah (Central Axis). This alliance first emerged after the June 1999 elections, and comprises the partnership formed between the PAN and the more strident PK as core, supplemented by the PPP and several smaller Muslim-based parties, together controlling a bloc of around 120 seats in the DPR. The Central Axis served to empower Amien Rais after the PAN itself only came in fifth position in the June 1999 elections, thus ruining his chance of gaining the presidency.

The Central Axis presents itself as reformist in vision, committed to democracy and nationalism. Initially, it indicated it would support the candidacy of Habibie for the presidency in the October 1999 elections. However, with an increasing awareness of the lack of viability of Habibie's candidature, the Central Axis embraced

Abdurrahman Wahid for the presidency as a strategy to counter Megawati's candidature. The Central Axis was to play a key role in bringing about the impeachment of President Wahid in July 2001, thus demonstrating its power as 'kingmaker'.

A key component of the Central Axis, the PPP led by Hamzah Haz, remained from the Suharto era, and embraced reformist policies with vigour. In line with modernist reformist thinking, it targeted for criticism the principal political representative of traditionalist Islam, namely the PKB. A March 1999 rally of the PPP attracted 40,000 people. Speakers called on supporters to shun the PKB, which was its major Islamic rival in the June 1999 elections (*The Independent* (Bangkok), 2 April 1999). In the event, the PKB outpolled the PPP in the elections by some two million votes, representing over 6% of the electorate.

Another voice articulating modernist reformist sentiment is the ICMI. Though not directly involved in politics, many of its leading members are politicians themselves, chief among whom was former President B. J. Habibie. Following the June 1999 general elections, the ICMI was concerned with the overwhelming support recorded for the PDI-P and its leader Megawati Sukarnoputri, and it played a key role in proposing and generating the Central Axis coalition of Muslim parties, which led to the eventual success of Abdurrahman Wahid in the presidential election. It was ably assisted in this task by the newspaper *Republika*, established at the same time as the ICMI and closely allied to ICMI policies and pronouncements.

Traditionalists

The third stream of Islamic thought is that of conservative traditionalism. Kurzman (1998, 5) refers to this group as followers of 'customary Islam, characterized by the combination of regional practices and those that are shared throughout the Islamic world'. Aspects of this stream are twofold: on the one hand they include those who revere local saints, a practice which has attracted so much criticism from modernist reformists, plus diverse syncretistic practices, especially in Java (Beatty 2000, 41–2); on the other they include a response to these syncretistic practices from traditionalist clerics, who urge a closer adherence to scriptural dictates, and above all obedience to established religious leadership.

On the political stage this group finds its voice in the PKB, which was established on 23 July 1998 by prominent figures associated with the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). The NU since its establishment 'had prioritised the values of the people of Indonesia rather than seeking to establish an Islamic state or instituting Islamic law in a formal way within the Indonesian state. Thus the PKB regarded the form of the unitary Republic of Indonesia as the final form' (Iskandar 1998, 26). The chairman of the PKB, H. Matori Abdul Djalil, quoting Abdurrahman Wahid, emphasizes the primary need for 'an Islamic society where Islamic values are carried out within the overall context of the Indonesian national state, rather than an Indonesian state where Islamic values could be officially recognised' (*Media Indonesia*, 9 April 1999). Thus Islam fits within the structure of Indonesia, rather than the reverse (as would be insisted upon by radical Islamists, discussed below).

The primary non-political voice for orthodox traditionalism has long been the NU, which was established in 1926. The membership of this organization currently stands at around 30 million (Mujiburrahman 1999, 340), with the NU controlling an extensive educational system comprising 5742 *pesantren*, which encompasses 4114 kindergartens, 780 junior high schools, 299 senior high schools, 19 universities and 26 other

academic institutions (Mangkey 2000). In spite of the history of NU traditionalism, the organization's 'conceptualization is proof that traditional Islam has been able to respond to a modern ideology' (Falaakh 2001, 34). In recent years young NU cadres have become more responsive to new ideas and the challenges of modernity, due in large part to the increasing influence of activist non-government organizations (NGOs) via the *pesantren* system of Islamic schools run by the NU. A particularly important NGO in this regard is the Centre for the Development of Pesantren and Society, established in 1983 by rural *pesantren* leaders (*kiai*) and NGO leaders. It establishes agreements with *pesantrens*, using them as a focus of community development work, and also runs regular seminars and workshops (*halaqah*) focusing on social issues in the context of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), such as the *fiqh* of land, the *fiqh* of tax and the *fiqh* of just leadership (*Indonesian Observer*, 26 November 1999). A further example of the *pesantren* system engaging with modernity is the Pondok Pesantren An-Nawawi in Bojonegoro, East Java, where Kiai Haji Fachurrozi focuses on treating *pesantren* students (*santri*) suffering from mental illnesses. The healing methods represent a mix of alternative medicines and mystical practice. So far this *pesantren* has provided healing services to 760 *santri* (*Jakarta Post*, 14 November 1999). Another good example of this phenomenon is provided by the Pesantren Surialaya in Taskimalaya, West Java, where Syekh Aba Anom provides treatment for drug addicts.

Another body which articulates the conservative traditionalist viewpoint is the Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars (Majelis Ulama Indonesia: MUI), which gathers together religious leaders at various levels from across the archipelago. Nevertheless, within such a body varying voices can be heard, representing the different streams of Islamic thought being examined within these pages.

It is important to take note of the bonds which exist between a number of neo-modernist leaders and traditionalist groups. The PKB was inaugurated in the residence of Abdurrahman Wahid, who served for many years as the head of the NU. When he was impeached as president in July 2001, the principal political and social groups to stand with him were the PKB and the NU. Furthermore, another prominent leader of the PKB who enjoys strong support from the NU, Alwi Shihab, embraces a political and social ideology which could be considered as neo-modernist, no doubt influenced by his period as a PhD. student at Temple University in the USA.

Islamists

The fourth and final stream of Islamic thought which we will examine is that of the Islamists. This is the group which attracts much media attention, and is variously referred to (according to degrees of commitment) as extremist, fundamentalist, radical or Islamist. This group may work within the democratic system, but is ultimately committed to replacing such a system with Islamic structures, allocating a priority to Islamic law, leadership by Muslims and primacy of Islamic scriptural injunctions. Islamists also tend to emphasize the importance of membership of the international Muslim community (*umma*) as a primary focus of identity, rather than Indonesian-ness serving as the key hallmark of self-awareness.

A key senior name in this regard in modern Indonesia is Ahmad Soemargono, who was elected to the DPR in the June 1999 elections as a member of the PBB, which put his name forward as a candidate for the October 1999 Presidential elections. Soemargono also serves as head of the Indonesian Committee for Muslim World Solidarity (Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam: KISDI), a body which prioritizes an

internationalist emphasis on world Islam, and which advocated on behalf of overseas Muslim causes and conflicts during the 1990s in the West Bank and Gaza, Bosnia, Kashmir and Algeria (Hefner 2000, 109–10).

Soemargono expresses passionately the disenchantment felt by Islamists during the Suharto years in the following terms:

> During the New Order Period, an anti-Islam group was in power for 24 years, namely from 1966–1990. During this period, [Islamists] were marginalized and considered as fascists … Suharto at this time was also anti-Islam … Later Suharto changed. From 1993 the atmosphere was more conducive for the Islamic *umma*—the Bank Muamalat was established, ICMI was set up, the cabinet became light green. Nevertheless Suharto changed not for Islam, but rather for his own political advantage. (*Tempo Interaktif*, 23 November 1998)

Soemargono was imprisoned for six months during 1980 after a speech he gave which was critical of the Suharto regime. However, after the regime's change of direction to assume a more Islamic hue, Soemargono established a closer relationship with some of its most prominent figures. He has enjoyed a close working relationship with Major-General Prabowo Subianto, a son-in-law of Suharto (van Dijk 2001, *passim*). Such links with army groups opposed to the pro-democracy movement no doubt reflect Soemargono's leanings, though due recognition should be given to the religious factors which underpin his views on the subject, rather than the power-related considerations which motive some army leaders, such as Prabowo. His rather qualified support for democracy is well reflected in a statement made to the press at the height of one of the debates which raged following Suharto's fall: 'the ideal is that if we have democracy, it should be proportional. And this means that the leader should be a Muslim' (*Tempo Interaktif*, 23 November 1998). In his private life Soemargono seeks to provide a model of strict adherence to Islamic precepts. He insists that his daughters wear *ḥijāb*, and forbids his children to walk in public with members of the opposite sex in pairs. Even as a member of the DPR, he still studies qur'ānic recitation and exegesis with a private Qur'ān teacher. He argues that polygamy is permissible, providing it follows religious guidelines and the first wife agrees. He argues that it is a very effective mechanism for caring for widows and their children (*Suara Hidayatullah*, December 1999).

Support for Islamists is gaining ground among segments of the Muslim youth in Indonesia. A young Islamist who is achieving increasing prominence, especially among student activists, is H. Muhammad Anis Matta. Born in October 1968 in Bone, South Sulawesi, Anis Matta has made a name for himself as a fiery young preacher, with his sermons achieving wide distribution in both cassette form (Matta n.d.) and on the Internet (Matta 1999). He was appointed as General Secretary of the PK when it was established in August 1998, and lobbied against the appointment of Abdurrahman Wahid as president the following year (Matta 2000), setting himself in opposition to the latter's neo-modernist views. The PK was founded by youthful '*dakwah* activists' (van Dijk 2001, 315), insists on segregation between men and women in its party headquarters and bans handshakes between its male and female members.

Beyond the immediate political stage, radical Islamist sentiment is articulated by several other groups. In March 1998 the Indonesian Muslim Students Association (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia: KAMMI) was established, and became very active organizing demonstrations in the period 1998–2001, with protests becoming increasingly intense as regional and sectarian conflicts flared in 2000. The leader of the KAMMI, Fahri Hamzah, said in interview that Indonesia should be governed accord-

ing to Islamic tenets, with the immediate banning of night-clubs, alcohol and prostitution (*Asiaweek*, 19 June 1998).

Further on the Islamist theme, recent years have witnessed the emergence of the Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah Laskar Jihad, a radical group committed to conducting military *jihād* on behalf of Muslim communities in Indonesia which are in conflict with non-Muslim neighbours. It first emerged as a coherent group during the 1999 troubles in the Moluccas. In January and February 2000, over 3000 Laskar Jihad fighters were reported to have reached the Moluccas, with more arriving in the region in early May after receiving military training at a base in Munjul village near Bogor on Java. The training camp is established on a seven-hectare plot of land belonging to the Al-Irsyad foundation. In interview, the leader of the Laskar Jihad, Jaffar Umar Thalib, said the aim was to deploy 10,000 volunteer fighters in the Moluccas, and that he would be visiting countries 'such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Jordan' to discuss the *jihād* (*BBC News*, 20 June 2000). The Laskar Jihad fighters were reportedly quickly into action soon after arrival (*New York Times*, 28 June 2000), and there were regular reports of massacres of Christians, as well as forced conversions to Islam and forced circumcisions during the period April 2000–February 2001.

A profile of a typical Laskar Jihad fighter was obtained when twelve members of the Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah Laskar Jihad were detained by security forces in Ambon, and assorted weaponry confiscated in mid-2000. All were aged between 19 and 23, and originated from Jakarta, Yogyakarta, West, Central and East Java, and North Sumatra. (*Jakarta Post*, 26 October 2000).

Radical Islamist sentiment is also nurtured by events such as the First Indonesian Mujahidin Congress held in Yogyakarta in early August 2000. This event was attended by 5000 people, and donations were received from Muslims in Sweden, Germany and Australia. Criticism was voiced of the Turkish model of secularization developed by Attaturk, with fears that Indonesia might go down the same route. The congress concluded with the establishment of a Mujahidin Assembly, the purpose of which, according to the chairman of the congress committee, Irfan S. Awwas, was 'ensuring that the Sharīʿa is upheld by Muslims in Indonesia and the world … The main objective is the establishment of a khilafah or one leadership for all Muslims in the world, similar to that in the Prophet's era' (*Jakarta Post*, 9 August 2000). Also emerging from the congress was a document called the *Yogyakarta Charter*, which called for amending the Indonesian constitution to make adherence to Sharīʿa law compulsory for Indonesian Muslims.

Key Issues of Debate

It would be instructive to see how the above streams of Islamic thought are articulated in the context of specific debates which have preoccupied the Islamic political stage in recent years.

A Female President?

With the success of the PDI-P in the parliamentary elections in June 1999, it seemed as if Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of the first president of Indonesia, was front-runner to become the fourth holder of this post. The fact of her being a woman triggered a considerable debate within Islamic political circles.

Leading neo-modernist voices such as Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid seemed to be driven by pragmatic rather than scriptural considerations. Speaking at the Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies in Singapore on 24 March 1999, Wahid indicated it was unlikely Megawati would be successful in her bid for the presidency because of the influence of Islam and Islamic law on the majority of voters. Nurcholish Madjid suggested Megawati needed to appear more Islamic if she hoped to win the masses. He suggested, for example, that she should use the Arabic greeting *assalamu 'alaikum* in speeches and readings from the Qur'ān in PDI-P forums (*Ummat*, 1 February 1999).

Modernist voices were more motivated by theological concerns. After the June 1999 elections, PPP leader Hamzah Haz issued a statement calling for the president to be Muslim and male. The PPP called for a coalition of Islamic parties to achieve this goal. This call was in harmony with ICMI statements made by its leader Ahmad Tirtosudiro, who referred to the 'gender problem' of having a female president, and the influence of non-Muslims within the PDI-P.

At the Congress of the Indonesian Muslim Community (Kongres Umat Islam Indonesia: KUII) held in Jakarta in early November 1998, a recommendation was passed that the President must be male, according to Islamic injunctions. Several individual Islamic scholars (*ulama*) issued their own *fatwā* statements saying it was not appropriate for a woman to become president. Similarly, Islamist voices such as Ahmad Soemargono, his PBB and the PK, opposed Megawati's candidature for the presidency in 1999 on the same grounds, expressing strong condemnation of the notion of a female leader during a mass meeting at the Al Azhar Mosque in Jakarta organized by the KISDI on 4 July 1999 (van Dijk 2001, 444).

Criticism of this view was heard from some Muslim quarters. The leading figure of the PKB, Alwi Shihab, who has strong NU connections, issued a statement saying there was no obstacle to a woman filling the presidency (*Detikcom*, 11 June 1999). The Pengurus Pusat Aisyiah, a women's organization of the Muhammadiyah, called for caution in dealing with such a sensitive issue. Furthermore, Megawati Sukarnoputri received strong expressions of support from traditionalist rural *pesantren* leader (*kiai*) groups for her candidature for the presidency (*Waspada*, 7 November 1998).

When President Wahid was impeached in July 2001, the same debate could potentially have resurfaced. However, different circumstances prevailed at the time. Megawati was the incumbent vice-president, and the constitution determined that in the event of the impeachment of the chief executive, the incumbent vice-president should assume the presidency. Thus any attempt to prevent Megawati becoming president on the grounds of her gender, or any other grounds, would have been unconstitutional. In the event, her appointment as president proceeded smoothly. Latent concerns in certain quarters were addressed in part by the appointment of PPP leader Hamzah Haz as vice-president, thereby ensuring that the Muslim Central Axis was only one step from the throne. If the new regime under President Megawati is not able to surmount Indonesia's multiple problems within a reasonable time-frame, the issue of gender and leadership may well resurface.

Islamic Political Parties?

When President Habibie gave permission for the free establishment of political parties in late May 1998 soon after he assumed the presidency, a long-running intra-Muslim debate was revived over whether Islamic political parties should be established.

Neo-modernists expressed ambivalence over the need to have Islamic political parties. Abdurrahman Wahid commented as follows:

> On the one hand, Islam is the majority. So any [politically minded] Muslim will be a representative of the Islamic community. In this case there is no need to form an Islamic party, as long as the Head of State and many high state officials are Muslim … On the other hand, the Islamic community should have political representation [via the PPP] and non-political representation [via the Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama]. Indeed, many non-political movements in deed and fact have a political character. An example is ICMI. (*Gatra*, 25 January 1997)

Nurcholish Madjid affirmed a view which he had long articulated, opposing the establishment of religion-affiliated political parties. He advocates the relegation of Islam to the private domain. From the early 1970s his catchcall has been 'Islam yes, Islamic political parties no' (*Gatra*, 25 January 1997).

As for modernist groups, there was broad agreement with the concept of establishing political parties which drew on Islam as their primary inspiration, but there were different perspectives on the degree to which the Islamic identity should be made overt. The PPP quickly reinstated the Ka'ba as its symbol, and affirmed Islam as its party philosophy in place of Pancasila in late 1998. Earlier in the same year, Amien Rais had questioned the wisdom of founding an Islam-based political party, though his primary motivation was strategic. On the one hand, he foresaw greater potential electoral support for a party which did not present itself as exclusively Islamic; on the other, he wished to reassure his supporters that he was committed to Islam as the party basis. He sought to balance these two notions with the following statement: 'If I lead an Islamic party, then those supporters of Megawati whom I could attract via a broad-based party would not choose me because I was associated with a party which was exclusively Islamic … In my opinion, our basis must be *iman dan taqwa* [faith and obedience to God], in the form of our Qur'ān and Sunnah' (Rais 1998, 134–5). Rais was made leader of the new PAN, and the party postponed a decision as to whether to make *iman dan taqwa* the official basis of the party in place of Pancasila both at its inception and again at its February 2000 congress.

Nevertheless, PAN's increasing self-perception as predominantly Islamic in inspiration was enunciated by its key role in the Central Axis alliance in the parliament. This was further reinforced by the close association which developed between PAN and the more strident PK, which at its establishment on 9 August 1998 drew on the principle that 'political parties are an effective means of creating a structure for a Muslim society … the founders and supporters of the Justice Party [PK] are convinced that the ideals of Islamic *da'wā* [propagation] represent a long-term goal which should be pursued little by little, (Ismail 1998, 35).

The somewhat different stances of the PPP and the PAN are reflected in their respective logos, with that of the former clearly Islamic with its inclusion of the Ka'ba and that of the PAN more ambiguous. The PK logo is also Islamic in flavour with its twin crescent moons, though not as overtly as that of the PPP (see Figures 1–3).

The modernist newspaper *Republika* addressed the emergence of dozens of new Islamic political parties in late 1998, and asked whether they would be pillars of democratic life. It pointed out that the New Order government had opposed Islamic political parties on the grounds that an association of Islam and politics often mani-
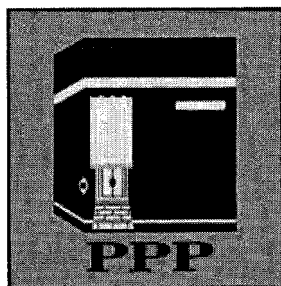
FIGURE 1. Logo of the PPP.

FIGURE 2. Logo of the PAN.

FIGURE 3. Logo of the PK.

fested itself in harsh, undemocratic and even subversive practices (*Republika Online,* 31 December 1998).

The KUII, held in Jakarta 3–7 November 1998 supported, the call for the establish-ment of specifically Islamic political parties and recommended that the Pancasila should no longer be the only acceptable philosophy for political and social organiza-tions.

Traditionalist groups showed some ambivalence on the question of Islam serving as the basis of political bodies. The PKB selected a non-Islamic logo in contrast with the PPP, and maintained Pancasila as the party philosophy. However, at its thirtieth congress in late November 1999, the non-political NU, the parent organization of the PKB, opted to discard Pancasila in favour of Islam as the organizational principle

(*Indonesian Observer*, 26 November 1999). Furthermore, K. H. Ali Yafie, the chairman of the MUI, spoke in favour of the establishment of religion-affiliated parties in the following terms: 'One cannot avoid the emergence of religion-based political parties. This is constitutional. If we are democratic, there should be no problem with this. What causes problems these days is that people use religious symbols outside the framework of democracy' (*Tempo Interaktif*, 14 December 1998).

When permission was given for the establishment of political parties in late May 1998, the Islamist Ahmad Soemargono quickly called for the establishment of Islamic political parties in a sermon at the Al Azhar Grand Mosque in Jakarta. The PBB was founded on 17 July that same year, with Soemargono one of its leading spokesmen, with the PK established by young activists only three weeks later.

The Jakarta Charter: Sharīʿa for Indonesian Muslims?

A debate has resurfaced in Indonesia since the fall of the Suharto regime which harks back to the early days of independence. In mid-1945, Indonesian nationalist leaders laboured over the precise wording to be used in the constitution of the new Republic. One of the most contentious issues surrounded the place to be allocated to Islam in the state.

Soekarno argued that the constitution should not give primacy to any single religion and proposed Pancasila, with its general statement of Belief in God as a central principle, as the ideal solution. Some Muslim leaders argued that Islam should be given a primary role, in recognition of the fact that it was the faith of the vast majority of citizens of the new state. Those taking a maximalist position argued for an Islamic state where the Sharīʿa would be the law of the land. Others proposed that the role of the Sharīʿa should be understood more narrowly, in terms of expecting that Indonesian Muslims should observe Islamic legal requirements. This latter viewpoint was embodied in the Jakarta Charter, a seven-word phrase which specified the requirements for Indonesian Muslims: *dengan kewajiban menjalankan syariah Islam bagi pemeluknya* (with the duty for the faith's adherents to practise Islamic Sharīʿa).

When the constitution was ratified, the Jakarta Charter was not included in the preamble. However, since the fall of Suharto, this debate has resurfaced, even being discussed in the forum of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) meeting of August 2000. On this debate also, varying viewpoints can be observed among the different streams of Islamic thought discussed earlier.

Nurcholish Madjid argued forcefully against increasing the role of Sharīʿa in matters of state (*Asiaweek*, 19 June 1998). Such was also the view of other leading neo-modernist thinkers, such as Emil Salim, Sucipto Wirosardjono and Abdurrahman Wahid, who 'does not aspire to an Islamic state [theocracy] for Indonesia, and therefore rejects any 'formalization' of religion within the state' (Mujiburrahman 1999, 344).

In July 1998, Amien Rais was interviewed on this subject at a conference in Malaysia. He articulated a viewpoint which was broadly in harmony with the views of the neo-modernists, as follows:

> I think the five principles of Pancasila are completely in line with Islamic teachings … the term Islamic State is very sensitive in my country … if I used the term Islamic State, there will be many groups in my country who will try to undermine my position … to manage a modern state, you have to have a complete book of law. I think the Qur'ān is not a book of law, … it is a source

of law—so you cannot make a source of law as a book of law. (*Crescent International*, 1–15 September 1998).

In a subsequent interview, Rais reaffirmed that the Islamic state is not the appropriate model for Indonesia, given its diversity (*Tempo Interaktif*, 11 January 1999). Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif of the Muhammadiyah argued similarly.

Other modernist voices took a different view from Rais and the Muhammadiyah. The PPP called for the reinstatement of the Jakarta Charter in the MPR meeting of August 2000, suggesting that it should not replace the Pancasila, but be incorporated within the body of the constitution (*Tempo Interaktif*, 10 August 2000).

Traditionalist voices were heard in opposition to the proposal to revive the Jakarta Charter. The PKB argued accordingly in the MPR debate in August 2000. Hasyim Muzadi of the NU similarly pressed for the maintenance of the existing constitution with its prioritizing of Pancasila.

Islamist groups were predictably in favour of reviving the Jakarta Charter. The First Indonesian Mujahidin Congress of November 2000 called for the inclusion of the Jakarta Charter in the constitution, and for Sharī'a to be applied as state law. Some went even further. The periodical *Tempo* reported on student cells in Bogor Agricultural University and the Bandung Institute of Technology, two leading Indonesian state universities, which had sworn oaths of allegiance to the Proclamation of the Islamic State of Indonesia, which was declared in 1948 by Kartosurwiryo, the leader of the Darul Islam rebellion. These student cells declared as null and void the Soekarno-Hatta declaration of an independent republic in August 1945 (*Tempo Interaktif*, 28 February 2000).

Trade Relations with Israel?

While chairman of the NU, Abdurrahman Wahid had visited Israel in 1994 as guest of the Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, and upon his return he had suggested that Indonesia establish diplomatic relations with Israel (Mujiburrahman 1999, 339). Less than one month after assumption of the Indonesian presidency, Wahid announced that trade relations would be established with the Jewish state (*Kompas*, 26 October 1999).

The latest proposal unleashed a storm of protest from various quarters, with this issue serving to unite the various streams of Islamic thought. Islamist groups were most vocal in their opposition. Student demonstrations were held in front of the parliament building in Jakarta, while in Bandung protests were organized by the Islamist student group KAMMI. PBB parliamentary representative and KISDI chairman Ahmad Soemargono spoke vehemently against this proposal, saying 'we appeal to the … state officials to cancel their plan … their attempt will plunge this nation into the Zionist embrace and disintegration'. The KISDI held a rally at the Al Azhar Grand Mosque in Jakarta to protest the government proposal (*Jakarta Post*, 13 November 1999).

The traditionalist Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars spoke out against the proposal, as did representatives from various modernist groups. Dismay was also expressed by several local embassies of Muslim countries, and President Wahid sought to assuage their concerns. In a meeting with sixteen local envoys from Arab countries, the president insisted that diplomatic ties would not be established until an independent Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem was established. In the press, Wahid argued forcefully for establishing trade ties with the Jewish state, saying that Indonesia

might thus act as a mediator in the Israel–Palestine dispute, and pointing out that some Arab countries had trade ties with Israel. He rejected criticism, saying it was strange that Indonesia had relations with godless countries like the former USSR and China but not Israel, which believed in One God (*Jakarta Post*, 15 November 1999).

Support for President Wahid's initiative was sparse. The Indonesian Bishops Conference said the Catholic Church saw no theological obstacle to the plan, and that it should be determined by Indonesia's interests (*Jakarta Post*, 12 November 1999). Eventually bowing to pressure, the government took the decision to postpone the planned contact with Israel. However, considerable damage had been done to the broad-based support from diverse Islamic groups for President Wahid within one month of his assumption of office, and this issue was a key component in the subsequent and steady erosion of support, which ultimately led to Wahid's isolation at the time of his impeachment in July 2001.

The Place of Minorities?

The issue of religious and ethnic minorities and their rightful place in society has been the cause of considerable debate since the fall of the Suharto regime.

Neo-modernist thinkers take a broad view on this subject. In interview, Abdurrahman Wahid appealed to universal values in commenting as follows:

> Concepts of understanding God can differ, but it does not necessarily imply rejection. Just difference. Difference is not rejection. Difference is understanding … We have to regard difference, whether ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural etc., as a sign of the greatness of God … A fact which cannot be ignored is that God himself made different religions. (*Narwastu*, February 1999)

Wahid's perception as a religious pluralist was affirmed when he officially opened a poetry competition in a Jakarta church, in spite of accusations of 'infidel' (*kāfir*) from some Islamists (*Narwastu,* February 1999). Furthermore, he attended New Year celebrations organized by the High Council of Confucianism in Indonesia and commented in his address that 'Confucius' followers also have equal rights and opportunities in Indonesia … all discriminatory actions against Confucianism must end' (*South China Morning Post*, 30 January 2001).

Nurcholish Madjid has long taken a similar view to that of his fellow neo-modernist Wahid. Madjid is a clear advocate for the rights of minorities, declaring that 'We cannot allow the minorities to continuously feel threatened' (*Ummat*, 1 February 1999). His liberal approach to this question includes an extension of the understanding of the term 'People of the Book' to include any religion which has a scripture, including Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism (Saeed 1997, 291). In a famous presentation in October 1992, Madjid argued that 'the Qur'ān was revealed to confirm and protect the truth of prior revelations, especially but not exclusively those of Judaism and Christianity' (Hefner 2000, 144). This drew a response of outrage from Islamist groups, as well as several death threats.

Modernists tend to look to Islamic scripture for guidance on this matter. In response to reported killings and rapes of Chinese in Jakarta in mid-1998, Amien Rais declared that there is no basis in the Qur'ān or Ḥadīth for rioting or victimizing Chinese. He stated that Chinese are of Adam's flock too, and that they should be protected by the Muslim majority around them (*Republika Online*, 16 May 1998).

Traditionalists have also spoken out in support of a compassionate consideration of minorities. As violence escalated through Indonesia in January 2000, there were reports that Islamist vigilante gangs were conducting checks of identity cards of passers-by in Jakarta and Ujung Pandang as a way of identifying Christians, who would then be attacked and in some cases killed. The Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars (MUI) head H. Amidhan spoke out strongly against this, calling for security forces to take stern action against these gangs, and insisting that their actions were inconsistent with the teaching of Islam, which called for tolerance of minorities (*Indonesian Observer*, 21 January 2000). Similarly, a statement was issued by MUI chairman Umar Shihab deploring the December 2000 bombings of Christian sites and offering condolences to the families of victims (*Republika Online*, 25 December 2000). Kyai Haji Zainuddin described the bombings of Christian buildings as 'shameful', and posed a rhetorical question to a large Muslim audience which he addressed at Freedom Square in Jakarta: 'What would it feel like if it was your mosque … your temple?' (*Straits Times Interactive*, 28 December 2000).

Islamist voices do not always offer such a reasoned approach. Speaking after reprisal attacks on mosques in Kupang following church burnings in Jakarta, Ahmad Soemargono said, 'We can see how minority groups become tyrannical when they have power … The problems don't always originate from the Muslim side. There is always a cause … When a bottle of beer is thrown at a mosque, this triggers a reaction. If the Islamic community was not provoked, it would never react' (*Tempo Interaktif*, 14 December 1998). The words of Muhammad Anis Matta on the subject of minorities are even more polemical. Speaking on the Moluccan crisis, he said 'Allah makes clear who are the enemies of the Muslim community from the armies of Satan, namely the adherents of the revealed religions from the People of the Book—the Jews and Christians—as well as the polytheists or the adherents of man-made religions' (Matta 1999).

How to Handle the Moluccan Crisis?

During 1999 the Moluccan crisis had steadily deteriorated, with Muslims and Christians accusing each other of violent attacks and atrocities. During 2000, matters took an even worse turn, and leaders of all parties and groups were called upon by their constituencies to make policy statements and suggest appropriate responses.

President Wahid was at pains to avoid being seen to side with either the Muslim or the Christian side in the conflict. His government sent more troops to the Moluccas in the hope of restoring order, and despatched naval units to inspect incoming vessels for illegal arms shipments to the warring parties.

After a reported massacre of Muslims by Christians on the North Moluccan island of Halmahera in late December 1999, events moved rapidly. Wahid continued to try to maintain an even-handed approach, and his lack of overt support for the Muslim side in the conflict caused the further erosion of Central Axis support for him during January 2000 (*Utusan Malaysia Online*, 14 January 2000). Amien Rais, as head of the Central Axis, addressed a mass rally at the National Monument in Jakarta on 7 January 2000, declaring that the Central Axis would 'uphold Muslim interests' in the Moluccas, and serving a deadline of two weeks on President Wahid to solve the crisis (*Australian*, 14 January 2000). During his address, sections of the mass crowd chanted, 'Allahu akbar' and 'jihād, jihād'. His address was recorded and widely distributed in cassette form, and had the important effect of raising the stakes and the temperature of the

Muslim–Christian tensions. This was a key moment in the emergence of the Laskar Jihad, though Rais did not necessarily intend for this to be the specific outcome of his address.

The leading neo-modernist Nurcholish Madjid was strongly critical of Amien Rais for taking such a partisan stance in the Moluccan conflict, and called for calm and a softening of rhetoric (*Indonesian Observer*, 18 January 2000). However, the damage was done, and the momentum of Islamist activity picked up pace, especially in the form of the training of Laskar Jihad fighters and their despatch to the Moluccas in the following months. This Islamist response was fuelled by the fiery rhetoric of figures such as Muhammad Anis Matta, who used a late 1999 Ramadan sermon (which was posted on the PK website) to call for military *jihād* in support of Moluccan Muslims who, he claimed, were the victims of unprovoked attacks by Christians. In polemical language, Matta referred to Muslim corpses being crucified in Christian churches in the Moluccas, and accused Moluccan Christians of being sadists (Matta 1999). Matta had previously distributed aid to Muslim victims of the fighting in Ambon in February 1999, in the form of funds collected from an Islamic global network collecting *zakat*, called the Komite Zakat, Infaq, dan Shadaqah (*Laporan Kegiatan Kzis-Isnet*).

The Moluccan crisis acted as a catalyst for Christian-Muslim conflict in other parts of the archipelago. Several Christian schools located near the Yogyakarta stadium where the First Indonesian Mujahidin Congress was being held in August 2000 received threatening letters from the Front Jihad Muslimin Indonesia during the congress (*Tempo Interaktif*, 2 August 2000). On the island of Lombok a number of Christians were killed, Christian property was destroyed and two-thirds of the Lombok Christian population of 7000 was forced to flee the island after attacks by local Muslims seeking revenge for reported Christian attacks on Muslims in the Moluccas (*Australian*, 24 January 2000). Both Muslim and Christian communities were guilty of atrocities in this increasing spiral of violence throughout the archipelago, as evidenced by the massacre of hundreds of Muslim Madurese transmigrants in Kalimantan by Christian Dayak tribesmen in February 2001.

The flames of this sectarian violence were fuelled by radical rhetoric from Islamist groups. Following the Christmas 2000 bombings of Christian churches throughout the archipelago, the radical periodical *Sabili* commented:

> The wounds of the Moluccan Muslim community have not yet healed. But the Christians want to inflict new wounds once again … The assault of the Christians against the Muslims three years ago indeed inflicted a 'wound' on the Islamic community. That assault was not only symbolic of the hatred which the Christians felt for the Muslims, but also reflected the ideological envy which had developed within them. (*Sabili Online*, 26 December 2000)

Indonesia: A Federal State?

With regional crises breaking out throughout the archipelago, some political leaders have made reference to federalism as a possible alternative political structure for the future.

On 27 December 1949, the Dutch formally transferred sovereignty to the Republik Indonesia Serikat (Republic of United States of Indonesia), an independent federal

republic grouping sixteen regional entities, most of which had been created by the Dutch. Within twelve months, the separate regional entities voluntarily merged into a unitary republic, which has been the basis of the Indonesian state since late 1950.

Thus when certain prominent Indonesians have called for the creation of a federal state as a means of dampening down secessionist desires in certain regions, others have seen this as a return to a failed model.

The most prominent Muslim leader to embrace the federal idea is Nurcholish Madjid, who called for the government to respond to increased provincial demands for secession by converting Indonesia into a federal state (*Indonesian Observer* 24 November 1999). Such a view is consistent with his concern for minority rights and his underlying pluralist inclinations.

However, other leaders have been more cautious in this regard. Amien Rais said that he would see a federal state of Indonesia only being justified as a last resort, preferring to maintain the present unitary republic structure.

At the time of writing, this issue was still in its infancy, and may well become more prominent if regional crises continue to multiply.

Conclusion

As we have seen in the preceding pages, the Indonesian political stage is far from monolithic. Islam has clearly resurfaced as a powerful player in the political arena, but competing streams of Islamic thought vie for predominance both among themselves and with more nationalist, non-sectarian parties such as the PDI-P and Golkar.

Ultimately, the struggle for control of the Islamic community is waged by two key groups: neo-modernist leaders who draw substantial support from traditionalist bodies, and modernist reformists grouped around the Central Axis bloc of parties.

It seems unlikely that radical Islamists can control the Indonesian Muslim community in the political arena on the basis of past history or present developments. Nevertheless, there has been a noticeable rise in Islamist sentiment among Indonesian Muslims, and voices articulating this stream of thought are much more audible and strident. The rise in support for this group can be attributed to a range of factors. First, the presence of large transmigrant communities in the outer islands, competing with local indigenous communities for increasingly scarce resources, has served as a festering sore during economic crises, providing the environment for the nurturing of xenophobic views. Secondly, the timing of the proposal to establish trade ties with Israel undermined the confidence of both modernist and Islamist elements in Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency within one month of him assuming office, with Islamists claiming success in their campaign to derail the proposal. Thirdly, Islamic media reporting of the alleged massacre of Muslims on Halmahera in late December 1999, and President Wahid's refusal to embrace the language of revenge after that incident, led to a terminal decline in support for him from modernist groups and Islamist radicals. Fourthly, and perhaps the key factor, was Amien Rais's address to the rally on 7 January 2000, using the fiery language of incitement. Fifthly, the emergence of the Laskar Jihad, and the ineffective government attempts to curtail the growth and operations of this group, have fanned the flames of sectarian crisis. Finally, the establishment of the First Indonesian Mujahidin Congress, with Assembly and Charter outputs, guaranteed the consolidation of links between radical groups and the world Islamist movement.

As Megawati Sukarnoputri struggles to establish her credentials as president following the impeachment of Abdurrahman Wahid, other key players are angling for

positions which might advantage them if Megawati stumbles. The dynamic and rapidly changing political scene in Indonesia makes prediction a risky enterprise. Nevertheless, one can state with confidence that if Megawati is to survive, she will need to take account of the diverse views articulated by the various Islamic groups which now function as important players on the Indonesian political stage.

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