



THE BROOKINGS PROJECT ON  
U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE ISLAMIC WORLD

ANALYSIS PAPER  
Number 9, October 2005

BETWEEN THE GLOBAL  
AND THE LOCAL:  
ISLAMISM, THE MIDDLE EAST, AND INDONESIA

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## NOTE FROM THE PROJECT CONVENORS

*The Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World* is designed to respond to some of the most difficult challenges that the U.S. will face in the coming years, most particularly how to prosecute the continuing war on global terrorist groups while still promoting positive relations with Muslim states and communities. A key part of the Project is the production of *Analysis Papers* that investigate critical, but under-explored, issues in American policy towards the Islamic world.

A repeated challenge in American policy towards the Muslim world is how the United States will deal with the rising power and popularity of groups that organize around ideas and forms of activism that conceive of Islam not just as a religion but also as a political ideology. From the Middle East to Southeast Asia, such groups, commonly referred to as Islamist, are among the most popular, active, and credible actors on the ground.

As American democratization, aid, public diplomacy, and other activities seek to play an increasingly active role within the political environment inside Muslim states, it is therefore clearly important for policymakers to understand the differences within, and evolution of, Islamism and Islamist groups and spin-offs. This is especially critical with respect to the role of Islamist parties in nascent democracies. But beyond that, understanding how the spread of ideas takes place in an increasingly globalized world is important not just to the success of such policies of reform, but also to counter-terrorist efforts. At a time when al-qa'ida is increasingly seen as an ideology rather than an organization, assessing the extent to which ideology in its malign forms has spread, and how it has done so, will equally provide clues as to the future trajectory of the terrorist threat.

At the same time, as the most populous Muslim democracy in the world, Indonesia is one of the most important states within the Muslim world. Yet, the focus of American policy towards, and understanding of, the Muslim world is centered on the Middle East, often leaving out this vital state in policy discussions. Thus, a better appreciation of the complexities of Indonesia, and local Islamist groups' connection into the broader, global exchange of ideas and adaptation, is necessary for future policy success.

As such, we are pleased to present *Between the Global and the Local: Islamism, the Middle East, and Indonesia* by Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, produced in cooperation with the Lowy Institute for International Policy. The Lowy Institute is an independent international policy think-tank based in Sydney, Australia, which has developed an exciting expertise on Southeast Asia. The research for the paper originally stemmed from the Lowy Institute Paper “Joining the Caravan: The Middle East, Islamism and Indonesia.” We appreciate their contribution to the Project’s work and certainly are proud to share their views and analysis on this important issue with the wider public.

We are also grateful for the generosity and cooperation of the Carnegie Corporation, the Education for Employment Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories, the MacArthur Foundation, the Government of Qatar, the United States Institute of Peace, Haim Saban, and the Brookings Institution for their backing of various Project’s activities. We would also like to acknowledge the hard work of Andrew Apostolou, Rabab Fayad, Ellen McHugh, Elina Noor, and Arif Rafiq for their support of the Project’s publications.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Against the background of the ‘war on terror’, many people have come to view Islamism as a monolithic ideological movement spreading from the center of the Muslim world, the Middle East, to Muslim countries around the globe. To borrow a phrase from Abdullah Azzam, the legendary jihadist who fought to expel the Soviet Union from Afghanistan in the 1980s, many today see all Islamists as fellow travellers in a global fundamentalist caravan. This paper evaluates the truth of that perception. It does so by examining the spread of two broad categories of Islamic thinking and activism — the more politically focused Islamism and more religiously focused ‘neo-fundamentalism’ — from the Middle East to Indonesia, a country often cited as an example of a formerly peaceful Muslim community radicalized by external influences.

Islamism is a term familiar to many. Most commonly it is used to categorize ideas and forms of activism that conceive of Islam as a political ideology. Today, a wide range of groups are classified as Islamist, from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood to al-qa’ida. While such a categorization remains appropriate in many cases, Islamism seems less useful as a label for those groups that do not see Islam as a political ideology and largely eschew political activism — even if their activism sometimes has political implications. Included in this category are groups concerned primarily with Islamic mission-

ary activity, but it would also include a group such as al-qa’ida whose acts of terrorism are arguably driven less by concrete political objectives than religious inspiration, albeit of a misguided form. This paper therefore uses the term ‘neo-fundamentalist’, developed by the French scholar Olivier Roy, to describe these groups and will study the transmission of both Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas to Indonesia.

Islamist ideas from the Middle East have indeed been imported into Indonesia by Muslims looking for new ways of thinking about the relationship between Islam, politics and society. Some Indonesian students who travelled to the Middle East came back influenced by the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood. More malign influences would also be imported by Indonesians who went to Afghanistan in the 1980s and 90s to fight in the *jihād* against the Soviets and forged links with the future leaders and activists of al-qa’ida. But Islamist and, in particular, neo-fundamentalist ideas have also been imported from the Middle East. Most notably, missionary activities by official and non-official organizations from Saudi Arabia played a critical role in the emergence of a salafist current within the Indonesian Muslim community.

The impact of these ideas has varied. Elements of Muslim Brotherhood thinking helped the Islamist Prosperous and Welfare Party (PKS) play a positive

role in Indonesian politics, though some of the darker sides of the PKS, notably the anti-Semitic views and anti-western conspiracy theories of some of its members, have also been influenced by thinking from the Middle East. Many of the Indonesian groups supported by Saudi Arabia limit their activism to the promotion of Islamic piety — albeit of a fairly puritanical form — though some have participated in violent sectarian conflict. More insidious has been the influence of al-qa'ida and other Middle Eastern sources on doctrine and operational techniques of the Indonesian terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

Nonetheless, Indonesian Muslims have also been selective in their appropriation and application of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas from the Middle East in Indonesia. A process of selection and indigenization is almost always at work. In terms of Muslim Brotherhood thinking, the gradualist approach of Hassan al-Banna has been utilized more than the revolutionary ideas of Sayyid Qutb and his radical heirs. The influence of Middle Eastern salafist sheikhs is sometimes manipulated by their local Indonesian representatives. Even the relationship between al-qa'ida and JI is not one of command and control. There are, arguably, tensions within JI between those of its members keen to pursue the imperatives of al-qa'ida's global project and those within the organization focused on more local, if still violent, priorities.

Overall, any reckoning of Middle Eastern influence on Indonesian Islamism needs to look not just at the radical elements inclined toward violence or divisive sectarianism but also at ideas that enhance democratic life and provide a legitimate form of expression for religious sentiment. The diverse flows of information that accompany globalization ensure that the impact of the Middle East will continue to be felt in a wide variety of ways. But this will never be a straightforward process. Indeed, in a globalized world, the flow of Islamist ideas into Indonesia is less and less a function of specifically Middle Eastern influences than a broader, global process of intellectual exchange and adaptation.

The issues canvassed in the paper are of obvious relevance to policy makers. At a time in which al-qa'ida is increasingly seen as an ideology rather than an organization, assessing the extent to which that ideology has spread, and how it has done so, provides clues as to the future trajectory of the terrorist threat. But it is also important for policy makers to understand the differences within, and evolution of, Islamism, particularly with respect to the role of Islamist parties in nascent democracies. A number of policy implications flow from the conclusions of this paper:

**1. In focusing on the global, don't lose sight of the local**

In focusing on the transnational dimensions of contemporary terrorism, governments should not lose sight of local causes. Today, there is a tendency to see contemporary terrorism as largely a function of the spread of a global ideology. But while the transmission of extremist ideas is part of the problem, it is by no means the sole defining characteristic. Local factors will still be critical in determining the future trajectory of the terrorist threat in Indonesia, from the dynamics of Muslim-Christian relations and the continuation of sectarian violence, to the relationship between Islamist and neo-fundamentalist groups and the state.

**2. Adopt a more nuanced categorization of Islamists and neo-fundamentalists**

Western governments and commentators should avoid labelling Muslims or Islamists simply as radicals or moderates. Not only are these terms often misleadingly reductionist, they also carry connotations of 'good' versus 'bad' Muslims, 'friendly' versus 'hostile' Muslims. This has an alienating effect on Muslims, who see it as evidence of a self interested western stereotyping of the Islamic community. While shorthand categorizations are sometimes inescapable, at the very least it is important to be conscious of the complexities that lie behind such labels and to avoid using them too rigidly.

### 3. Take a less timorous approach to engagement with Islamists

Initiatives such as inter-faith dialogues and conferences on Islam play an important symbolic role in ensuring that the 'war on terror' does not poison relations between the Muslim world and the West. But western governments tend to be far too timorous in whom they invite. More would be achieved by pursuing a dialogue with individuals and organisations representing a broader range of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist views. In particular, greater first hand exposure to a range of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist groups would provide western governments and specialists with a more nuanced understanding of the various manifestations of these forms of Islamic activism and the implications of their activism.

### 4. Think about education and the 'war of ideas' in broad terms

Some outside observers have identified the radical teachings of a number of *pesantren* in Indonesia as part of the terrorism problem and have advocated the reform of Islamic education. But other mechanisms for the dissemination of extremist ideas exist outside these *pesantren*, including channels of electronic communication and student experiences in the Middle East, and these are often much more effective conveyers of ideas. In the best case, promoting the reform of Islamic education won't stop the spread of these ideas. But in the worst case, such policies will be seen as yet another example of western attempts to pollute and weaken Islam. As tempting as such involvement may seem, it is better for the West to stay out of Islamic education and to focus instead on supporting the ability of the mainstream education systems in countries like Indonesia to provide students with the skills to compete in the globalized economy.

### 5. Encourage transparency

The complex question of Saudi Arabian religious propagation in Indonesia (and elsewhere) needs to be addressed. But the answer does not lie simply in

encouraging greater regulation by the Saudi government of its official and non-government organizations involved in international Islamic propagation (*da'wa*). In Indonesia, legitimate and non-jihadist educational and welfare institutions supported by Saudi organizations have suffered as a result of international pressure on Saudi Arabia to limit its charitable and *da'wa* activities, leading to considerable resentment against the 'war on terror'. The danger is that this may push hitherto peaceful groups toward more militant financiers. The solution is to encourage Saudi Arabia to accompany greater regulation of its charitable and propagation activities with greater transparency. Encouraging other organizations, Muslim and non-Muslim, to be similarly transparent about their missionary activities will also be an important step in this regard.

### 6. Be conscious of double standards and the democracy dilemma

One of the most damaging things for western governments in the context of the 'war of ideas' is the perception of double standards. In the Middle East, and elsewhere in the Muslim world, the West needs to accept that democracy will sometimes deliver Islamist victories. This is not necessarily a bad thing. In Indonesia, Islamists have played a constructive role in Indonesia's process of democratization, reflecting the growing understanding among Islamist parties around the world that to be successful they need to adapt their political programs to incorporate the everyday concerns of voters. The democratic credentials of every individual Islamist group should not be assumed. But neither should we assume Islamism's purported incompatibility with democracy, nor should we ignore the potentially transformative impact of even a tactical acceptance of the democratic process on the part of some Islamist groups.

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# CHAPTER 1: ISLAMISM AND ‘NEO-FUNDAMENTALISM’

This paper is intended as a contribution to the broader debate about the role Islamists play in contemporary international politics. Its line of inquiry is framed by the perception — increasingly common after the events of 9/11 — that Islamism is a monolithic ideological movement spreading from the center of the Islamic world, the Middle East, to Muslim countries around the world. There is already growing literature on the technical and operational links between various Islamist groups, most notably those engaged in terrorism.<sup>1</sup> Our focus instead is on what can be termed the ideological dimension, undertaking what is, in effect, a case study examining the impact of Islamist ideas from the Middle East on Indonesia, a country often cited as an example of a formerly irenic Muslim community radicalized by external influences.

Our analysis occurs against the background of a number of major changes taking place in both the Muslim world and the West’s perception of the Muslim world. An obvious change has been the impact of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. At a time when al-qa’ida is increasingly seen as an ideology rather than an organization, assessing the extent to which that ideology or worldview has spread will provide

clues as to the future trajectory of the terrorist threat.<sup>2</sup> Terrorism also colors the West’s view of Islamism more generally. One senses that an appreciation for the diversity of Islamist ideas and activism has been lost and thus the attempt will be made in this paper to disentangle some of the different currents of contemporary Islamism and Islamic religiosity as well as the contentious question of Islamism’s relationship with democracy.

Another major fact about the Muslim world of which many in the international community still seem unaware is that most of the world’s Muslims do not live in the Middle East. While figures vary, some 350–380 million of the world’s 1.2 to 1.5 billion Muslims are presently found in the region — in other words still a sizeable proportion (roughly 30 percent) of the total Muslim community, but a minority nevertheless. The rest of the world’s Muslims are either of Middle Eastern descent but have migrated outside the region, or are part of the world’s many non-Middle Eastern Muslim communities.

Indonesia is an excellent example. It has the largest Muslim population of any country in the world. The 2000 census showed that there were 178 million

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1 See for example: Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside al-Qaeda: global network of terror*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: Casting a shadow of terror* (London, I.B. Tauris, 2003). Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004). Marc Sageman, *Understanding terror networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

2 See for example Burke, *Al-Qaeda*.

Muslims in Indonesia, 88.2 percent of the then total population of 201 million and about 13 percent of the world's Islamic community.<sup>3</sup> This figure needs to be treated with some care as Indonesians are obliged to adhere to one of five formally recognized religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism. This policy has likely inflated the official number of Muslims. One interesting development in recent decades has been the acceleration of Islamization within Indonesian society. This has not greatly changed the proportion of Muslims to non-Muslims but it has significantly increased the number of pious or 'santri' Muslims compared to unobservant or unorthodox Muslims.<sup>4</sup> Far more Indonesians now regard Islam as a central part of their life. This can be measured in the popularity of 'Islamic dress', increased mosque and religious school attendance, greater numbers undertaking the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) and growing sales of Islamic literature. This process of growing pietism is often referred to as santri-ization and it shows little sign of slowing. Interestingly, there is little evidence in Indonesia that increasing pietism has led to a surge in popularity of Islamist parties.

Chapter Two will examine some of the main vectors through which Islamist ideas have been transmitted to Indonesia, most notably the role played by human movements, education, Middle Eastern propagation and publishing, and the Internet. Chapter Three will then assess the impact of these ideas and models of activism, focusing in particular on Muslim Brotherhood-inspired groups such as the so-called Tarbiyah movement and the Prosperous and Justice Party (PKS), salafist groups such as Laskar Jihad and al-Sofwah and terrorist groups, notably Jemaah Islamiyah. Our research is not, however, driven by a

purely academic interest. The analysis presented in this paper is intended to be relevant to how policy makers respond to the Islamist phenomenon in all its dimensions, from the spread of ideas that underpin terrorism to the role of Islamist parties in democratization. A concluding chapter will, therefore, consider some of the broader policy implications of this paper's findings.

## ISLAMISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Islamism has commonly been defined as Islam conceived as an ideology. Islamists extend the traditional idea of Islam as an all encompassing religion to modern society.<sup>5</sup> In their view it should shape everything in society, from the way it is governed, to its education, legal systems, culture, and economy. In this respect Islamism is less the extension of religion to politics than an effort to reassert what Islamists contend has always been Islam's inherent political, social and even economic message. Historically, the major consequence of such a view has been the Islamist belief in the need for an Islamic state. That is, for Islamists a truly Islamic society — and flowing from this, a just, prosperous and strong one — is not simply comprised of pious Muslims; it requires an Islamic state or system.<sup>6</sup> A second key element of Islamism is its activism. For Sayyid Qutb, one of radical Islamism's seminal theorists, being a good Muslim not only meant praying five times a day, it implied political, social, and even paramilitary acts necessary to establish an Islamic state.

For the purposes of this paper we will focus on two currents within Islamism: the first current, represented by the contemporary Muslim Brotherhood and some of its off-shoots, which has focused largely

3 Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin and Aris Ananta, *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), 103–107.

4 The percentage of Muslims in Indonesia has changed only slightly in the 30 years since censuses have been gathering data on religious adherence. The 1971 census put the proportion of Muslims at 87 percent.

5 Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new umma* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 2004), 58.

6 Islamist views on the form an Islamic state vary markedly, due partly to the fact that the Qur'an contains no prescription for such state. Some Islamists advocate a state transcending national boundaries and headed by a caliph; others seek to change the basis of their own nation-state to that of Islam. Common to all Islamist thinking on this subject is the necessity of an Islamic state to comprehensively implement *shari'a* and uphold Islamic principles.

on preaching or da'wa and non-violent political activism; the other, a radical current that draws inspiration from the ideas of the Egyptian Muslim Brother Sayyid Qutb and is typically preoccupied with violent activism — or as it would define it, jihad. One can also distinguish a radical Shi'ite current associated with the ideas of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and 'liberal' and 'leftist' currents associated with thinkers such as Fatima Mernissi and Hassan Hanafi, though these will not be dealt with in this paper.

For the purposes of this paper, when we refer to Muslim Brotherhood ideas we mainly mean those of the movement's founder Hassan al-Banna (al-Banna's ideas have largely been the inspiration for Indonesian Islamists who associate themselves with Brotherhood thinking). For al-Banna in Egypt in the 1920s and 30s, the Muslim world's decline was symbolized by its acceptance of western forms of government and western laws — in particular the separation of religious and political authority. As a consequence, a return to Islam implied the establishment of an Islamic state or system (*al-nizam al-Islami*). Central to this system would be the imposition of *shari'a* — the total corpus of Muslim law and belief<sup>7</sup> — and the Qur'an would be its constitution.

Al-Banna's strategy for achieving this end was largely a gradualist and reformist one. He envisaged an Islamic state as a consequence of the Islamization of society. In effect his project was to create an Islamic state from below by sparking a vast 'spiritual awakening' among his fellow Muslims. To this end he developed the Muslim Brotherhood as a broad-based movement geared toward various forms of grassroots activism. The basic unit of organization within the Brotherhood was the cell or 'family' (*nizam al-usar*) of ten members with a leader. Each was a component of successively larger units of organization, reinforcing group loyalty and providing a well defined and tightly knit chain of

command for the Brotherhood as a whole. The main role of each family unit was education (*tarbiya*) and preaching (da'wa), with weekly meetings held to teach Islamic principles and correct behaviour aimed at ensuring that conduct across all spheres of an individual's daily activities was guided by Islamic principles.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the Brotherhood was deeply involved in social welfare and economic activities and organized mosques, schools, and medical clinics. It ran its own factories, providing employment opportunities for the urban poor and established athletic clubs. Indeed it continues to undertake many of these activities today.

The Brotherhood has never been ambivalent about political activity, nor in its early years, about the use of violence and terrorism. Shari'a required a state to enforce it and the power to reform society was inextricably tied to the power to rule.<sup>9</sup> In its early years the Brotherhood's political and, at times, militant activism would see it, among other things: push for reform of Egypt's constitution and rail against government corruption; send volunteers to the Arab uprising in Palestine in 1936–39 and the Arab–Israeli war in 1948; coordinate strikes and violent demonstrations; and carry out acts of terror and political assassination. Indeed, the violent confrontation between the Brotherhood and the Egyptian government in the late 1940s would lead to al-Banna's assassination in 1949 and would see the movement outlawed.

The Brotherhood is still, officially, an illegal organization, though it has continued to operate over the years, variously tolerated and pressured by successive Egyptian governments. Since the 1960s, the Brotherhood has largely avoided the violent activism of its early years, focusing instead on continuing efforts to promote spiritual and intellectual reform while trying to create political space for itself by such activities as running independent candidates in Egypt's parliamentary elections and winning control over the country's

7 Ira M. Lapidus, *A history of Islamic societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 157.

8 Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 199.

9 Ibid., 308.

professional syndicates and unions. Today, it remains perhaps the most powerful of all opposition movements in Egypt, a function of both its organizational capacity and the reputation of its leaders and members for piety and probity. In particular, its emphasis on the fight against official and elite corruption continues to resonate in a society in which economic and social disparities have become increasingly obvious.

Today, the Muslim Brotherhood describes a specific movement or movements — the founding organization in Egypt as well as its branches throughout the Middle East — as well as an intellectual tendency.<sup>10</sup> Two elaborations of this tendency are found in the ideas of Hizb al-Wasat in Egypt and the ‘tele-Islamist’ Sheikh Yousef al-Qaradawi. Hizb al-Wasat was the attempt by a younger generation of Muslim Brothers in Egypt to form a political party (a *hizb*), a move long opposed by the older generation Brotherhood leadership. The Egyptian government has repeatedly refused to allow the registration of the party, portraying it as a stalking horse for the Brotherhood. Yet despite its currently marginal role in Egyptian politics, Hizb al-Wasat represents a significant evolution of contemporary Islamism and bears some consideration.

Hizb al-Wasat’s leaders were heavily influenced by the ideas of a broad group of Egyptian Islamic intellectuals including Yousef al-Qaradawi, Kamal Abul Magd, Tariq al-Bishri and Muhammed Salim al-Awa, dubbed by some the ‘*Wasatiyya*’ (the ‘centrists’).<sup>11</sup> Among other things, the *Wasatiyya* have promoted the idea of an Islamic democracy (Qaradawi), and the notion that Islam as a civilization provides a foundation for an inclusive and pluralist national project (Abul Magd). The latter became a key component of Hizb al-Wasat’s platform and marked it as an important break with the

Muslim identity politics of the Brotherhood.<sup>12</sup> Hizb al-Wasat distinguished between Islam as a religion, which by definition excludes non-Muslims, and Islam as a civilization, which includes all its members, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. The movement has called for democratic elections, has attempted to reconcile shari’a with parliamentary rule and advocates the rights of minorities (and indeed includes a small number of Egyptian Christians among its membership).<sup>13</sup>

As important as its ideas were, Hizb al-Wasat’s preference for a more overtly political activism was reflected in its desire to form a political party. The movement’s leaders made clear their project was more explicitly political, and distinct from the broader preaching and politics mission of the Brotherhood. In part, this preference emerged as a result of the experience of key Hizb al-Wasat figures in the professional syndicates that the Brotherhood’s leadership had sent them to infiltrate in the 1970s. In these organizations they ran for and won office and operated essentially as they would in a political party, even though this was not their original intention.<sup>14</sup> They also found themselves supported by people who, in the first instance, were not necessarily sympathetic to the Islamic cause but shared their concerns about corruption and the need for political reform in Egypt, thereby providing a broader constituency from that of the Brotherhood.<sup>15</sup>

Whereas for Hassan al-Banna politics was a necessary sphere of activity insofar as it served the Muslim Brotherhood’s broader goals of Islamizing society and creating a truly Islamic state, for the leaders of Hizb al-Wasat politics is the core activity for which they are prepared to subordinate or adapt Islamist ideology. This is not to say that Hizb al-Wasat has given up on ideology and become entirely pragmatic. For example,

10 The authors are grateful to Peter Mandaville for raising this point. See also Olivier Roy, *The failure of political Islam*, trans. Carol Volk (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994), 110–112.

11 See in particular Raymond William Baker, *Islam without fear: Egypt and the new Islamists* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

12 International Crisis Group, “Islamism in North Africa II: Egypt’s opportunity,” April 2004, <[http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=login&ref\\_id=2994](http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=login&ref_id=2994)>, 18.

13 See Joshua A Stacher, “Post-Islamist Rumbblings in Egypt: The Emergence of the Wasat Party,” *Middle East Journal* 56, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 415–432.

14 *Ibid.*, 419.

15 *Ibid.*, 419.

the party's platform on issues such as the role of women is not very far removed from the views of the Brotherhood.<sup>16</sup> But where the militant project of groups like the Egyptian al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah and even the gradualist project of the Brotherhood sought to completely transform if not transcend the Egyptian nation state, substituting an Islamic variant, Hizb al-Wasat seeks a role for itself within the existing state — albeit a state that it wants to reform in both democratic and Islamic directions.

The Egyptian government has claimed that Hizb al-Wasat is little more than a stalking horse for the Brotherhood — that is, it acts to put a more acceptable face on the Brotherhood's ideology. The claim is a convenient one for the Egyptian government to make, but even if it were true the real question would be whether it matters. Tactical shifts can also be transformative, perhaps best illustrated by the Justice and Development Party, a moderate Islamist party which came to power in Turkey in 2002. Its success can also be seen as the result of a tactical shift prompted by the fact that successive efforts by Turkish Islamists to enter mainstream politics were blocked — at times extra legally — by Turkey's secular and military elite. In other words, the leaders of the Justice and Development Party came to learn that the price for success in mainstream politics was a moderation of its ideological goals and a more gradualist and pragmatic approach, a lesson that has not been lost on other Islamist parties in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Hizb al-Wasat is also symptomatic of a trend amongst many Islamist groups including the movement from which it emerged, the Muslim Brotherhood: a growing preoccupation with local politics.<sup>17</sup> Despite the movement's pan-Islamic aspirations, the Brotherhood and its various branches seem to have essentially settled for

the politics of their own states and have adapted their activism to suit local conditions. Thus in Egypt the Brotherhood's leadership has resisted calls from within the movement to transform itself into a political party, wary of provoking a confrontation with the Egyptian government, while in Jordan and Kuwait Brotherhood members have formed political parties to run in local parliamentary elections. In effect the founding movement in Egypt and its regional variants have very much become separate movements. Even amongst more militant groups, such as the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) in Algeria, there has been a growing acceptance of the existing state as the main focus of Islamist activism, as opposed to the classical Islamist view of contemporary states as artificial constructs.<sup>18</sup>

Not every Muslim Brother has given up having transnational horizons. Sheikh Yousef al-Qaradawi, in particular, represents the international face of the Brotherhood current. Al-Qaradawi's subjects range from international politics to more everyday questions (including whether singing and cinema are illicit in Islam — he says they are licit). The fact that his sermons are topical, contemporary and delivered in an accessible language has undoubtedly helped to enhance his influence in the Muslim world. Al-Qaradawi's broad appeal is, however, as much about medium as it is message. As the host of a popular Islamic program on the Qatar-based Arabic satellite channel *al-Jazeera* but also via the Internet, books, audio and video cassettes — many of them translated into other languages — he has been able to reach and establish a major following, from the Middle East and Africa, to Southeast Asia and the Balkans.

Some Muslims and some in the West have labelled al-Qaradawi a dangerous radical, while he is regularly denounced by conservative Muslims for being too liberal.<sup>19</sup> At times he appears to walk a fine line

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16 Ibid., 428–429.

17 For an excellent discussion of this trend see chapter 2 in Roy, *Globalised Islam*.

18 International Crisis Group, "Islamism, Violence and Reform in Algeria: Turning the Page," July 2004, <[http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=login&ref\\_id=2884](http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=login&ref_id=2884)>, 9.

19 For a Muslim critique of al-Qaradawi's radicalism see: Abdel Rahman al-Rashed, "Innocent religion is now a message of hate," *The Telegraph*, 5 September 2004. For a salafist critique see: IslamicWeb.com, "Some Mistakes of Yousef al-Qaradawi," <<http://www.islamicweb.com/beliefs/misguided/qaradawi.htm>>.

between diplomatic moderation and a populist militancy. For example, he condemned al-qa'ida's terrorist attacks in the United States on 9/11, but has defended the right of Hamas to carry out terrorist attacks against Israel.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless the significance of his ideas lies in the precedence he gives to an individual's religious identity. Thus, for example, he attempts to reconcile democracy with Islam — arguing that it is enshrined in the Qur'an, in the form of *shura* (consultation) — rather than with the political culture or traditions of particular countries in which Muslims live.<sup>21</sup>

## RADICALISM

Perhaps no single term has come to be as associated with Islamism as jihad. Among scholars of Islam — Muslim and non-Muslim — it provokes debate as to its true meaning. It is often divided into the greater and lesser jihad, the former being the personal struggle for a perfect spiritual life and the latter involving essentially everything from missionary activity to holy war. Islamist and neo-fundamentalist groups, when referring to jihad, however, have tended to focus on its armed form. Indeed the question of whether to participate in violent jihad has often separated mainstream groups from more radical ones. But even among the latter, jihad often reflects distinct purposes. Jihad has meant armed struggle — whether in the form of insurgency or terrorism — against purportedly impious rulers in countries like Egypt and Algeria. It has been used by Hamas to describe acts of violence and terrorism in the cause of Palestinian independence. In the 1980s, the term gained notoriety as a description for the struggle by foreign and Afghan *mujahideen* against an external enemy, the Soviet Union.

If the Muslim Brotherhood today represents the ideas of non-violent Islamism, the movement has also

played a historical role in producing more militant ideas and forms of activism. The militant heritage of the Brotherhood can be traced to Sayyid Qutb and the Brotherhood's confrontation with the Egyptian Nasserite state in the 1950s and 60s. Contemporary interest in Qutb, driven by perceptions of a direct line between his thought and that of al-qa'ida, makes much of the disgust he expressed for American society following a study visit he made to the United States in the late 1940s. While this visit was undoubtedly important in the development of his ideas, the crucible of Qutb's radical thought seems less the licentious streets of New York than the harsh prisons of Cairo. As a result of the nationalists' crackdown on the Brotherhood the movement was driven underground and many of its members imprisoned and tortured. When Muslim Brothers began emerging from prison in the early 1960s many remained keen to continue the reformist approach of al-Banna. Qutb, however, offered a more incendiary alternative for those who, like him, had suffered at the hands of Nasser's prison guards and interrogators.

It was in the stark and desperate prison environment that Qutb wrote what arguably became radical Islamism's most influential political manifesto, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* ('Signposts along the Way'). Whether Qutb intended it as an Islamist version of Lenin's 'What is to be Done' is debatable. Nevertheless, 'Signposts' has had a lasting impact on Islamist movements worldwide. Central to Qutb's thesis was the notion of an Islamic state elaborated from the writings of the Pakistani Islamist thinker, Abu al-A'la Maududi. For Maududi, a truly Islamic state was one that recognised only the sovereignty of God (*hakimiya*), worshipped God alone, and implemented His law, the shari'a. Anything short of this was *jahiliya* — a term often taken to refer to the historical period of 'ignorance' that had existed prior to

20 Yousef al-Qaradawi, "Address to the 'Islam and the West' conference in Khartoum, Sudan," 22 December 2003, <[http://www.qaradawi.net/site/topics/article.asp?cu\\_no=2&item\\_no=3227&version=1&template\\_id=187](http://www.qaradawi.net/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=3227&version=1&template_id=187)>.

21 See for example: Yousef al-Qaradawi, "Islam's approach toward democracy." *The Message International*, April/May 2002, <<http://www.messageonline.org/2002aprilmay/cover1.htm>>.

the Prophet's preaching of Islam, though it can also be translated as barbarism.<sup>22</sup>

The idea of jahiliya formed the cornerstone of Qutb's polemic. He developed and extended the term beyond Maududi's usage, defining all the societies of his era as being in a state of jahiliya. This applied to communist societies and the West most obviously. Yet the real drama in Qutb's elaboration of the concept was not his labelling of the West as jahiliya — an idea most Islamists of his time would have readily accepted — but his use of it to condemn his own nominally Muslim society and, in particular, its rulers. For Qutb, it was not enough for Muslims in a given society to be individually pious. Islam was a total system rather than just a religion and any society was jahiliya if its complete way of life was not based solely on total submission to God.

Qutb, intentionally or otherwise, provided a discourse for revolutionary activism. In 'Signposts' he argued that jahiliya society had to be confronted and swept away. The first step was personal purification, ridding oneself of the corrupting influences of jahiliya ideas and contemplating the true meaning of Islam. Once this had occurred a movement led by a vanguard of true and committed Muslims was necessary to overthrow jahiliya society.<sup>23</sup> Qutb argued that preaching and persuasion to reform ideas and beliefs — the traditional approach of the Brotherhood — would not be enough. 'Physical power' and 'jihad' were also needed.<sup>24</sup> If for al-Banna an Islamic system was achieved from below — that is from the Islamization of society through reform — for Qutb it could only be achieved from above, by directly removing the jahiliya system that stood in Islam's way.

Qutb was executed before he could spell out the full implications of his ideas and, as a result, a number of

different readings of his work emerged.<sup>25</sup> Within the Brotherhood his ideas proved controversial and an allegorical interpretation was promoted by the leadership, with Qutb's notion of jahiliya seen to imply only a spiritual rather than a comprehensive rupture with society.<sup>26</sup> A radical reading was, however, adopted by a younger and more extreme Islamist current in Egypt (and elsewhere in the Middle East) which elaborated the most serious implication of Qutb's writings — that of *takfir*, the declaration in Islamic jurisprudence that a nominal Muslim has become apostate and therefore potentially licit to be killed. Takfir has traditionally been the preserve of established religious jurists and was applied cautiously and very selectively. Qutb's articulation of the concept of jahiliya helped, however, to create the basis for a wider and less discriminate usage by potentially branding everyone in society as impious.

What could be termed a 'Qutbist' current of Islamism emerged following his death. It was reflected in groups such as Tanzim al-Jihad (or Egyptian Islamic Jihad), which assassinated Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in October 1981 and al-Gamma al-Islamiyah, which undertook a campaign of terrorism in Egypt in the 1990s targeting government officials, secular intellectuals, Egyptian Christians and tourists.

It is important to note however that Qutb's ideas were not the only factor motivating radical Islamists toward revolt. As important, if not more so, were the social, political and economic conditions of the time, from the catastrophic defeat of Arab states by Israel in 1967 to economic and social dislocation in the 1970s and 80s. They provided both mainstream Islamism and more extreme currents an opportunity to gain broader currency.

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22 For an excellent discussion of the translation of the term jahiliyya see William E. Shepard, "Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of Jahiliyya," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 4 (November 2003): 521-545.

23 Sayyid Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*, (Cairo: Dar al-Sharouk, 1992), 11.

24 *Ibid.*, 64.

25 Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: the trail of political Islam*, trans. Anthony F. Roberts (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 31-32.

26 *Ibid.*, 32.

Not all of radical Islamism's jihads were directed against the state however. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 became a major focus for jihadist activism through the 1980s. Muslim Brothers played a prominent role amongst the 'international brigades' of Islamists that fought in Afghanistan, most notably Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian–Jordanian Muslim Brother. Azzam played a critical role in the training and deployment of foreign jihadists, notably through the Maktab al-Khidamat (Office of Services), which he ran with Saudi backing in Peshawar. More importantly, Azzam was a tireless and effective polemicist for a jihad that, at least initially, seemed peripheral to Islamists in the Middle East, most of whom were preoccupied with either the struggle against their own 'apostate' regimes or the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

Azzam received a formal Islamic education, culminating with a doctorate from al-Azhar University in Cairo. The weight of this training can be felt in the legalistic tone of his most famous polemics, *Ilhaq bil Qaafila* ('Join the Caravan') and *Defa'a aan Araadi al-Muslimeen* ('Defence of Muslim Lands').<sup>27</sup> Azzam argued that Islamic jurists had documented that the lands of the Muslims were 'like a single land' and therefore all Muslims had an obligation to rally to the defense of any part of that land, including in this case Afghanistan. He defined the jihad against the Soviets as *fard ayn* — an individual obligation on all Muslims. (Interestingly the Saudi clerical establishment which provided financial, spiritual and juridical backing for the jihad only defined it as *fard kifaya* — a collective obligation, fulfilled by the Islamic community provided at least some Muslims were performing it).<sup>28</sup>

For Azzam the jihad in Afghanistan was, however, more significant than simply the fight to expel the Soviets. Azzam argued that the obligation of jihad did

not end with victory over the Soviets in Afghanistan but extended until all former Muslim lands, from 'Andalusia' to the Philippines, had been liberated. Moreover, jihad was not just a means toward an end but an end in itself, an idea that would be echoed in al-qa'ida's spectacular though seemingly nihilistic acts of violence. In a polemic entitled *al-Qaeda al-Sulbah* ('The Solid Base'), which is sometimes seen as an early manifesto for al-qa'ida, Azzam argued that every principle or ideology needed a vanguard to carry it forward to victory.<sup>29</sup> Such a movement required, however, maturity through trial by fire.<sup>30</sup> For Azzam the Afghan jihad provided just such an opportunity for training and preparation which he likened to the Prophet's 13-year period of contemplation in Mecca before he set out to propagate Islam.

In many respects Azzam was less an ideologue than a chronicler of a particular mindset or experience. Notions of jihad and of the Muslim *umma* were hardly new, but Azzam and the Islamist internationals lived these ideas. Whatever their ultimate, and probably minor role, in the victory over the Soviets that was won largely by local Afghan mujahideen, the foreign jihadists could lay claim to have participated in a real jihad. They left their former professions and took up the fight against Islam's enemies in a harsh and distant land. Mixing with other Muslims from North Africa, the Gulf and Southeast Asia reinforced the idea of a common fight for a common community. The time they spent in Afghanistan provided practical opportunities for military training, indoctrination and for the establishment of international networks.

Afghanistan was not the only jihad against an 'external enemy'. The entry of Hizballah in Lebanon in the 1980s, and Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the 1980s and 1990s gave an Islamist hue to what were largely nationalist struggles. The Palestinian struggle,

27 Abdullah Azzam, "Defence of the Muslim Lands," <[http://www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/azzam\\_defence\\_2\\_intro.htm](http://www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/azzam_defence_2_intro.htm)>.

28 International Crisis Group, "Saudi Arabia backgrounder: who are the Islamists?" 21 September 2004,

< [http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=logon&ref\\_id=3021](http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=logon&ref_id=3021)>, 3.

29 Abdullah Azzam, "al-Qa'idah al-Sulbah," *al-Jihad Magazine*, April 1988.

30 Ibid.

in particular, captured the attention of much of the Islamic world, including Indonesia. Hamas evolved out of a decision by a group of Palestinian Muslim Brothers to drop their passive role in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and join the first uprising or *intifada* against Israel that began in 1987. The Islamization of Palestinian society, a goal Hamas shares with the Brotherhood, has largely taken a back seat to the nationalist struggle for the establishment of a Palestinian state, a goal it shares with secular nationalist groups (even if they differ on what they would accept as a territorial basis for that state, with Hamas having consistently opposed a two state solution). With the advent of the second intifada in 2000, its role in Palestinian politics and society has continued to strengthen.

Hamas gained particular notoriety for employing suicide bombers against Israeli targets, often against civilians. Suicide bombings are not uniquely Islamic, nor did the tactic originate among Palestinian Islamists. The Tamil Tigers, whose recruits are predominantly Hindu and whose ideology includes elements of Marxism and Leninism, often employed the tactic; indeed from 1980–2001 they used it more than any other single organization in the world.<sup>31</sup> Prior to Hamas' adoption of the practice, the Lebanese Hizballah drew on Shi'ite traditions of self-sacrifice to justify such attacks as acts of martyrdom, using them to devastating effect against the United States and other foreign forces in Lebanon in the 1980s. While Sunni scholars subsequently issued religious opinions sanctioning the practice — if selectively<sup>32</sup> — it has also been employed by secular groups in the Middle East. Nevertheless, the linkage of suicide bombing with the Palestinian struggle, whether in religious or nationalist terms, had undoubtedly provided the tactic with added resonance which, as we shall see in Chapter Four, is today felt as far as Indonesia.

## 'NEO-FUNDAMENTALISM'

Islamism does not, however, adequately characterize all forms of Islamic activism. Not all Islamic activists relate to Islam specifically as an ideology nor is their activism explicitly political in the sense of trying to establish an Islamic state or encourage political reform within a particular state. This applies even in particular cases — most notably that of al-qa'ida — where violence is employed in the name or defense of Islam, or the Islamic community. We have chosen, therefore, to use the term 'neo-fundamentalism', developed by the French scholar Olivier Roy, to categorize a separate category of Islamic activism alongside Islamism. This term remains useful even if, as Roy notes, the lines between these categories are often blurred, and some Islamists have drifted toward neo-fundamentalism. It should be noted that this is not a term that is self-ascribed by groups or individuals, but is used here largely as a conceptual tool.

Neo-fundamentalism describes individuals and groups that broadly share a conservative, literalist approach to Islam. That is, they are fundamentalist in the sense that they call for a return to what they argue are the essential tenets of the religion.<sup>33</sup> As Roy argues, what makes neo-fundamentalists new — or 'neo' — is that they deal with a new situation in which religion finds itself 'de-territorialized'. A consequence of globalization is that Islam is today less ascribed to a particular region or territory, in large part because many of the world's Muslims live outside traditionally Muslim countries. However, Roy argues that de-territorialization can also be experienced by Muslims who have not migrated, in the sense that the 'westernization' of their own societies leave some feeling that they too are now in the minority.<sup>34</sup>

Neo-fundamentalism covers broad forms of activism, although for the most part its concern is with religiosity

31 Robert A Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (August 2003): 343–361.

32 Underlining just how pragmatic the religious sanction for suicide bombing can be, the prominent Islamist preacher Yousef al-Qardawi has issued religious opinions endorsing Palestinian suicide bombings but condemning the suicide attacks on September 11, 2001.

33 See chapter 6 in Roy, *Globalised Islam*.

34 *Ibid.*, 19.

and preaching. Typical of this type of activism are so-called salafi groups. At the extreme end of neo-fundamentalist activism one also finds violent and terrorist forms of activism, sometimes referred to as jihadist-salafism. In effect both forms of activism are trying to defend a pristine conception of Islam, in the case of salafists, from external influences and the weakening of the religion, and in the case of jihadist-salafists, from the perceived physical threats faced by the global Muslim community. Ironically, as we shall see below, their defense of the religion actually manifests itself in new forms of Islamic religiosity. Neo-fundamentalists also share an aversion to statist politics. Typically, they bypass the nation-state altogether and focus their activism on individual Muslims and a supranational umma or community of believing Muslims. Unsurprisingly, it has largely been the uprooted and the dislocated who have drifted toward neo-fundamentalism.

Salafism describes less a coherent movement than an approach to Islam.<sup>35</sup> Salafism has historically been an effort to revive Islam's fundamentals, returning to the religion practiced by the pious predecessors (*as-salaf as-salih*). These pious ancestors are usually seen as the first three 'generations' of the Muslim community, who lived from the time of the Prophet until the 10th century. Salafists refer to it as a *manhaj*, or a methodology for implementing the beliefs and principles of Islam. As one salafist writer states, salafism is "neither of one nation nor of a particular group of people," but is a method of understanding Islam and acting according to its teachings.<sup>36</sup>

Salafism is distinct from Islamism in a number of respects. Islamists and salafists will often hold similar views on the challenges facing the Muslim world but differ on what to do about them.<sup>37</sup> Historically for

Islamists the solution has been to establish Islamic states via political or revolutionary action. By contrast, for most salafists the solution is personal salvation through faith (*iman*) and their interpretation of the correct practice of Islam, in particular by avoiding anything considered to be an innovation (*bid'a*), idolatrous (*shirk*), or blind imitation (*taqlid*). Salafists believe that shari'a is the only law under which a true Muslim should live, but do not see the existence of an Islamic state as necessary for this to occur. Indeed salafists tend to eschew political activism, or any form of organization, believing that this leads to the prioritization of material concerns over the spiritual (and possibly to innovation or idolatry).<sup>38</sup>

Despite the fact that most salafists condemn Islamist activism, some Islamists have drifted toward salafism. A major factor in this drift has been the role Saudi Arabia has played since the 1960s and 70s in co-opting Islamists and promoting its own conservative Wahhabist creed.<sup>39</sup> Wahhabism is a salafist movement *par excellence* (although its adherents do not typically refer to themselves as Wahhabists, in some cases they will describe themselves as salafists).<sup>40</sup> In many cases salafists internationally are oriented toward Saudi Arabian religious scholars including the late Sheikhs Abd al-Aziz bin Baz, Mohammed bin Saleh al-Uthaimeen and Nasir ad-Din al-Albani and current figures Sheikh Salih ibn Fawzan al-Fawzan and Sheikh Salim al-Hilali. Apart from the extensive material support provided to salafist groups worldwide, Saudi Arabian religious institutions have become a key vector in the establishment of salafist networks. Nonetheless, not all leading salafist scholars are Saudi or Wahhabi, a prominent example being the Yemeni Sheikh Muqbil Bin Hadi al-Wadi. Additionally, not all salafists are oriented toward Wahhabism. Indeed salafism should not be seen as monolithic; the

35 The reference to contemporary salafism is meant to distinguish current individuals and groups that call themselves salafi from the historical *Salafiyyah*, the nineteenth and twentieth century rival movement of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Mohammed Abduh and Rashid Rida.

36 Abu Iyad as-Salafi, "A brief introduction to the Salafi daw'ah," <<http://www.salafipublications.com/sps/>>.

37 Roy, *Globalised Islam*, 250.

38 *Ibid.*, 247.

39 For an excellent discussion of what he has called 'Petro-Islam' see chapter 3 in Kepel, *Jihad: the trail of political Islam*.

40 Interview with Associate Professor Ahmad Shboul, Sydney University, October 2004.

international salafist community is riddled with disputation and salafists spend considerable time debating each other over matters of orthodoxy.

Notwithstanding the prominent role Saudi Arabia has played in its promotion, salafism is an excellent illustration of the extent to which some forms of Islamic religiosity are becoming less specifically Middle Eastern. Salafism copes better than many forms of Islamic religiosity with Islam's 'de-territorialization'.<sup>41</sup> Salafism adapts to de-territorialization precisely because it is an effort to reduce Islam to an abstract faith and moral code, purifying it of national or cultural identities, traditions and histories — whether western or those of traditional Muslim countries.<sup>42</sup> The 'portability' of the highly idealized Islamic identity propagated has enabled it to gain an audience among Muslims who feel alienated or marginalized living in the West.<sup>43</sup> Even in predominantly Muslim countries it provides a vehicle for individuals to distinguish themselves from the 'corrupted' society around them. This is not just a case of rejecting western influences, though salafists are often more anti-western than Islamists.<sup>44</sup> Often the first target of salafism is the indigenous culture of Muslim countries in which they live that is perceived to have distorted 'true' Islam.<sup>45</sup> It is in this sense that salafism's effort to preserve a pristine form of Islam actually contributes to the generation of new forms of Islamic religiosity and identity. As Roy notes, neo-fundamentalism is both a product and an agent of globalization.<sup>46</sup>

As Peter Mandaville notes, new media technology, in particular the Internet, has also been a powerful factor

in this process, allowing the development and articulation of new forms of identity regardless of time and place.<sup>47</sup> What matters most is the ability to communicate, whether electronically or personally, rather than where one is located. This can have a transformative impact on Muslim communities because it allows access to a vast array of views on Islamic life and doctrine. Muslims, particularly those who feel alienated or oppressed, can find idioms and ideologies that speak to their condition. As Mandaville argues, globalization has greatly added to the 'range of voices' to which a Muslim may have access and thus served to diminish the traditional Islamic scholar's monopoly over religious knowledge.<sup>48</sup> The net result is the creation of what is, in effect, a virtual umma that transcends national borders as well as different cultures and ethnic groups.

Typically, the key activity for most salafists is preaching (da'wa). This indifference to political activism also means that salafists are less prone to revolt against Muslim rulers and, unlike some Islamists, reject jihad against even unjust leaders. They do, however, believe in the necessity of jihad under certain circumstances, but tend to accord it less priority than da'wa and typically impose stricter and more legalistic conditions on its operation.<sup>49</sup> Nonetheless, the line between salafist activism and politics is sometimes blurred. Even if salafists typically avoid express political activism their preaching can still have political implications. Moreover, some salafist groups, while ostensibly still preoccupied with religiosity, will cross the line into violence; for example, by launching vigilante attacks on video stores and nightclubs considered to be

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41 Roy, *Globalised Islam*, 18. See also Peter Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics*, (London: Routledge, 2004).

42 Olivier Roy, "Radical Islam appeals to the rootless," *The Financial Times*, 12 October 2004.

43 International Crisis Group, "Islamism in North Africa I: the legacies of history," 20 April 2004, <[http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=login&ref\\_id=2993](http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=login&ref_id=2993)>, 12.

44 Despite its condemnation of al-qa'ida's brand of terrorism even the Saudi religious establishment tends to take a hostile attitude toward the West. See for example: Sheikh Abd al-Aziz Bin Abdullah Bin Baz, *The ideological attack*, trans. Abu 'Aaliyah Surkheel Ibn Anwar Sharif (Hounslow: Message of Islam, 1999).

45 Roy, "Radical Islam appeals to the rootless," *The Financial Times*.

46 Roy, *Globalised Islam*, 258.

47 Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics*.

48 *Ibid.*, 19.

49 See for example Sheikh Nasir ud-Din al-Albani, "Debate with a Jihadi," SalafiPublications.com, <<http://spubs.com/sps/sp.cfm?subsecID=IBD17&articleID=IBD170004&articlePages=1>>.

promoting immorality. There is, however, a distinct and extreme minority of self-described salafists who go beyond even this into 'organized' terrorism. Labelled jihadist-salafists, they substitute a focus on violent jihad for the traditional focus on da'wa. It is to this current that al-qa'ida and its partisans belong.

At least in part, al-qa'ida reflects the drift from Islamism into salafism referred to earlier, albeit salafism of a distinct and militant variety. In some cases this shift was prompted by failure, the most prominent example being bin Laden's deputy, and al-qa'ida's purported ideologue, Ayman al-Zawahiri.<sup>50</sup> Up until the 1990s, al-Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad fought side by side with the more broadly based al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah (to some degree the two organizations were indistinguishable) in its campaign of violence and terrorism in Egypt. Yet unlike al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah, which in the 1990s announced a ceasefire and apologized for its past acts of militancy, al-Zawahiri responded to the failure of radical Islamism to dislodge the ruling regime in Egypt by taking his organization into al-qa'ida.<sup>51</sup>

Yet if al-qa'ida owes something of its beginnings to radical Islamism in the Middle East, it is also a break with it, reflecting its deeper origins in the Afghan jihad against the Soviets and its conservative, salafist religious outlook. Following the ignominious Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, some foreign veterans of the Afghan jihad began looking for new Islamic causes around the world for which to fight. While some returned home to participate in jihad against the state, others remained keen to pursue the

course set in Afghanistan. Emboldened by the victory over the Soviets, imbued with Azzam's ideas about jihad in the cause of the umma, and utilizing bonds forged with other foreign veterans, they fought in 'Muslim' conflicts around the world: Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir and the Philippines among others. This coincided with the fact that some Afghan veterans effectively became stateless after the war, unable to return home or soon forced into exile by ruling regimes suspicious of their radical outlook and military skills. The 1991 Gulf War played a particular role in this regard, contributing to the emergence of a group of displaced veterans — most prominent among them, Osama bin Laden — alienated from their former Saudi patron by the latter's decision to invite 'infidel' troops into the Kingdom to defend it against Iraq.

Even after Kabul fell to the Afghan mujahideen in 1992, Afghanistan continued to serve as a crucible for jihadist-salafist ideas and a channel for the establishment of international networks. But the spread of jihadist-salafism was by no means limited to foreigners in Afghanistan. Some Afghan veterans found exile in the West, particularly in Europe, where they preached a jihadist-salafist message. Typical of this group were Omar Uthman Abu Omar (Abu Qatada) who established himself in a London mosque after having lived for a time in Peshawar, and Mohammed Haydar Zammar, an Afghan veteran who preached at the Hamburg Mosque.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, there is a strong theme of dislocation and uprootedness in the backgrounds of most of al-qa'ida's members, even those who were not veterans of the Afghan war.<sup>53</sup> For

50 Bin Laden was also a veteran of a period of ferment in Saudi Arabia that essentially petered out in the mid 1990s, though it has now resurfaced. It was as a direct result of his involvement in that unrest that he found himself exiled first to Sudan and then later to Afghanistan. In the mid-1990s, the polemics of two Saudi dissidents living London, Muhammaed al-Masari and Saad al-Faqih, initially received far more attention than bin Laden's calls for political change from his exile in Sudan.

51 Al-Zawahiri rationalized his own shift from a struggle against the Egyptian government to jihad against the West by saying he had come to recognize the United States would never allow "any Muslim force to reach power in the Arab countries." Former al-Zawahiri associate and al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah figure, Montasser al-Zayyat, is less charitable. He argues that al-Zawahiri's shift was dramatic; until 1996–97, he had remained committed to the fight against the Egyptian government. Al-Zayyat argues that the shift reflected little more than an unwillingness to abandon violence despite the failure of terrorism in Egypt. See serialized excerpts from Ayman al-Zawahiri, "Knights under the Prophet's banner," trans. FBIS, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 2001.. 67 and Montasser al-Zayyat, *The Road to al-Qaeda*, trans. Ahmed Fekry (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 64–65.

52 Miriam Abou Zahab and Olivier Roy, *Islamist Networks: The Afghan-Pakistan connection*, trans. John King. (London: Hurst & Company, 2004), 49–50.

53 For an excellent discussion of this see chapter 5 in Sageman, *Understanding terror networks*.

example, Muhammed Atta and other key perpetrators of the attacks on 9/11 were radicalized not in their home country — in Atta's case, Egypt — but as students living in Germany.<sup>54</sup>

Al-qa'ida evolved over the period between the Soviet departure from Afghanistan in 1989 and 1998 — though it seems to have taken real shape after bin Laden returned to Afghanistan in 1996 from exile in Sudan. It was at this point that the Taliban in Afghanistan made bin Laden responsible for all the foreign fighters still in the country and that he formalized his long relationship with al-Zawahiri in the 1998 declaration of a 'World Islamic Front' to wage jihad against 'Jews and Crusaders'.<sup>55</sup> The meaning of 'al-qa'ida' has been variously translated as the 'base' or 'vanguard' of jihadist activity, or simply as a 'database' of jihadist activists.<sup>56</sup> Most often al-qa'ida has been seen as a loose transnational network led by a small core which has both carried out terrorist attacks on its own, or sponsored attacks by others — a sort of venture capitalist organization for terrorists. As one Saudi Islamist described it, "al-qa'ida see themselves as a college where people enrol, graduate and then go their separate ways. But they are encouraged to establish their own satellite networks which ultimately link in with al-qa'ida."<sup>57</sup>

A key distinction between al-qa'ida and the historic

patterns of radical Islamist activism in the Middle East is the former's decision to fight the 'far enemy' (the United States and its western allies) as opposed to the 'near enemy' (the impious rulers of Muslim states). Few if any radical Islamists would disagree with Osama bin Laden's complaints against the West. Nonetheless the prioritization by al-qa'ida and its partisans of 'peripheral' jihad seems to reflect more than a tactical choice. In the al-qa'ida world view, it is fighting at the borders of the Islamic world against the perceived assaults of the United States and its western allies. Indeed prominent salafist-jihadists are referred to as *ahl al-thughoor* — a historic allusion to those who defended Islam's frontier in the early centuries of its expansion.<sup>58</sup>

Since the launch of the 'war on terror' and the destruction of al-qa'ida's physical base in Afghanistan, it is arguable whether it still possesses meaning as an organization. Jason Burke and others have increasingly described al-qa'ida as an ideology rather than a movement.<sup>59</sup> If Burke's description seems apt, it perhaps grants more coherence to al-qa'ida's world-view than the latter actually possesses. Among jihadist-salafists there are no real ideologues in the mould of a Sayyid Qutb, though plenty of demagogues. In their writings one typically finds little more than elaborate anti-American and anti-western conspiracies, mingled with a fervent anti-Semitism, all justifying perpetual jihad.<sup>60</sup> Indeed jihad becomes

54 Roy, *Globalised Islam*, 302–303.

55 For an interesting account of this see an interview with the London based Saudi dissident Saad al-Faqih in Mahan Abedin, "The essence of al-Qaeda: an interview with Saad al-Faqih." The Jamestown Foundation 5 February 2004: <[http://www.jamestown.org/publications\\_details.php?volume\\_id=397&issue\\_id=2907](http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=397&issue_id=2907)>. See also: al-Zayyat, *The road to al-Qaeda*.

56 See for example Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, 315, and Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 36.

57 Abedin, "The essence of al-Qaeda: an interview with Saad al-Faqih."

58 The jihadist-salafi web magazine Sawt al-Jihad regularly carries quotes of what it refers to as *ahl al-thughoor* including Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Muhammed bin Abdullah al-Saif. One meaning of *thughoor* is the gaps between teeth. In this context it refers to the historic western border zone in early Islamic times straddled by the Anti-Taurus and Taurus Mountains of what is today Turkey, specifically the gaps between these mountain ranges. Thus, people who guard and fight in such regions can be regarded as *ahl al-thughoor* (literally, "people of the gap"). The Thughur system became a series of fortified bases established near the gaps or passes between the Taurus and anti-Taurus onto the Anatolian plateau.

59 Burke, *Al-Qaeda*.

60 A cursory glance at the writings of associated salafi-jihadist polemicists find conspiracies and elaborate apologia for violence against the West. Yousuf al-Ayiri, killed in 2003 in a shootout with Saudi security forces, argues in *Hakikat al-Harb al-Salibiya al-Jadida* (The Truth about the New Crusade) that the terrorism of September 11, 2001 was entirely justified by the West's assault on Islam. Similarly, the London based Palestinian Salafi-jihadist, Abu Qatada, argues that the jihad as declared by Bin Laden is the only way to counter western dominance of the world. His fellow Palestinian, Muhammad al-Maqdisi, argues in *Mashrou' al-Sharq al-Awsat al-Kabir* (The Greater Middle East Initiative) that democracy is a sin that some Muslims have embraced out of ignorance and enthusiasm for western culture and values. See Abu Qatada, "Al Awlama wa Saraiya Al Jihad," *Manbar Al Tawheed Wal Jihad*, <<http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=1235>>. Abu Muhammad Maqdisi, "Mashrou' Al-Sharq Al Awsat Al Kabir," *Minbar Al Tawheed Wal Jihad*, <<http://www.almaqdes.com/r?i=2673&c=2390>>.

an end in itself and a manifestation of one's faith; it is Azzam's 'trial by fire'.<sup>61</sup>

It is in this respect that al-qa'ida and organizations like it are more appropriately seen as neo-fundamentalist rather than Islamist — albeit at the extreme end of the neo-fundamentalist spectrum. Unlike Islamists, al-qa'ida and its followers are not attempting to re-order their own Muslim states and societies — in part because they are no longer connected to them.<sup>62</sup> At most they are attempting to rally other Muslims to join them at the front line of the umma in the fight against non-Muslim enemies. They lack tangible political objectives or ambitions, will not run in elections or even overthrow governments — though governments may fall as a result of their acts of terrorism, as happened in Spain after the Madrid bombing in 2004 and as might happen in Saudi Arabia. Likewise in Iraq, while most local Sunni insurgents have one eye on their place in Iraq's ultimate political dispensation, the foreign contingent around Abu Musab Zarqawi are unlikely to be bought off or otherwise diverted from what they see as a religious duty to fight the United States and its allies. Like Russian anarchists of the 19th and early 20th centuries, they see themselves as, in effect, above politics. It is the act of violence, or in their case jihad, more than the result that is important.

At the same time it is important to distinguish jihadist-salafism from salafism. In particular, the former lacks salafism's more rigorous approach to faith and its heavy reliance on traditional religious scholars (*ulema*). Indeed, as a function of this and the condemnation that al-qa'ida's approach have drawn from Islamic scholars across the religious and political spectrum, jihadist-salafism has created its own ulema and religious doctrine. Despite the fact that bin Laden and other leading al-qa'ida figures lack any formal religious training, they are frequently addressed as

sheikhs or imams. Efforts are also repeatedly made to justify attacks via highly selective readings of the works of Islamic jurists, notably Ibn Taymiyah.<sup>63</sup>

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62 See chapter 7 in Roy, *Globalised Islam*, and Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 146-151.

63 See for example Yousef al-Ayiri, *Hakikat al-harb al-salibiya al-jadida*, (Centre for Islamic Studies and Research, 2001), <<http://www.tawhed.ws/a?i=250>>.

## CHAPTER 2: FROM THE MIDDLE EAST TO INDONESIA—

### INTRODUCTION

The great Dutch scholar of Islam, Snouck Hurgronje, wrote of the Indonesian community in Mecca in the 1880s, “Here lies the heart of the religious life of the East-Indian archipelago, and the numberless arteries pump thence fresh blood in ever accelerating tempo to the entire body of the Moslem populace in Indonesia.”<sup>64</sup> He also observed that Indonesians “render in a purely formal manner due homage to the institutions ordained of Allah, which are everywhere as sincerely received in theory as they are ill observed in practice.”<sup>65</sup> These two quotes capture an enduring and widely held view among western observers of the relationship between Indonesian Muslims and their Middle Eastern counterparts. On the one hand, Indonesians seek knowledge and inspiration from the Middle East, but on the other hand, apply this knowledge in a distinctively ‘local’ way. Some scholars marvelled at what they saw as the adaptive genius of Indonesians, who were skilled at borrowing and blending the old with the new to create a rich religious synthesis. In general they approved of this ‘tropical’ variant of Islam over the ‘desert-dried’ form of the Near East. Other writers, especially scholars of Islam, looked askance at what they saw as the dilution of ‘pure’ Middle Eastern Islam.<sup>66</sup>

In contemporary times, and especially after 9/11, western views of both Middle Eastern and Indonesian Islam and the interaction between them have hardened. More than any other region of the Islamic world, the Middle East is now seen as the crucible of nihilistic jihadism. Indonesian Islam is still regarded as predominantly tolerant and pluralistic, but the emergence in recent years of local paramilitary jihadist and terrorist groups has led to concern over perceived radicalization and the eroding of the country’s essentially ‘moderate’ Islamic character. One reason commonly advanced by western observers for this ‘extremist’ minority trend in Indonesia is the growing influence of Middle Eastern Islam. Globalization and the increasing penetration of mass communications have contributed to this process, as has generous Middle Eastern sponsorship of radical outreach programs. Thus, the more Indonesian Islam is seen as having Middle Eastern qualities, the greater specter of threat it poses.

The reality is far more complex than these stereotypes suggest. As demonstrated in Chapter One, there is a wide range of Islamist thinking and behaviour in the Middle East, from the innovative and the

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64 C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the Nineteenth Century: Daily Life, Customs and Learning of the Moslems of the East-Indian Archipelago*, trans. J. H. Monahan (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1931), 291.

65 C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, trans. A. W. S. O’Sullivan (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1906), 313.

66 For a good discussion of this discourse, see Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 121–126.

pragmatic, to virulent jihadist-salafism. To characterize all of Middle Eastern Islamism as dangerously radical is to miss a large part of the mosaic. Islamism has never been uniquely Middle Eastern, and today it is even less so, underlined by neo-fundamentalism's growing detachment from the region. Indonesian Islam, while mainly irenic, has also had a long history of violent minority radicalism which owed little to external influences, whether from the Middle East or elsewhere. Indeed, these largely endogenous movements have been a major recruiting ground for modern-day terrorists.

Similarly, the relationship between Middle Eastern and Indonesian Muslims is far more variegated than is commonly imagined by many contemporary Western commentators. As the birthplace of Islam, the Middle East has, not surprisingly, been a powerful force in shaping the faith in Southeast Asia. Most of the major streams of thinking and practice in the Middle East have made their way to Southeast Asia. Rarely have these processes entailed direct transfer and unmediated application by Muslims in countries like Indonesia. More commonly, though not always, there has been an ongoing process of selection and modification of various practices, combining them with pre-existing Islamic and non-Islamic features. The result is a local form which resembles its Middle Eastern antecedents but which also has distinguishing features.

In the next two chapters, we will discuss the transmission and impact of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas, specifically salafism and jihadist-salafism. This chapter will focus on three major vectors for the transmission of these ideas: the movement of students and scholars and Indonesian jihadists who participated in the Afghan war against the Soviets; Middle Eastern religious propagation in Indonesia, in particular by Saudi Arabia; and publishing and the Internet. The impact of these ideas will then be considered in the next chapter.

Two things become immediately apparent when considering the transmission of Islamist ideas from the Middle East to Indonesia. First, the transmission of ideas runs largely in one direction: from the Middle East to Indonesia. Much as Indonesians seek an audience for their work in the Middle East, in reality most Arabs regard Southeast Asia as the intellectual periphery of the Islamic world from which little can be gained. This Arab condescension if not derision towards Southeast Asians is often a source of irritation.

Second, the transmission of Islamism to Indonesia has both pull and push factors. On the one hand, many Indonesian Muslims actively seek knowledge from the Middle East, whether as students studying there or as consumers of publications and electronic media. On the other hand, Middle Eastern governments, charitable organizations and private donors keenly promote their interpretations of Islam within the region, funding Islamic infrastructure such as mosques, schools and colleges, sponsoring visits by preachers and the publication of books and journals, and providing scholarships for study in Arab countries. Thus, Indonesian Muslims who have a Middle Eastern orientation have abundant opportunities to further their interest.

## HUMAN MOVEMENT

Historically, the main means for transmission of Middle Eastern thought to Southeast Asia has been human movement. Arab traders and scholars have been travelling to the region for at least eight centuries, disseminating Islamic knowledge and proselytising among non-Muslims. From the mid-19th century many thousands of Yemeni Arabs from the Hadramawt valley settled in Indonesia, becoming well established as teachers, ulema and merchants.<sup>67</sup> The implications of this migration are still felt today in the role played by Indonesians of Arab descent in

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<sup>67</sup> See chapter 1 in Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900–1942* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1999).

the Muslim community. For their part, Indonesian Muslims have, for several centuries, gone to the Middle East as pilgrims, officials, businessmen, students and scholars. As Azyumardi Azra's excellent discussion of the Middle Eastern networks of Indonesian ulema of the 17th and 18th centuries shows, there is a rich tradition of ideas being exchanged and mediated.<sup>68</sup>

In terms of human movement, students have been perhaps the most important contemporary conduits of Islamist ideas from the Middle East to Indonesia. They went to the Middle East, and especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia, in large numbers to study with prestigious Islamic scholars and immerse themselves in an 'authentic' Islamic culture. The longer their education in the Middle East or the more famous the teacher under whom they studied, the greater would be their standing upon returning to Indonesia. In recent years, the number of Indonesians in the Middle East has risen dramatically, due not only to the increase in Indonesian government scholarships but also additional financial assistance from Middle Eastern governments and private donors.

These students did not typically go to the Middle East to study Islamist ideas, but rather the classical subjects of Islamic scholarship such as *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *usul ad-din* (theology). The time spent in the region has, however, provided opportunities to interact with Islamist groups and exposed students to their ideas. One Indonesian student at Islam's most prestigious educational institution, al-Azhar University in Cairo, recalled that while in Egypt, Indonesian students often circulated in Muslim

Brotherhood circles. Another Indonesian interviewee noted that Yousef al-Qaradawi was popularized in Indonesia by students who watched his broadcasts and read his books while studying in the Middle East.<sup>69</sup>

At present, there are more than 20,000 Indonesians living in the Middle East. Many of them are workers, though a significant proportion are students. According to 2004 figures supplied by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, the key destination is Egypt (3,528 students—with most if not all at al-Azhar), though Indonesians also study at Islamic institutions in other countries of the region, including Saudi Arabia (87) Sudan (162), Yemen (143), Iran (105) and Tunisia (17).<sup>70</sup> The number of students has increased fourfold in Egypt since the 1980s when the number of Indonesian students there was around 700.<sup>71</sup> According to the Egyptian embassy in Jakarta, the Egyptian government provides around 120 scholarships a year for Indonesian students. International Islamic organizations and charities provide an additional number of scholarships for study at al-Azhar.

Given the location of Islam's two holiest sites in Saudi Arabia, the kingdom is another important destination for Indonesian students. Indonesians students study at the Islamic University in Madinah, Umm al-Qora University in Mecca, and Al-Imam Mohammed bin Saud University in Riyadh. A small number also study at the King Abdul Aziz University and some are also enrolled in petroleum studies at King Fahd University in Dahrhan. Obtaining a reliable figure for student numbers in the kingdom is difficult, however. One reliable source said that the Saudi government currently provides around 170 full scholarships, down

68 Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia* (Canberra: Asian Studies Association of Australia, 2004). Another fine study of this subject can be found in Michael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma Below the Winds* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

69 Al-Jazeera is available in Indonesia through satellite and cable TV, but relatively few Indonesians have access to these expensive services. During the Iraq War, free to air television networks carried special al-Jazeera broadcasts, but ceased shortly thereafter. Al-Qaradawi's ideas are mainly circulated through written translations of his sermons and books.

70 According to Department of Religion statistics, the total number of Indonesian Muslim students abroad in 2004 was 4476, 91.2 percent of who were in the Middle East. Egypt accounts for by far the largest share with 78 percent. Outside the Middle East, Pakistan and Malaysia have the largest number of Indonesian students with 131 and 120 respectively. Only 3.2 percent of Islamic students study in the West (Australia 38, US 33, Canada 27 and Germany 7). Based on information from the Sub-directorate for Higher Education and Scientific Publications in the Department of Religion, Jakarta, supplied in September 2004.

71 Mona Abaza, *Indonesian Azharites, fifteen years later*, *SOJOURN* 18 no. 1, April 2003.

from around 200 three years ago. This conflicts with the Ministry of Religious Affairs figure above of 87 students in the country.<sup>72</sup>

Moreover, alongside Saudi government sponsorship, Islamic organizations such as the Muslim World League and other smaller charities provide additional scholarships. According to a recent report by the International Crisis Group (ICG), the Indonesian arm of a Kuwaiti Islamic NGO, Jamiat Ihya at-Turath al-Islamiyah (or as it is known in Indonesia, Yayasan Majelis at-Turots al-Islami), provides opportunities for selected students to undertake fully-funded study at the Islamic University in Madinah.<sup>73</sup> An unknown number of Indonesians also study with individual religious scholars in Saudi Arabia. This is a particularly important form of religious education among Indonesian salafists and can later become a source of patronage for the students, often enabling them to establish their own pesantren (Islamic boarding school) in Indonesia.<sup>74</sup>

A key conduit of jihadist ideas was the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s. We have already recounted the role that Afghan veterans played in militant violence and terrorism in Algeria and Egypt, and in the formation of al-qa'ida. More than 300 Indonesians — and possibly as many as 600 — also went through foreign mujahideen training camps from the early 1980s until the mid-1990s. Their reasons for attending these camps are complex. Some responded to the active recruitment efforts of Islamic organizations, notably the Saudi-based Muslim World League. For others, like the many Arab Islamists who travelled to Afghanistan, more practical motives also seem to have been at play; in particular, the opportunity Afghanistan provided for gaining military training that could then be used in their home countries. It is

noteworthy in this respect that Indonesians were still undertaking training in Afghanistan well after the Soviets had withdrawn and Kabul had fallen to the Afghan mujahideen.

By far the largest group of Indonesians was sent to Afghanistan by the future Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) founder Abdullah Sungkar who used his networks within the Darul Islam movement. Most of JI's senior leadership and many of its middle-level operatives were Afghan veterans. Other Indonesian organizations, such as the Islamic Youth Movement (GPI), also assisted members and sympathizers to travel to Afghanistan. The linkages that were formed between Indonesian and other foreign jihadists at this time, culminating in the operational connections between the Indonesian terrorist group JI and al-qa'ida in particular, are fairly well documented.<sup>75</sup> It is important to note in this regard the JI did not exist as an organization when Indonesians started travelling to Afghanistan.

Indonesian mujahideen had a varied exposure to their Arab counterparts. On arrival in Pakistan, many went through Abdullah Azzam's Maktab al-Khidamat, before going on to the training camp of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, the Afghan commander who had the closest ties to Saudi Arabia and Osama bin Laden. Probably 200–300 Indonesians trained at the Sayyaf camp and they appeared to have been kept together as a group with other Southeast Asians, with little interaction between them and those undergoing training from the Middle East.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless many of their trainers were from the Middle East and many Indonesians also seem to have met Osama bin Laden and other future al-qa'ida figures, such as Khalid Sheikh Muhammed, in the Sayyaf camp.<sup>77</sup> A small number of Indonesian mujahideen trained at the camps of other Afghan leaders such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Jamil ur-Rahman.

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72 Confidential interview.

73 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and terrorism mostly don't mix," 13 September 2004, 11.

74 Ibid., 3, and a confidential interview.

75 By far the best accounts are provided by International Crisis Group's reports on the subject. See in particular International Crisis Group, "Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous," 26 August 2004.

76 Ibid., 5.

77 Ibid., 5.

Apart from military training the Indonesian mujahideen were also provided with religious and ideological training. As with many of the Saudi-funded camps there was a heavy focus on salafist teachings, though of a jihadist bent.<sup>78</sup> Other ideological influences were also present; Muslim Brothers like Abdullah Azzam were prominent in Saudi organisations supporting the jihad and among foreign mujahideen more generally. Azzam's writings and ideas were a significant part of the curricula in the camps, though the romanticized personal example he set was probably even more influential.<sup>79</sup> Even today, Azzam is something of a Che Guevara figure among Indonesian jihadists. Contacts also appear to have been made with Egyptian militants, both al-Zawahiri's Islamic Jihad and al-Gama'a al-Islamiyyah.

While the Indonesians who went to Afghanistan returned with military training and links with other foreign jihadists, the extent to which they absorbed particular ideas is difficult to assess. One complication is that, as Jason Burke notes, while the isolated and harsh nature of the camps undoubtedly played a role in forming a particular mindset, most who travelled to Afghanistan were already highly committed (at least ideologically), having endured significant hardship to make the journey.<sup>80</sup>

It is also worth recalling that Osama bin Laden's plans to launch al-qa'ida's jihad against the United States and its western allies probably did not crystallize until after his return to Afghanistan in 1996. By this time many JI members had already left the camps there (in 1995, JI began shifting its training to the Philippines, though it still maintained a presence in Afghanistan<sup>81</sup>). The time spent in the common Afghan milieu, and in particular the tangible personal connections that persisted beyond Afghanistan, undoubtedly made it

easier for JI to fall in behind al-qa'ida's call for a global jihad. At the same time, it also suggests that JI's decision was arrived at independently.

## EDUCATION AND PROPAGATION

A second key conduit for Islamist ideas has been education and da'wa (preaching) supported by government and non-government organizations and individuals from the Middle East. At the outset, it needs to be emphasized that da'wa typically involves the propagation of a religious (Islamic) message rather than a political (Islamist) message. Similarly, support for institutions of Islamic education in Indonesia often comprises little more than provision of teaching materials on classical Islamic subjects. Our focus here, therefore, is specifically on those da'wa or educational activities that either serve as a conduit for Islamist ideas or potentially have political or indeed violent implications.

Organizations and individuals from a number of Middle Eastern countries, including from Egypt, Kuwait and other Gulf states, have been active in Indonesia in the education and da'wa fields. According to one estimate, there are currently some 50 teachers from al-Azhar University teaching at Islamic institutions in Indonesia.<sup>82</sup> A confidential source at the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs commented that Iranian institutions are particularly aggressive — despite the fact the Indonesian Muslims are overwhelming Sunnis — offering several dozen generous scholarships a year for study in Iran. But it is the role played by Saudi Arabia in both da'wa and education that has attracted the greatest attention and will be our main focus.

Since 9/11, Saudi Arabia's support for international Islamic causes around the world has come under

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78 Ibid., 5.

79 Interview with Ulil Abshar Abdalla in Jakarta, 26 April 2004.

80 Burke, *Al-Qaeda*, 154.

81 International Crisis Group, "Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous," 10.

82 Mena News Agency, "Indonesian Education Minister meets Egyptian religious leader," 18 December 2003.

intense scrutiny. This reflects in large part the role some Saudi-based Islamic charities have played, inadvertently or otherwise, in the financing of terrorism. There has also been concern about Saudi Arabia's propagation of its Wahhabist brand of salafism. It has been argued that the promotion of this puritanical form of Islam has radicalized once tolerant and moderate Muslim communities around the world, including in Indonesia. For example, in the latest report of the Independent Task Force on Terrorist Financing, sponsored by the US think tank, the Council on Foreign Relations, it was claimed that in its "support for madrassas (sic), mosques, cultural centres, hospitals, and other institutions, and the training and export of radical clerics to populate these outposts, Saudi Arabia has spent what could amount to hundreds of millions of dollars around the world financing extremism."<sup>83</sup>

The issue is a complex one. As the Taskforce Report concedes, Saudi Arabia has provided considerable legitimate humanitarian and development assistance to Muslim causes around the world. The difficulty is trying to disentangle genuine charity from the funding of terrorist groups and the propagation of ideas that cross the line between purely religious and a more political activism. This difficulty is reinforced by the lack of Saudi transparency. Indeed, official Saudi representatives in Jakarta were unwilling to discuss in any detail the extent of official and semi-official propagation and education activities. The incomplete picture presented here is, therefore, largely constructed from discussions with Indonesian and other interlocutors.

A variety of Saudi official and non-government agencies, either primarily or partially focused on education and religious propagation, are active in Indonesia. These include religious attachés at the Saudi Arabian

Embassy in Jakarta; the non-government Muslim World League (MWL) and two of its subsidiary agencies, the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO) and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY); and private donors and other non-government charities, such as the infamous Saudi charity al-Haramain whose Indonesian branch was listed as a terrorist supporting organization by the United States and the United Nations and ostensibly shut down.

Saudi sponsored educational and da'wa activities in Indonesia expanded dramatically in the 1980s, probably as a part of Saudi Arabia's broader ideological conflict at that time with Iranian Islamism.<sup>84</sup> It would be wrong, however, to view Saudi activism in Indonesia as reflective of a coherent strategy or aim. Saudi religious propagation and educational activities often seemed to manifest different motives and sometimes competing interests. Saudi sponsorship has undoubtedly been provided to those groups whose religious inclinations are closest to Wahhabism, notably Indonesian salafi groups. But it has by no means been limited to them. Nor does Saudi largesse always seem tied to a particular religious or ideological ends. In many cases, mosques and orphanages have been built simply as a function of charity (a central tenet of Islam) with no strings attached.<sup>85</sup>

Where the goal has been the propagation of Wahhabist-oriented forms of Islamic practice, ostensibly the concern has been with religiosity rather than politics. That is, the purpose has been to purify or correct the form of Islam practiced by Indonesian Muslims. Indeed, there are examples where members of the Saudi religious establishment have counselled an Indonesian client specifically against engaging in political forms of activism (see Chapter Three). Nevertheless the line between strictly apolitical

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83 Maurice R. Greenberg and Lee S. Wolosky, "Update on the Global Campaign Against Terrorist Financing," (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2004), <[http://www.cfr.org/pub7111/maurice\\_r\\_greenberg\\_william\\_f\\_wechsler\\_lee\\_s\\_wolosky\\_mallory\\_factor/update\\_on\\_the\\_global\\_campaign\\_against\\_terrorist\\_financing.php](http://www.cfr.org/pub7111/maurice_r_greenberg_william_f_wechsler_lee_s_wolosky_mallory_factor/update_on_the_global_campaign_against_terrorist_financing.php)>, 20.

84 From discussion with Indonesian interlocutors it appears that the Iranian embassy was very active in the 1980s in spreading its revolutionary ideology. Indeed by some accounts a small number of Indonesians, who are predominantly Sunnis, converted to Shi'ism. More recently Iranian activism seems to have declined markedly.

85 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and terrorism mostly don't mix," 23.

propagation and one that is either politically motivated, or has political consequences, is often blurred. In some cases Saudi funding has been provided to groups involved in more explicitly political and sometimes violent forms of activism, one example being Wahdah Islamiyah (see below).

This coexistence of purely religious da'wa and activities that have political implications reflects the different interests at play among the various Saudi government and non-government bodies active in this field and their Indonesian grantees. The extent to which these interests and those in Indonesia sometimes conflict is illustrated by accounts surrounding efforts in early 2004 to remove the director of the Muslim World League and International Islamic Relief Organization in Indonesia, a Saudi national. A number of Indonesian sources separately confirmed that these efforts had been prompted by complaints from Indonesian salafists that he was insufficiently salafist (indeed, that he was a *Sufi* and thus rejected on doctrinal grounds by salafists). It was not clear, however, whether this was related to any perceived laxity in his religious practices or outlook or his willingness to provide financial assistance to non-salafi causes.

Perhaps the key institution of Saudi-sponsored Islamic education in Indonesia is *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab* (the Indonesian Institute for Islamic and Arabic Sciences or LIPIA), a branch of Al-Imam Muhammad bin Saud University in Riyadh. Established in 1980, it provides courses in both Arabic and Islamic studies for Indonesian students, the most successful of whom can gain scholarships for post-graduate study at Al-Imam University. All tuition at LIPIA is conducted in Arabic, and between 80 and 90 percent of the teaching faculty comes from the Middle East. The Institute has always been headed by a Saudi.

Admission standards are high; according to former students the Institute typically accepts (and graduates) at least 200 students per year from around 1,000–2,000 that apply.<sup>86</sup> Once accepted however, tuition is free and students are provided with a generous stipend by Indonesian standards.<sup>87</sup>

The teaching at LIPIA seems to reflect a combination of the curriculum of its parent institution, Al-Imam University, and the particular orientation of faculty members, though the balance between the two has varied over the years. Ulil Abshar Abdalla, founder of Indonesia's Liberal Islam Network (JIL), and a former LIPIA student from 1988 to 1993, said that when he studied at the institution the curriculum was very much akin to Al-Imam's.<sup>88</sup> He noted that the study of Ibn Taymiyah was "a must" at LIPIA.<sup>89</sup> In general, he characterized the teaching as hostile to the local Indonesian culture and Muslim practices. He recalled that when he had confronted his teachers over this issue they had responded by saying that they did not want to teach narrow-minded nationalism.<sup>90</sup> Other former students also noted a Wahhabist-salafist orientation, though they characterized it as more 'open' than what one would find in Saudi Arabia.

Alongside a salafist disposition, however, LIPIA also had, to varying degrees throughout its history, notable Muslim Brotherhood influences. Many of its teachers have a strong Brotherhood background. This is hardly surprising given that Saudi institutions of Islamic education have long employed Muslim Brothers. This tolerance of Muslim Brothers has begun to recede in Saudi Arabia in recent years, as the regime has come to blame the movement for encouraging extremist ideas in the Kingdom. This does not appear to have had an impact on LIPIA at this stage. The ICG's Sidney Jones characterized LIPIA as basically Brotherhood-dominated these days.<sup>91</sup>

86 Interviews with Ulil Abshar Abdalla in Jakarta, 26 April 2004, and Farid Okhbah, 19 April 2004.

87 Ibid., Also: International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and terrorism mostly don't mix," 8.

88 Interview with Ulil Abshar Abdalla in Jakarta, 26 April 2004.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid.

91 Electronic communication with Sidney Jones, International Crisis Group, 6 October 2004.

The distinct influences mediated by LIPIA over its history are reflected in the trajectories of its graduates. On the one hand, no single institution seems to have done more than LIPIA to propagate contemporary forms of salafism in Indonesia.<sup>92</sup> Graduates of LIPIA have become leading figures in the Indonesian salafist movement and are particularly prominent as publishers, preachers, teachers and ulema. In particular, LIPIA graduates have gone on to establish salafist pesantren, often with Saudi funding.<sup>93</sup> These have grown from a handful in the 1980s to hundreds today, providing a mechanism for spreading salafist ideas through outreach activities and for the training of local salafist teachers and propagators.<sup>94</sup>

On the other hand, LIPIA has also served as a seedbed of Brotherhood ideas. Many graduates emerged steeped in Brotherhood thinking, including some who would go on to be leaders of the Brotherhood-oriented Prosperous and Justice Party (PKS). The obvious question is whether the difference between salafist and Muslim Brotherhood approaches is meaningful in practice. There is much in common with respect to religious faith and doctrine. In the past the Saudi religious establishment — and the Saudi regime — saw no difficulty employing Muslim Brothers in teaching positions, with the tacit understanding that the political dimensions of the Brotherhood's *da'wa* would not be propagated in Saudi Arabia. Many Muslim Brothers began drifting toward salafism as they became more disconnected from the societies from which they originally came.<sup>95</sup>

Nonetheless it is the Brotherhood's more overtly political activism and its generally accommodating attitude to both political pluralism and religious diversity that still distinguishes it from contemporary salafism. As already noted, the latter tends to eschew politics and to

be intolerant toward what it perceives as impure or innovative religious practices. In Indonesia, this distinction has been manifest in the efforts of Indonesian salafist 'purists' to discourage their followers from attending LIPIA from the mid- to late 1990s onward, because they believed the institution to have been excessively compromised by Brotherhood ideas.<sup>96</sup> Nonetheless it is also possible that the combination of a salafist curriculum and Muslim Brotherhood teachers may at times have produced graduates that combine a puritanical religious outlook with more overtly political forms of activism.<sup>97</sup>

In terms of *da'wa*, both government and non-government activity is largely focused on the support of local Indonesian organizations. Support is provided to groups across the spectrum, from those propagating a purely Wahhabist-oriented salafism to groups that take their inspiration from a range of influences including from the Muslim Brotherhood. Embassy religious attachés provide these organizations with materials on Wahhabism to distribute and by some accounts pay their *da'i* (preachers) a monthly stipend. One Indonesian interlocutor claimed that embassy religious attachés fund some 400 *da'i* on a monthly basis, although we were not able to confirm this number.<sup>98</sup>

Three organizations, in particular, have received significant Saudi support, both government and non-government: Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII; Indonesian Islamic Predication Council), Jamiat Islam wal-Irsyad (The Islamic Association for Enlightenment, usually known as simply al-Irsyad); and the Persatuan Islam (Persis; Islamic Association). DDII was established in 1967 by leaders of the banned Masyumi Islamic Party. Its focus has been propagation rather than practical political activity. DDII's chairman, Mohammad Natsir, was widely respected

92 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and terrorism mostly don't mix," 7.

93 Ibid., 10, and a confidential interview.

94 Ibid., 10.

95 Roy, *Globalised Islam*, 65–67 and 251.

96 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and terrorism mostly don't mix," 8.

97 Interview with Ulil Abshar Abdalla in Jakarta, 26 April 2004.

98 Confidential interview.

in Middle Eastern Wahhabi and salafist circles and he became the most important conduit for Saudi funding flowing into Indonesia during the 1970s and 80s. Al-Irsyad, founded in 1913, is primarily devoted to Islamic education and propagation, and Persis was established in 1924 as a modernist Muslim organisation. Both al-Irsyad and Persis have Islamic schools that have featured prominently in the education of Indonesian Islamists.

Together with LIPIA, DDII was critical to the growth of salafism in the 1970s and early 1980s. DDII, as the main disburser of Saudi money in Indonesia during these decades, provided scholarships for young Indonesian Muslims to study at Middle Eastern institutions, including several of the leading centres of salafist education such as al-Imam University in Riyadh. Through its chairman, Natsir, DDII also facilitated the establishment of LIPIA. But again Saudi support did not orient DDII specifically toward Wahhabism or salafism. DDII also played a key role in popularizing Brotherhood thought, translating a number of seminal Brotherhood texts in the late 1970s and 1980s, the most popular of which was Sayyid Qutb's 'Signposts' (*Petunjuk Jalan*). Many of the students sent to al-Azhar by DDII took the opportunity to study at first hand Brotherhood thinking and organizational methods. Moreover, DDII funded intensive training courses for Muslim tertiary students that drew heavily upon Brotherhood principles. Indeed, the breadth of DDII's approach has probably helped it to obtain funding from sources other than those in Saudi Arabia.<sup>99</sup>

In general terms, Indonesian salafist groups have benefited the most from Saudi and Gulf states' funding. Many of the leading salafist groups received generous funding from and in several prominent cases, were founded at the instigation of, Middle Eastern donors, both government and non-govern-

ment. Two salafist organizations that receive significant support from the IIRO are Yayasan al-Sofwah and Wahdah Islamiyah (WI).<sup>100</sup> The former has largely been involved in salafist propagation. The latter has, however, produced a number of Indonesian militants including Agus Dwikarna and even among Indonesian salafists the movement is seen as leaning toward jihadist-salafism.<sup>101</sup>

Other organizations that have received, or continue to receive, non-governmental Saudi support include the al-Huda Islamic Foundation, which was established in 1998 and runs its own kindergartens and schools as well as a teachers' college and an AM radio station (Radio al-Iman Swaratama); the al-Ta'ifah Mansoura Foundation founded in 1994 by salafist activists from campus mosques in East Java; the al-Imam Foundation (which appears to be struggling because of a decline in Saudi funding); the al-Sunnah Foundation, in Cirebon, West Java, which runs the largest salafist pesantren in Cirebon with programs from kindergarten to junior high school; and the Nda' al-Fatra Foundation, in Surabaya, East Java, which publishes and distributes salafist texts and also maintains a radio station (as-Salam FM).<sup>102</sup>

The U.S. crackdown on the flow of money from Middle Eastern institutions to countries such as Indonesia since 9/11 has resulted in a sharp drop in Saudi funding for both Indonesian salafist groups and other organizations such as DDII. For example, construction of DDII's long-awaited school and college complex at the organization's Jakarta headquarters has been halted by dwindling Middle Eastern funding with the building about 75 percent complete. Dewan Dakwah officials complain that the U.S.-instigated pressure on such funding is more likely to drive students into radical institutions than undermine terrorism. The salafist website, 'Al-Islam' has also had its Saudi funding curtailed, resulting in a sharp decline in

99 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and terrorism mostly don't mix," 22.

100 Ibid., 23.

101 Ibid., 24.

102 Confidential interviews.

its operations. The director of the IIRO office in Jakarta claimed to us in May 2004 that he had not received any new funding for a year. He also noted that many wealthy Saudis with a genuine interest in providing humanitarian assistance had been scared off from donating to the IIRO.

This has affected salafist groups more than others, given their reliance on Saudi funding. Some of these groups have succeeded in gaining funds directly from individual donors; others have sought to increase their own fund-raising capacity by establishing enterprises and cultivating local donors.<sup>103</sup> Nonetheless, there is circumstantial evidence that non-government Saudi donors have found ways to bypass the official crack-down on the funding and had continued in 2004 to provide money to some of the salafist groups mentioned above, including WI.<sup>104</sup> The Eastern Province (in Saudi Arabia) Branch of the IIRO seems to have been particularly active in Indonesia in this regard.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, the unintended impact within Indonesia of international pressure on Saudi Arabia has been to reduce funding to legitimate projects without preventing more zealously motivated patrons from getting their money through. Not only does this create resentment towards the West among lawful recipients of this assistance but could potentially lead such groups and organisations into the arms of more ideologically-oriented sources of finance.

Mosque construction is another form of activity that reflects both purely charitable motivations and the aims of propagation. No figure is available for the number of mosques built with government and non-government money from Saudi Arabia but it is likely to go into the thousands. Both government and non-government funding has been provided for this purpose. According to the IIRO's own figures, in 2003 it

constructed 309 mosques.<sup>106</sup> The extent to which this is a vehicle for propagation seems to vary, however. A number of Indonesian and other interlocutors told us that in certain cases the Saudi financiers of a particular mosque would insist on appointing the *imam* (prayer leader). In other cases, however, as already noted, mosques appear to have been built without any binding conditions.

## PUBLISHING AND THE INTERNET

The flow of printed material from the Middle East has long historical roots. It has taken many forms, from textbooks and commentaries on various Islamic sciences, to journals, pamphlets and newspapers representing different doctrinal and political views. This material was read in its original Arabic by the relatively small number of Muslims with the competence to do so, or translated into vernacular languages such as Malay and Javanese, thus bringing it to a far larger audience. Since the 1980s, however, the popular demand for books on Islam has increased markedly, with 'Islamic books' usually being among the largest sections in a bookstore.<sup>107</sup> Translations of Yousef al-Qaradawi's writings and sermons are among the most popular Islamic texts, in no small part because they provide guidance on the 'correct' Islamic approach to a range of everyday tasks and concerns confronting Indonesian Muslims.

Accompanying this has been a dramatic expansion in Islamic publishing with a growing quantity of material translated from Arabic into Indonesian. In the case of salafist and Brotherhood works, much of the translation has been done by LIPIA graduates. Some of the publishing appears driven by da'wa objectives; as already noted, DDII played a major role in the translation of Sayyid Qutb and Hassan al-Banna's works into

103 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Background: Why Salafism and terrorism mostly don't mix," and Solahudin, *Jihad: Salafy vs Salafy Jihadi* (paper presented at the Islamic Perspectives on State, Governance and Society in Southeast Asia Conference, Canberra, 30-31 August 2004).

104 Confidential interview.

105 Confidential interviews.

106 See footnote 109 in International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Background: Why Salafism and terrorism mostly don't mix," 23.

107 James J. Fox, "Currents in Contemporary Islam in Indonesia," (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Asia Vision 21, 2004).

Indonesian. The number of salafist-oriented publishing houses has risen sharply in recent years and they have a growing presence in the mainstream Islamic market. Though no reliable sales figures are available, the wide distribution of salafist literature, including through large bookshop chains such as Gunung Agung and Gramedia, is proof of high public demand for works of this kind.

A considerable body of material also deals with the plight of Muslims in the world or offers political commentaries from an Islamic perspective, among them a sub-class of publishing some have dubbed 'pamphlet Islam'.<sup>108</sup> Typically, these are translations from Arabic material and often the topics are anti-western and anti-Semitic. In some cases it seems the more lurid and conspiratorial material is published because it sells well. As James Fox recounts, in one case an Indonesian publisher amended the original title of an Arabic book from *Globalization or Americanization to America: Dictator of the World*.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, a number of Indonesian interlocutors commented that the volume of material being translated and published was high simply because it was profitable.

As with other parts of the Muslim world, in recent decades digital technology and globalization have greatly accelerated the flow of information from the Middle East to Indonesia. The main channel has been the Internet, which has allowed Indonesians quick and relatively cheap access to a diverse array of material from across the Islamic world. Internet usage in Indonesia is low by international standards, but Islamist groups in particular have proven adept at exploiting this technology and using it to disseminate information. If a small number of activists have access to the Internet, material can be quickly downloaded and distributed through mosque networks, students

groups, and Qur'anic study classes.<sup>110</sup> Indonesian websites also provide links on major Middle Eastern conflicts and to other sites involving Muslims around the world. One site, for example, provides up-to-date information on the Palestinian Intifada <[www.info.palestina.com](http://www.info.palestina.com)>, while other sites offer often graphic accounts of Muslim struggles in regions such as Chechnya and Kashmir <[www.qoqaz.net](http://www.qoqaz.net)> and <[www.maktab-islam.com](http://www.maktab-islam.com)>.

The importance of the Internet as a tool for the transmission and dissemination of ideas is particularly strong among Indonesian salafist groups. Notwithstanding their typical social conservatism, salafist groups in the Middle East and elsewhere have tended to embrace the Internet precisely because it offers an opportunity to create a generic or de-culturated Islamic identity. These sites abound; see for example <[www.salafi.net](http://www.salafi.net)> or <[www.salafipublications.com](http://www.salafipublications.com)>. The Internet offers them a facility to link directly to other salafist scholars overseas and use the ideas they download to challenge local traditions of Indonesian Islam, bypassing local sources of religious authority.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, the Internet creates a virtual umma that these groups can inhabit, or, as Peter Mandaville argues, provides them with a means of re-imagining the umma as something beyond their immediate Muslim community. This does not simply apply to salafist discourses, but to a broader critical re-evaluation of some of Islam's central ideas facilitated by the Internet.<sup>112</sup> That said, the virtual umma is not necessarily a harmonious one. Most salafist groups in Indonesia often use their own websites to launch vitriolic attacks on other salafists.

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108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

110 For a good discussion of Islamist use of digital media see Robert W. Hefner, "Civic pluralism denied? The new media and jihadi violence in Indonesia," in *New media in the Muslim world: The emerging public sphere*, eds. Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

111 Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics*, 185.

112 Ibid., 187.

## CHAPTER 3: ASSESSING ISLAMISM'S IMPACT IN INDONESIA

### INTRODUCTION

Asked why salafism developed so quickly in Indonesia, one Indonesian salafist replied to us that “every seed you plant in Indonesia grows.”<sup>113</sup> As the last chapter underlined, the paths for transmission of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas are constantly expanding. The question is what impact is this having on the development of Islam, Islamism or neo-fundamentalism in Indonesia? One obvious difficulty in making a net assessment is that ideas and influences from the Middle East are not the only seeds being planted in Indonesia today. Everything from ‘western style’ consumerism to international Christian missionary activity competes for influence. And not all these seeds grow in the way intended by those who sowed them. All of these external influences vie with, and are influenced by, Indonesia’s indigenous culture and religious traditions.

With respect to the impact of Middle Eastern ideas, many observers are naturally most interested in those currents related to contemporary forms of terrorism. While this is certainly part of our focus, we have sought to go beyond this narrow though important frame to give some sense of the broader impact of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist thinking. This will, in part, help disentangle those ideas that contribute to the terrorism problem from those that do not. Thus, we will examine three broad intellectual currents: the

Islamist ideas of Muslim Brotherhood (including its more radical iterations), and two key manifestations of neo-fundamentalism — salafism and jihadist-salafism. The key question framing our inquiry is the extent to which these currents have been absorbed wholesale or whether there has been a process of Indonesianization, in which external ideas have been sifted and applied in a Southeast Asian context. We will precede this discussion with a brief survey of political Islam in Indonesia.

### ISLAMIC POLITICS IN INDONESIA

The history of political Islam in Indonesia has been dominated by three features: first, Islamic parties have never been able to attract support from more than about half of Muslim voters; second, most attempts to realize Islamist policy agendas such as Islamization of the constitution and statutes have failed; and third, for much of the post-independence period, Islamic politics have been severely repressed by authoritarian regimes. In terms of electoral performance, the high point of political Islam was the 1950s. Islamic parties gained nearly 44 percent of the vote in Indonesia’s first general elections in 1955. The result disappointed Islamic politicians, who had expected that most of Indonesia’s large Muslim majority would vote for their parties. Instead, almost 50 percent of Muslims appear to

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113 Confidential interview

have voted for nationalist or leftist parties that strenuously opposed Islamist policies, suggesting that either Islam was not an important determinant in how they voted or that they specifically rejected state involvement in enforcing Islamic law and values (see Appendix for table of Islamic parties' electoral performance).

The authoritarian turn in politics from the late 1950s was the start of four decades of state restriction of Islamic parties. Both Sukarno's Guided Democracy regime (1959–66) and Soeharto's New Order (1966–98) saw Islam as a political threat to their ascendancy and imposed a succession of measures designed to coopt or marginalize Islamic groups. Sukarno banned the largest Islamic party, Masyumi, in 1960, and pressed the remaining Islamic parties to conform to his largely secular ideological agenda. Soeharto proved even more hostile towards political Islam. He prevented the full rehabilitation of Masyumi in 1968 and in 1973 forced the four Islamic parties to amalgamate to form the United Development Party (PPP). PPP was progressively stripped of its Islamic symbols and identity, though it managed to gain almost 30 percent of the vote in two of the six tightly orchestrated elections of the New Order. In 1985, Soeharto required all Islamic organizations to replace Islam as their ideological basis with the religiously neutral state doctrine of Pancasila. Muslim politicians viewed the New Order period as the nadir of political Islam.<sup>114</sup>

The transition to democracy which followed Soeharto's downfall in mid-1998 led many Muslim leaders to hope for a revival of Islamic politics, though once again, they overestimated their electoral support. Twenty-one Islamic or Islamically-based parties contested the 1999 election, but their total vote was 38.4 percent; Islamist parties gained just 17 percent. At the 2004 election, the total Islamic vote fell slightly to 37.9 percent and the Islamist vote rose to 21.3 percent. The main Islamist parties in these 2 elections were the PPP,

which gained 10.7 percent and 8.2 percent respectively, the Crescent-Star Party (PBB) which received 1.9 percent and 2.6 percent, and PKS, which will be discussed below. The largest of the non-Islamist 'Islamic parties' (that is, parties that were not ideologically-based on Islam but relied on Islamic allegiances for their support), were the National Revival Party (PKB), which won 12.6 percent and 10.6 percent in the 1999 and 2004 elections, and the National Mandate Party (PAN), which gained 7.1 percent and 6.4 percent.

The post-Soeharto election results indicate a partial de-linking of Islam as a religion from Islam as politics. In the 1950s, most santri or devout Muslims appear to have voted for Islamic parties, all of which wanted an Islamized constitution and state. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, even though Islamization had resulted in a higher proportion of santri in the electorate, the overall vote for Islamic parties fell and the sharpest decline was that of Islamist parties. Although the press and some scholars repeatedly assert that political Islam is a rising force in Indonesia, the psephological evidence contradicts this.<sup>115</sup>

In addition to political Islam's relative lack of success at the ballot box, it has also failed to win support for many of its policies regarding the state and shari'a. In 1945 and again in 1959, Islamic parties campaigned unsuccessfully for constitutional recognition of Islamic law. They proposed that the preamble to the constitution contain a clause stipulating that Muslims were obliged to implement Islamic law. During the Guided Democracy and New Order regimes, discussion of 'Islamic state' issues was effectively outlawed. In the post-Soeharto period, several Islamist parties have argued for re-inserting a shari'a clause in the constitution, but their proposals have been soundly defeated. Islamic groups have had some success in the last 15 years in gaining concessions from the state on sensitive Islamic issues. The authority of religious

114 Greg Fealy, "Divided Majority: Limits of Indonesian political Islam," in *Islam and Political Legitimacy*, eds. Shahram Akbarzadeh and Abdullah Saeed (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 150–68.

115 Greg Fealy, "Islamisation and politics in Southeast Asia: The contrasting cases of Malaysia and Indonesia," in *Islam in World Politics*, eds. Nelly Lahoud and Anthony Johns (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 152–69.

courts has been expanded, restrictions on women wearing head coverings in school have been lifted, and the state plays a greater role in such things as collecting and distributing alms. Overall, though, Indonesia remains a state in which there is little formal acknowledgement of Islam's status as the majority religion.

## THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

Of all forms of contemporary Islamism, the influence of the prototypical Muslim Brotherhood in Indonesia has perhaps the longest history. But even in this case, the Muslim Brotherhood came later to Indonesia than to many other areas of the Islamic world. Although a small number of modernist Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia became attracted to Brotherhood thinking in the late 1950s, it was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that Brotherhood ideas and organizational techniques began to win a sizeable following.

Several factors account for this rising popularity. For many younger Muslims, the 1970s and 1980s were a period of growing frustration and disillusionment with both the Soeharto regime's treatment of Islamic organizations and the behaviour of Muslim leaders themselves. The regime systematically emasculated Islam as an independent political force and allowed relatively few devout Muslims privileged positions in the bureaucracy or business world. At the same time, many Muslim leaders were drawn into the New Order's vast patronage networks, conforming to the regime's largely 'secular' rhetoric in return for material rewards and peripheral involvement in state decision making. As one activist recalled of that era, "We looked around us and found very few Muslim leaders whom we could respect, who were men of integrity. When we heard them speak or saw what they did, we were constantly disappointed. So, we sought a new model of Islamic struggle."<sup>116</sup>

It was in this context of disaffection that many young Muslims began to be drawn to a Brotherhood model

that offered a new approach to Islamic activism. We have already explored in chapter two some of the ways in which Muslim Brotherhood ideas were transmitted to Indonesia, notably the role played by DDII. What was particularly attractive were the Brotherhood's organizational ideas, notably the emphasis on personal piety, the provision of community services and the formation of close-knit groups capable of creating discrete Islamized spaces from which the broader community might be made more devout. The fact that the Brotherhood developed these concepts and structures in the highly repressive environment of Nasser's Egypt added to the attraction.

The main expression of Brotherhood thinking was the Gerakan Tarbiyah which emerged in the early 1980s, at the height of New Order suppression of Islam and student politics. The regime banned student political organizations (a program euphemistically called "normalization of campuses") and obliged university administrations to closely monitor all campus activities. In this restrictive environment, Muslim students adopted the Brotherhood model of organizing themselves into small groups or cells, known as *usrah* (literally, family — see Chapter One). As in the Egyptian prototype, within these units emphasis was placed on strict observance of ritual obligations, mutual support, the acquiring of Islamic knowledge, and social activism such as providing health and welfare services to needy communities. Close bonds were formed between cell members, who tended to see themselves as a vanguard bringing genuine Islamic values to society.

The ideals and models of activism of Hassan al-Banna became the centrepiece of Tarbiyah thinking. Al-Banna's views on politics, the state, personal behaviour and organizational methods were widely read within the movement and formed a primary reference in shaping the doctrine and activities of Tarbiyah members. As the founder of the Brotherhood, al-Banna carried special legitimacy and the Tarbiyah movement found his writings more applicable in an Indonesian

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116 Interview with Rachmat Abdullah, Jakarta, September 2002.

context than those of other more radical Islamist thinkers. Like al-Banna, Tarbiyah members regarded Islam and the state as inseparable, as a matter of principle. But they did not regard the founding of a formal Islamic state in Indonesia in the near future as either necessary or possible. Echoing al-Banna's approach, Islamization of the state was seen as a gradual process that had to begin with greater piety within society. Until Islamic law and principles were well understood by Muslims, a viable Islamic state would be difficult to establish. Nonetheless, an Islamic state was seen as the endpoint of the struggle.<sup>117</sup>

The writings of post-al-Banna Brotherhood ideologues and intellectuals such as Sayyid Qutb and Yousef al-Qaradawi have been used selectively by the Tarbiyah movement. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Qutb's ideas on jahiliya had a powerful effect on Tarbiyah thinking. In some respects, however, the emphasis was placed on the less dramatic dimensions of Qutb's notion of jahiliya. Tarbiyah members commonly quoted Qutb in asserting that, "Muslims are now in jahiliya, like in the early period of Islam. Everything around us is jahiliya." However, the main danger to Muslims came from outside the Muslim community. The West was seen as conducting an ideological assault — *al-ghazw al-fikri* (*ghazwul fikri*) — against the Islamic community which must be resisted if Muslims were to create a strong and pious community. Muslims, they argued, must realize that their faith provides a complete, perfect and timeless set of beliefs and principles which they must embrace wholeheartedly. One need not look outside Islam for enlightenment.<sup>118</sup>

All of this is consistent with Qutb's thinking, but would seem to downplay the real drama in his elaboration of the jahiliya — specifically, its application to Muslims within his own society. This is underlined by

the fact that takfir — effectively, excommunication, articulated by some of Qutb's more radical heirs in the Middle East in attacks against their impious rulers or society — was seldom referred to in Tarbiyah texts, as it was seen as inappropriate to Indonesian conditions and harmful to the movement's relations with other Islamic groups. Other key Qutbist concepts in relation to the Islamic state were also not picked up by the Tarbiyah movement. There are, for example, few references in Tarbiyah texts to *hakimiya* — that is, the idea that sovereignty belongs to God alone — a key concept that Qutb had elaborated from Maududi.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the Tarbiyah movement remained overtly apolitical and appeared to the regime and university administrators as primarily a religious movement that posed little threat to the established order. Accordingly, it was able to access state resources for training and predication programs which facilitated its spread across campuses in Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. The well-organized Tarbiyah members also made rapid gains in campus representative bodies and by the early 1990s, the movement controlled the student councils of many of Indonesia's largest and most prestigious state universities.

As the Tarbiyah movement consolidated itself during the 1990s, pressure grew from within the movement to become more politically active. This crystallized in early 1998, when the New Order began to teeter following the Asian financial crisis. Tarbiyah activists formed the student organization KAMMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia, or Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union) in April 1998 which quickly assumed a prominent role in protests that brought down the regime. Following Soeharto's downfall, many of these same Tarbiyah leaders founded a new party, the Justice

117 A good discussion of the Islamic state issue can be found in Aay Muhamad Furkon, "Partai Keadilan Sejahtera: Ideologi dan Praksis Politik Kaum Muda Muslim Indonesia Kontemporer (The Prosperous and Justice Party: Ideology and Practical Politics of Young Contemporary Indonesian Muslims)," (Jakarta: Teraju, 2004).

118 Interviews with former Tarbiyah members, August and September 2002. Also: Abdul Aziz, *Kehidupan Beragama dan Kelompok Keagamaan di Kampus Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta (Religious Life and Religious Groups on the University of Indonesia Campus, Jakarta)* (Jakarta: 1995) and unpublished research report, Departemen Agama R. I., Balai Penelitian Agama dan Kemasyarakatan.

Party (PK), which gained 1.4 percent of the vote at the 1999 general election and 7 seats in the national parliament. Much of its support came from campus Islamic groups and young graduates who had been involved in Tarbiyah activities. As it failed to meet the 2 percent threshold needed to contest the 2004 election, PK changed its name to the Prosperous and Justice Party (PKS), though it was effectively the same party. It was the only party that contested the 1999 election to make major gains in the 2004 parliamentary elections, lifting its vote to 7.3 percent and securing 45 seats in the new 550-member parliament. A large majority of the party's new voters at this election were attracted more by its message of clean government and social justice rather than by Islamic appeal.<sup>119</sup>

The evolution of Brotherhood inspired movements, from the Gerakan Tarbiyah to a mainstream political party, offers a revealing case study of the impact of Middle Eastern Islamism in Indonesia and the process of adaptation to changing local conditions. Tarbiyah was a closed movement whose members were carefully selected and inducted into a program designed to ensure pious behaviour. The emphasis was upon personal rectitude and group solidarity rather than mass involvement. The decision of some Tarbiyah leaders in 1998 to form PK was a reaction to the post-Soeharto lifting of politically repressive measures and a belief that it was now time to move into a new stage of development, one that focused on formal politics and popular appeal as a means of furthering their objectives. The exclusivity of Tarbiyah thus gave way to a more inclusive and outward looking approach. At the time of the 1999 election, PK had about 60,000 members; when PKS's formation was announced in mid-2003, the party had more than 300,000 members. The party consciously recruited members from a non-Tarbiyah background to broaden its appeal and, at the 2004 election, fielded more than 30 non-Muslim legislative candidates.

As noted in Chapter One, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, reflecting both local political conditions and the preferences of its historic leadership, consistently rejected its transformation into a political party. In this regard, the PKS seems closer to that younger generation of Muslim Brothers in Egypt who left the movement to form Hizb al-Wasat. There are indeed some striking similarities, most notably the shift away from a heavily Islamic vocabulary, the adoption of the language of democracy and economic reform, reflecting the everyday concerns of constituents, and the inclusion of and appeal to non-Muslims. PKS, like Hizb al-Wasat, would seem to reflect the victory of political over religious logic — though again without abandoning the religious underpinnings — though PKS obviously has greater scope to pursue this process given Indonesia's democratization. Interestingly though, PKS leaders rarely draw parallels between their own party and Hizb al-Wasat, despite the obvious similarities between the two parties. More frequently they will cite Turkey's Welfare and Justice Party (AKP) as a model and inspiration. Starting from a common Muslim Brotherhood framework, both PKS and Hizb al-Wasat appear to have arrived independently at similar political destinations.

While Tarbiyah members regarded the Islamization of society, the economy, and the state as a cornerstone of their struggle, PKS downplayed these issues in the 1999 and 2004 elections, emphasizing instead the 'secular' themes of fighting corruption, socio-economic equality and the need for continued political reform. Party leaders made clear that their stance on these issues was informed by their Islamic norms, but they usually conveyed their electoral messages in religiously neutral language. This was not to say that PKS leaders had abandoned their earlier commitment to Islamist causes; rather they argued that it was premature and ultimately counterproductive to take such issues to the broader electorate. Most voters, they said, had a poor

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119 For a good account of the history of the Tarbiyah movement and PK, see: Ali Said Damanik, *Fenomena Partai Keadilan: Transformasi 20 Tahun Gerakan Tarbiyah di Indonesia (The Justice Party phenomenon: the 20-Year transformation of the Tarbiyah Movement in Indonesia)* (Jakarta: Penerbit Teraju, 2002), and Ali Said Damanik, *Tarbiyah Menjawab Tantangan: Refleksi 20 Tahun Pembaharuan Tarbiyah di Indonesia (Tarbiyah Answers the Challenge: Reflections on 20 Years of Tarbiyah Reform in Indonesia)* (Jakarta: Robbani Press, 2002).

understanding of Brotherhood principles and PKS did not want to risk being labelled sectarian or radical if it promoted such an agenda. Thus, PKS's constitution and manifesto made no mention of establishing an Islamic state.

When drawn on the issue by the media or researchers, party leaders usually admitted that an Islamized state was an aspiration but that formalizing this by declaring Indonesia to be an 'Islamic state' was not important. The views of one senior PKS leader were paraphrased in the following way:

If the substance sufficiently represents the name [i.e., 'Islamic state'], the name does not need to reflect the substance... What is the use of a country as large as Indonesia, whose Muslim population is the largest in the world, declaring itself to be [an Islamic state]. Previously, the people ran this nation in a secular way [but] now we want to run it Islamically. That is the essence of it. Hence, Partai Keadilan never bears aloft the Islamic state or syariat Islam.<sup>120</sup>

There is another characteristic of PKS that makes it distinctive in Indonesian politics, also reflecting Muslim Brotherhood influences: it is the only genuine cadre party. Advancement within PKS usually depends on members establishing a strong record of service within their community and also showing detailed knowledge of PKS ideology and policies. In other major parties, ambitious cadre often purchase prestigious positions or secure preferment through the intervention of powerful patrons. In PKS, merit and demonstrated commitment are the usual bases for promotion. While PKS is not entirely free of corruption, 'money politics' is far less commonplace within its ranks than with other parties.

A final feature of the party seldom found in its rivals is its community service function, again another hallmark of the Brotherhood. This takes a wide variety of forms, including supplying emergency relief to flood and fire victims, providing mobile medical and dental clinics, and organizing mass circumcisions and welfare services to poor communities. As a result of such measures, PKS has acquired a reputation as one of the few parties whose rhetoric of social concern is backed up by regular grassroots assistance programs.

Some PKS actions, however, have drawn criticism. The party has, at times, cultivated a public image of itself which is starkly at odds with its internal discourses. While its spokespeople have stressed the party's commitment to pluralism and tolerance, PKS training documents and websites indicate a far more militant stream of thinking among many of its branches. PKS has also been attacked for its choice of legislative candidates in the 2004 election. The most controversial of these was Tamsil Linrung who was nominated by PKS despite a prima facie case linking him to several violent Islamic organizations, including Jemaah Islamiyah, and his unenviable reputation for financial mismanagement.<sup>121</sup> Another contentious PKS parliamentarian is the former senior intelligence official, Soeripto, who was under investigation for corruption and has gained a high profile by peddling outlandish conspiracy theories about western involvement in terrorist acts.

Another of PKS's pernicious dimensions is the fact that trenchantly anti-Christian and anti-Semitic rhetoric is commonplace among sections of its membership, as are various theories regarding global plots to subjugate Muslims. This is not unique to PKS; it is certainly found in more extreme groups but can also be found in most Islamic parties. While the

120 Furkon, *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera: Ideologi dan Praksis Politik Kaum Muda Muslim Indonesia Kontemporer (The Prosperous and Justice Party: Ideology and Practical Politics of Young Contemporary Indonesian Muslims)*, 234–235. For more on this subject, see *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera Menjawab Tuduhan dan Fitnah (The Prosperous and Justice Party Answers Accusations and Slander)* (Jakarta: Pustaka Saksi, 2004), 13–22.

121 Tamsil Linrung was elected to the national parliament from South Sulawesi. For details of his alleged involvement in paramilitary and terrorist groups, see International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: How the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist network operates," 11 December 2003, 9 and 21. See also Sian Powell, "Terror Suspect Heads for Parliament," *The Australian*, 24 September 2004.

anti-Christian rhetoric reflects Indonesia's recent history of sporadic sectarian conflict, anti-Semitism is largely a Middle Eastern import (Indonesia's Jewish community numbers only in the dozens). To some extent, Indonesian Muslims have been drawn to conspiracy theories regarding 'global Jewish domination' because this provides a powerful sense of the hostile 'other' on to whom responsibility can be shifted for the plight of the Islamic community (both in Indonesia and elsewhere).<sup>122</sup> Martin Van Bruinessen also suggests some Indonesian Muslims, particularly during the Soeharto era, found it safer to attack Jews than the much resented and largely non-Muslim minority Chinese community. In that sense, Indonesian anti-Semitism was a proxy for anti-Sinicism.<sup>123</sup>

Nonetheless, PKS represents one of the few genuine alternatives in Indonesian politics to the elite controlled and vastly corrupt mainstream parties. As such, its emergence is a positive development for Indonesian democracy, offering a new paradigm of political behavior and greater electoral choice. In this respect, the role that PKS has played is a tangible demonstration of how Islamists can sometimes assist a process of democratization by generating an alternative to the oligarchic structures that often underpin autocratic — or formerly autocratic — regimes.<sup>124</sup> PKS's distinctiveness in this regard is a direct consequence of its Brotherhood-derived ideology and norms. Although the party has adapted its thinking to fit Indonesian political conditions, its core frame of reference remains that of the Brotherhood. Viewed from this perspective it can be argued that this particular form of Middle Eastern influence has had a positive impact on Indonesian political life.

In terms of Brotherhood influences in Indonesia, it is worth mentioning two other examples, Sheikh Yousef al-Qaradawi and Hizb ut-Tahrir. Al-Qaradawi has been one of the most influential of contemporary Middle Eastern thinkers within Indonesian Islam. He has made several visits to Indonesia over the past two decades and at least 15 of his works have been translated and published since the mid-1980s. His writings on Islamic jurisprudence have become especially popular and are widely cited, not just in Muslim Brotherhood-inspired groups such as Gerakan Tarbiyah and the PKS, but more broadly among younger, urban Muslims who lack a strong formal religious education. Many in these sections of society find al-Qaradawi's pronouncements on shari'a more accessible and practical than those found in classical jurisprudential texts. For example, he provides guidance on everyday matters such as what approach Muslims should take to working in a conventional bank or a large corporation owned by non-Muslims.<sup>125</sup> His readers are attracted to the directness and relevance of his works and the way they can quickly find answers to the problems confronting them in daily life. His views have, however, had little impact among mainstream and more traditional organisations such as Nahdlatul Ulama.

Another interesting case study in this context is Hizb ut-Tahrir. In many parts of Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia, it has a reputation for strident radicalism (see Chapter Two). By contrast, in Indonesia, where it has had a presence since 1982, Hizb ut-Tahrir has a record of peaceful predication and intellectual activity which avoids the inflammatory rhetoric of some of its overseas counterparts. Unlike many other Indonesian Islamist organizations, it has no

122 There is a large market for anti-western and conspiracy theorising publications in Indonesia. One of the largest selling magazines, *Sabili*, gives high prominence to western or non-Muslim plots against Indonesia's Islamic community. A number of books have also appeared which cast the war on terror as an anti-Islam conspiracy. See, for example, Dedi Junaedi, *Konspirasi di Balik Bom Bali* (The Conspiracy Behind the Bali Bombing) (Jakarta: Bina Wawasan Press, 2003) and Fauzan al-Anshari, *Mission Order* (Jakarta: Departemen Data dan Informasi, MMI, 2003).

123 Martin van Bruinessen, "Yahudi sebagai simbol dalam wacana Islam Indonesia masa kini (Jews as a symbol in contemporary Muslim discourse in Indonesia)," in *Spiritualitas baru: Agama dan aspirasi rakyat* [Seri Dian II Tahun I] (Yogyakarta: Dian/Interfidei, 1994), 253–268.

124 Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 81.

125 Two of al-Qaradawi's best know works in Indonesia are *Fatwa Fatwa Kontemporer* (Contemporary Religious Decisions) (Jakarta, Gema Insani Press, 1995) and *Fikih Prioritas: urutan amal yang terpenting dari yang penting* (Jurisprudential Priorities: The order of the most important deeds from the important) (Jakarta, Gema Insani Press, 1996).

paramilitary wing or thuggish 'security units'. Moreover, it has sought to tailor its message to Indonesian conditions and, of late, has given as much emphasis to the implementation of shari'a as it has to the caliphate.<sup>126</sup> Hizb ut-Tahrir has a growing membership in Indonesia — no precise figures are available but it is probably several tens of thousands — but it remains small in comparison to mainstream organizations and parties.

## SALAFIST GROUPS

The development of the salafist movement in Indonesia has much in common with that of Brotherhood-inspired groups, but there are a number of significant differences. The salafist community is small when compared to mainstream Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, whose members number in the tens of millions. Most of the salafist groups are based around educational and propagation institutions such as the al-Sofwah Foundation, the Ihsa at-Turots Foundation and al-Haramain al-Khairiyah. The number of students in each of these institutions may number up to several thousand, but most salafist groups are much smaller, usually in the hundreds. The very nature of salafism, with its emphasis on exemplary piety, ensures that these groups are more concerned with the quality of their members or students than with their quantity. The largest single salafist movement in recent history was the Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah (FKAWJ) and its high profile paramilitary force, the Laskar Jihad. The Forum was established in 1998 by a group of about 60 prominent salafist teachers and preachers led by a veteran of the Afghan war, Ja'far Umar Thalib.

In early 2000, the Forum founded Laskar Jihad, primarily to defend Muslims it believed were being attacked and slaughtered by Christians in the province of

Maluku. At its height in 2001, Laskar Jihad claimed to have about 10,000 members, up to 5,000 of whom were involved in fighting and providing health and welfare services in Maluku, Central Sulawesi, and Papua. The Forum voluntarily dissolved itself and Laskar Jihad in early October 2002, following criticism of LJ activities by several key Saudi sheikhs. It had also experienced growing internal disputes between Ja'far and other leaders, and as the incidence of Muslim-Christian conflict fell, declining protection and financial support from sections of the Indonesian military and a drop in funding from within the Islamic community.<sup>127</sup>

The relatively small size of the salafist community is not, however, an accurate indicator of its influence. There is evidence to suggest that the salafists enjoy considerable success in communicating their ideas to a wider audience and, to some extent, attracting people to their cause. Significant demand exists for salafist publications.<sup>128</sup> This is not to say that salafist ideas find ready acceptance among mainstream Muslims, but rather that many Muslims are interested in such material and may selectively subscribe to the views set out within. The salafist movement is also highly effective at training and mobilizing preachers through mosque and campus networks. Such da'wa (dakwah) activities have proved effective in popularizing salafist thinking.

Salafist groups in Indonesia bear all the hallmarks of contemporary salafism in the Middle East and indeed of the movement globally. In particular, they seek to de-link the practice of Islam from Indonesian culture. Thus local salafists are far less likely than their Brotherhood-inspired counterparts to accommodate local cultural preferences when attempting to reform religious practice. They regard 'indigenous' manifestations of Islamic religiosity with some caution, believing them to contain deviations from pure orthodox religious practice. They often adopt forms of salafist

126 Interview with Ismail Yusanto, the official spokesman for HT, Jakarta, 26 April 2004.

127 Noorhaidi Hasan, "Faith and politics: the rise of the Laskar Jihad in the era of transition in Indonesia," *Indonesia* no. 73 April 2002, 145–169. Greg Fealy, "Islamic radicalism in Indonesia: The faltering revival?" in *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2004. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), 104–121. Martin van Bruinessen, *Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in post-Suharto Indonesia*, 104–121.

128 One measure of this growing demand for *salafi* publications is the proliferation of publishers and the wider distribution which such books now enjoy. *Salafi* publishers include Darul Falah Cahaya Tauhid Press, Pustaka Azzam, Pustaka al Sofwah, Pustaka al-Haura and Maktabah Salafy Press.

clothing distinct from traditional Indonesian Islamic garb symbolically echoing the dress norms of salafists in the Middle East and elsewhere.

As already noted with respect to salafist groups in the Middle East, salafism in Indonesia is far from monolithic. The salafist community is notoriously fractious and its history since the early 1990s is replete with bitter personal and doctrinal disputes, leading to frequent splits within groups and the formation of new entities. Salafist publications and websites are notable for the often vitriolic attacks on other salafist groups and denunciation of those seen to have departed from the 'genuine' salafist teachings. Frequently such disputes revolve around competing claims to be enacting the most pure form of salafism and protecting the movement from harmful 'innovation'.<sup>129</sup>

In practice — and somewhat ironically — the effort to promote a universalist or generic form of Islamic identity makes salafism in Indonesia, of all the Islamist streams discussed in this paper, the most closely tied to the Middle East. This is true not only doctrinally and culturally but also financially. As already noted, the growth of contemporary salafism in Indonesia in the 1980s was in large part the result of the assistance provided by Gulf States, notably Saudi Arabia. Unlike the Tarbiyah/PKS movement, where Brotherhood ideas and principles were seen as a guide rather than a strict prescription, salafist groups regard their Middle Eastern counterparts as exemplars of proper thinking and behavior and they strive to follow closely the norms and practices of Arab salafism. Indeed some Indonesian liberal Muslims have been critical of what they say is the growing 'Arabization' of Indonesian Islam.<sup>130</sup>

A distinctive element in Indonesian salafist behaviour is the deference paid to senior Middle Eastern salafist

leaders. Eminent salafist sheikhs in Saudi Arabia and Yemen are regarded as *masyaikh*, or those capable of authoritative pronouncements on matters of Islamic law, whereas Indonesian salafist leaders see themselves as at the subordinate level of *tholibul ilm* (*talib al-ilm*) or 'seekers of knowledge'. While Indonesian salafist scholars may take the title of '*ustadz*' (literally, 'teacher') and make rulings on lesser matters of Islamic law, they would seek and adhere to the religious opinions of senior Middle Eastern salafist sheikhs on important or controversial issues.

Yet this process is not beyond manipulation by Indonesian *ustadz*. Frequently, a local salafist will furnish Middle Eastern sheikhs with partisan or self-serving information and lobby them to issue a statement favourable to their particular interest or doctrinal position. The sheikhs' lack of knowledge of Indonesian affairs makes them susceptible to such campaigns. So, while Indonesian salafists will ultimately respect the ruling made by a prominent Middle Eastern sheikh, they will also seek to steer the decision-making process.

A well-documented case of this is the Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah. Throughout its existence, the Forum repeatedly sought guidance from a number of Middle Eastern ulema regarding key decisions. The establishment of Laskar Jihad was only undertaken after such prominent sheikhs as Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi, Rabi bin Hadi al-Madkholi and Wahid al-Jabiri gave their approval and, similarly, the disbandment of the Forum and Laskar was triggered by disapproving comments from Saudi and Yemeni ulema.<sup>131</sup> This latter case provided a rare instance of an Indonesian *ustadz* questioning a *fatwa* from senior salafist sheikhs. Ja'far Umar Thalib rejected the criticism of his behavior and the direction of Laskar Jihad, not on the basis of the sheikhs' competence, but

129 The various salafi websites provide ample evidence of this. See for example, <<http://www.salafyoon.cjb.net>>, <<http://www.salafy.or.id>>, and <<http://www.ngajisalat.net>>.

130 Ulil Abshar-Abdalla is one intellectual to express concern about Arabization within Indonesian Islam.

131 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and terrorism mostly don't mix." Hasan, "Faith and politics: the rise of the Laskar Jihad in the era of transition in Indonesia," 145–169.

rather by challenging the veracity of the information presented to them by his Indonesian salafist rivals. Ja'far's reluctance to accept the fatwa led to him being ostracized by most salafist groups.

The relationship between salafism, politics and violence (including terrorism) is as complex in Indonesia as it is in the Middle East. The only real certainty is that one cannot place all salafists in the same category. Most Indonesian salafist groups focus exclusively on religiosity and peaceful missionary and educational activity. Like salafism in the Middle East they actively avoid political activism. While many purists take the orthodox salafist view against democracy, some Indonesian salafist groups have permitted their members to vote in Indonesian elections.<sup>132</sup> Nonetheless a number of salafist groups have resorted to violence to, as they see it, defend the Muslim community in Indonesia. Thus religiously-minded salafists have participated in sectarian violence — in Maluku, as noted above — or in acts of vigilante violence against moral threats to the Islamic community.

As with the Middle East, those self-described salafist groups who focus on organized acts of terrorism need to be viewed as a separate category, under the broad rubric of jihadist-salafism. While the line between sectarian violence and terrorism is by no means clear cut, it is a distinction that salafists themselves make. Some salafists see their participation in sectarian violence as legitimate but would draw the line at what they consider an act of terrorism. Indeed despite the fact that some Indonesian terrorist groups — such as JI — call themselves salafist, there are sharp differences between them and mainstream salafists.

In Indonesia, most strict salafists appear to regard the terrorist movement, JI, with suspicion and contempt. They object to its clandestine nature and its practice of members swearing oaths to the JI *amir* (commander).

For purist salafists, allegiance should only be given to the *amirul Muslimeen* (*amir al-Muslimeen*) or 'commander of the faithful' (leader of the global Islamic community), not to the head of a small covert group. They also reject JI's interpretation of jihad, which sanctions terrorist attacks and the use of 'martyr' suicide bombers. Most salafist leaders regard terrorists as *muharibeen* (those who cause harm on earth) and believe that the perpetrators of such acts should be punished by death. They further believe that death by suicide in a terrorism attack is a sin that precludes martyrdom. Finally, salafist groups condemn JI's determination to bring down the 'Muslim governments' of Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries, believing that Muslims are forbidden to rebel against their rulers, even if they are tyrannical and impious.<sup>133</sup>

Such objections are dismissed by the leaders of JI, who see jihad as essential to realizing salafist ideals in the modern world. Indeed, JI figures such as Mukhlis have written derisively about those who call themselves salafist but are not prepared to undertake jihad.<sup>134</sup> JI argues that such is the military and economic might of Islam's enemies, only through unremitting war and terrorism can Muslims hope to re-establish the kind of state which existed at the time of the *salaaf*. The difference between mainstream salafists and jihadist-salafists is most often manifest in their attitude toward religious scholars. Mainstream salafists tend to ascribe primacy to the teachings of prominent establishment sheikhs in Saudi Arabia such as the late Sheikhs Abd al-Aziz Bin Baz and Mohammed bin Saleh al-Uthaimeen. By contrast JI gives primacy to what it calls *ahluts tsughur* (*ahl al-thughoor* — see Chapter One; in effect, 'warrior ulama') — notably Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Qatada (not all of whom are religious scholars). Imam Samudra, for example, wrote that jihadists should only, "hold to the fatwa of the ulama (ulema) *mujahid*;" that is, those who have

132 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and terrorism mostly don't mix," 4.

133 Solahudin, *Jihad: Salafy vs Salafy Jihadi*.

134 Aly Ghufron Nurhasyim (Mukhlis), *Pembelaan Bom Bali (In Defence of the Bali Bomb)*. (Bali: 2003).

fought directly in the jihad battlefield. For him, Islamic knowledge alone is insufficient; to have real authority in matters of jihad, an ulema needs to have battlefield experience as part of God's struggle.<sup>135</sup>

## JIHADIST GROUPS

In the minds of many western government officials and journalists working in Indonesia, the recent rise of terrorism is proof of the malignant effect of Middle Eastern Islam on the region.<sup>136</sup> Such a view ignores Indonesia's long history of violent Muslim extremism. In reality, Indonesian terrorism is the product of a complex interaction between local and external factors.

Indonesia has, with the possible exception of the Philippines, the most serious terrorism problem of any Southeast Asian state. It has suffered more terrorist attacks and more casualties than any of its neighbors. It has also provided a majority of the region's confirmed Islamist terrorists, though this should not be statistically surprising given that Indonesia is home to almost 90 percent of Southeast Asia's Muslims. Nonetheless the number of proven or suspected Indonesia-based terrorist groups is small. Foremost among them is JI, but there are several local groups such as Wahdah Islamiyah and Laskar Jundullah, sections of which have been repeatedly implicated in terrorist activity.

JI was founded in 1993 by Abdullah Sungkar.<sup>137</sup> Like al-qa'ida, JI is a genuine transnational movement: a large majority of its leaders and members are Indonesian, but Muslims from Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand and possibly several other Southeast Asian states are also closely involved. The formal aim of JI is to create a caliphate in the region, under which shari'a law would be comprehensively

implemented. This would then become the basis for the restoration of a global caliphate.<sup>138</sup> In reality, most JI members are more concerned with establishing an Islamic state within Indonesia and striking against Islam's perceived foes. Doctrinally, JI regards itself as strictly salafist, but as discussed above, this has been contested by non-jihadist-salafists.<sup>139</sup>

JI commenced serious planning for terrorist acts from the late 1990s, the main targets of which were to be Christian places of worship and clergy. These began with several church bombings in the Sumatran city of Medan in May 2000, followed 3 months later by the car bombing of the Philippines ambassador's residence in Jakarta, which killed one bystander. The first large-scale operation was a near simultaneous set of attacks on 38 churches across Indonesia on Christmas Eve 2000, resulting in the deaths of 19 people. By far the most lethal terrorist action by JI was the bombing of two crowded nightclubs in Bali in October 2002, which killed 202 people and left more than 300 others seriously injured. The Bali bombing represented a new development in JI terrorism. Not only was it the first suicide attack undertaken by the organization, it was also the first time westerners had been specifically targeted. Statements by the perpetrators revealed that they had wanted to strike at the United States, regarding it as the leader of global anti-Islamic forces. The Bali attack was followed by the car bombing of the JW Marriott hotel in Jakarta in August 2003, leading to the loss of another 12 lives. The bombing of the Australian embassy in Jakarta in September 2004, which killed 11 Indonesians, is also likely to be the work of JI or its affiliates. In all, the death toll from these and other, smaller, JI attacks probably exceeds 250.

In addition to its own operations, JI has spawned or cooperated closely with other militant groups in the

135 Imam Samudra, *Aku Melawan Teroris* (I Oppose Terrorists) (Solo: Jazera, 2004), 67–72.

136 This view has been conveyed in strong terms to both authors in their discussions with U.S. and Australian government officials and analysts.

137 Ustadz Mu'nim Mulia, "Pernyataan Resmi al-Jamaah al-Islamiyyah (Official Statement of Jemaah Islamiyah)," 6 October 2000.

138 Majlis Qiyadah Markaziyah al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah, *Pedoman Umum Perjuangan al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah* (General Struggle Guidelines for Jemaah Islamiyah), May 1996.

139 Ibid. For example, the second of JI's Ten Principles states that "Our Creed is that of the Adherents of the Prophetic tradition and Community using the approach of the Righteous Ancestors (*minhajis slafish shalih*)."

region which are involved in jihadist activities. The Makassar bombing in South Sulawesi in December 2002, which caused three fatalities, was carried out by members of Wahdah Islamiyah and Laskar Jundullah, both of which have ideological, training and personal links to JI. Along with the Mujahidin Kompak, a paramilitary group associated with Dewan Dakwah's aid organization, Kompak, Wahdah Islamiyah and Laskar Jundullah also took part in sectarian violence in Central Sulawesi in late 2003. Across the region, JI has worked closely with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the southern Philippines, including running joint operations and training camps, and the Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM), though the exact nature of this latter relationship remains open to dispute.<sup>140</sup>

That JI is seen as predominantly a product of international jihadist forces is scarcely surprising given the background of many of its leaders, its ideological orientation, and its well-established links with foreign terrorist networks, most notably that of al-qa'ida. The Afghanistan experience had a powerful effect on the outlook of the Indonesian mujahideen and their capacity to undertake terrorist acts. The arduous conditions in the training camps and on the battlefield created close bonds among the Indonesian fighters and also with other mujahideen from across the Muslim world. These friendships and networks would later prove critical to JI's ability to mount large, well-coordinated terrorist attacks. The mujahideen learned skills necessary for terrorism, such as bomb-making, use of firearms and covert operation techniques. They were heavily indoctrinated with jihadist thinking that provided powerful religious sanction for the use of terrorist violence, and the experience of Afghanistan created a strong pan-Islamist outlook. JI relocated its offshore training to MILF camps in Mindanao in the southern Philippines in 1995, though the so-called

'*alumni Moro*' did not have the same prestige and tight networking found among the Afghanistan veterans.<sup>141</sup>

Ideologically, the Middle Eastern influence on JI is unmistakable. Significantly, however, the influences are diverse, cutting across various currents of radical Islamism in the Middle East. In JI texts, Middle Eastern figures, both contemporary and historical, have pride of place. Despite the fact that JI describes itself as a salafist movement, Qutbist notions of jahiliya and radical global jihad feature prominently, particularly in the teachings of Abdullah Sungkar. Sungkar and Ba'asyir also applied the Brotherhood's usrah strategy within the movement, believing that Islamizing society was a precondition for an Islamic state. The Egyptian al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah connection was also important. Both Sungkar and Ba'asyir were admirers of the spiritual head of al-Gama'a, Sheikh Omar Abd al-Rahman. JI's General Declaration of Struggle (commonly known by the acronym 'PUPJI') was, according to several of the organisation's leaders, inspired by the Gama'a's *Mithaq al-Amal al-Islami* ('Charter of Islamic Action' published by the JI-linked press, al-Alaq, as *Pedoman Amal Islami*).<sup>142</sup> Not all of JI's texts, it should be noted, are of Islamic origin. Abu Dujana, a current senior JI leader, appears to have edited a manual for 'urban mujahid' which draws heavily upon Carlos Marighella's classic insurgency text, *The Mini-Manual of the Urban Guerilla*. The text has been Islamized, for example, replacing the original 'urban guerilla' with 'urban mujahid'.<sup>143</sup>

The two most seminal 'external' authorities for JI are, however, Abdullah Azzam and Ibn Taymiyah. JI texts often paid homage to Azzam and his role in conceptualizing and facilitating global jihad. Al-Alaq in Solo, which is close to key JI figures, translated and

140 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Jihad in Central Sulawesi," 3 February 2004. John Funston, "Malaysia: Muslim Militancy — how much of a threat?" *AUS-CSCAP Newsletter* no. 13 2002.

141 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: How the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist network operates," no. 43, 11 December 2003, 19.

142 Confidential correspondence. See also the police interrogation transcript of Thoriqudin (alias Abu Rusydan).

143 We have only been able to obtain an English language translation of the Abu Dujana text which is entitled "Mini-Manual of the Urban Mujahid," though information from independent researchers suggests that the document is authentic.

published many of his works, including *Di Bawah Naungan Surat at-Taubah* and a 12-volume collection of writings and speeches entitled *Tarbiyah Jihadiyah*, all of which became major references on JI reading lists.<sup>144</sup> Ibn Taymiyah's treatises on *jihad* and the need to remove Muslim rulers who did not uphold Islamic law were also regarded as essential texts for JI recruits. Two other influential texts have been Abu Qatada's *al-Jihad wa'l-Ijtihad* and Muhammad Sayyid al-Qathani's *al-Wala' wa'l-Bara*.

The Middle Eastern influence is also evident in JI's use of suicide bombers in the Bali, Marriott and Australian Embassy attacks. Manuals on suicide bombing, particularly those from Palestinian sources, were studied in JI training courses and several of these texts were translated and published in Indonesia by JI activists. The techniques used by JI draw closely on those employed by groups such as Hamas.<sup>145</sup> Nonetheless, while the methods and inspiration for suicide bombings owe much to the Palestinian example, it is wrong to assert, as several writers on JI have done, that there is no historical precedent for such attacks in Southeast Asia. Muslims in Aceh, North Sumatra, and the southern Philippines regularly resorted to suicidal jihadism against 'infidel' colonial forces during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.<sup>146</sup>

Interestingly, available evidence suggests that JI members rarely ever cite takfir (excommunication) as a basis for terrorist action. The JI leader, Imam Samudra, for example, decried the use of takfir as another device which divided the Islamic community.<sup>147</sup> As already noted, in Egypt takfir was used by radical Islamists to justify attacks on their own Muslim governments. The fact that JI does not apply it is

unsurprising given that JI's acts of terrorism have generally been directed at non-Muslims, either Indonesian Christians or Westerners. JI members, like mainstream salafists, are inclined to the view that lax or liberal-minded Muslims should be regarded as misguided rather than having left the faith.<sup>147</sup> This suggests that JI shares al-qa'ida's prioritization of the struggle for the global Islamic umma, rather than the more traditional focus of Islamists, overthrowing the impious rulers of Muslim states.

The al-qa'ida influence is also evident in the rhetoric and statements of JI. Compare, for example, the following two texts. The first is the al-qa'ida statement which appeared in April 2002. It said, in part:

There currently exists an extermination effort against the Islamic peoples that has America's blessing, not just by virtue of its effective cooperation, but by America's activity. The best witness to this is what is happening with the full knowledge of the world in the Palestinian cities of Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah and elsewhere. Every day, all can follow the atrocious slaughter going on there with American support that is aimed at children, women and the elderly. Are Muslims not permitted to respond in the same way and kill those among the Americans who are like the Muslims they are killing? Certainly! By Allah, it is truly a right for Muslims... It is allowed for Muslims to kill protected ones among unbelievers as an act of reciprocity. If the unbelievers have targeted Muslim women, children and elderly, it is permissible for Muslims to respond in kind and kill those similar to those whom the unbelievers killed.<sup>149</sup>

144 Abdullah Azzam, *Hijrah dan I'dad (Flight and preparation)* (Solo: Pustaka al-Alaqa, 2002). Abdullah Azzam, *Tarbiyah Jihadiyah (Jihadist Training)* (Solo: Pustaka al-Alaqa, 2001).

145 We are grateful to Sidney Jones and a confidential Australian source for this information.

146 Stephen Frederic Dale, Religious suicide in Islamic Asia: Anticolonial terrorism in India, Indonesia and the Philippines, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32 (1) 1988, 37–59.

147 Imam Samudra, *Aku Melawan Teroris*. Solo, Jazeera, 2004.

148 Confidential interviews, Jakarta, April 2004.

149 Quoted in Quinton Wiktorowicz and John Kaltner, Killing in the Name of Islam: Al-Qaeda's Justification for September 11, *Middle-East Policy X* (2) 2003.

Of note here is the listing of places across the globe where Muslims have been victims of non-Muslim violence, and the resort to principles of reciprocity and vengeance as justification for jihadist terrorism. Six months later, immediately after the Bali bombing, JI leaders released the following statement on the web:

Let it be acknowledged that every single drop of Muslim blood, be it from any nationality and from any place will be remembered and accounted for. [The text then refers to 'thousands of Muslims' killed in Afghanistan, Sudan, Palestine, Bosnia, Kashmir and Iraq.] The heinous crime and international conspiracy of the Christians also extends to the Philippines and Indonesia. This has resulted in Muslim cleansing in Moro [southern Philippines], Ambon, Poso and surrounding areas. It is clearly evident the crusade is continuing and will not stop... Every blow will be repaid. Blood will be redeemed by blood. A life for a life... To all you Christian unbelievers, if you define this act [i.e., the Bali bombings] on your civilians as heinous and cruel, you yourself have committed crimes which are more heinous. The cries of the babies and Muslim women have never succeeded in stopping your brutality. Well, here we are the Muslim men! We will harness the pain of the death of our brothers and sisters. You will bear the consequences of your actions wherever you are... We are responsible for the incident in Legian, Kuta, Bali.<sup>150</sup>

Several terrorism specialists have suggested JI is an integral or subordinate part of al-qa'ida, whereas Sidney Jones of the ICG has described the relationship

as one of "mutual benefit and parallel struggle" in which JI is largely autonomous.<sup>151</sup> The available evidence favors the latter view. JI leaders have certainly had extensive contact with bin Laden and other key al-qa'ida figures during the late 1980s and early 1990s in Afghanistan and several JI figures had ongoing operational ties. The most obvious was Hambali, who not only headed JI operations but also consulted closely with the al-qa'ida leadership. Others who appear to have had good links with bin Laden's group included Zulkarnaen, the commander of JI's military wing, and Fathur Rahman al-Ghozi, a bomb expert with extensive experience in Afghanistan and the Philippines. Al-qa'ida also provided substantial sums of money to JI for terrorist attacks, including US\$35,000 for the Bali bombing. Furthermore, it has supplied operatives such as the Kuwaiti, Omar al-Faruq, who assisted JI in Indonesia from the late 1990s till his arrest in mid-2002.<sup>152</sup>

There can also be little doubt about al-qa'ida's ideological influence on JI thinking. Al-qa'ida's 1998 fatwa calling for a jihad against the West had a galvanizing effect on the most militant section of JI's leadership. This group, which included Hambali, Mukhlas, Zulkarnaen, Dr Azhari Husin, Imam Samudra and Dul Matin, believed that the fatwa should be acted upon and that the time had come for an emphatic jihadist response to Islam's foes. This view was, however, opposed by other sections of JI, which argued that the al-qa'ida fatwa did not reflect conditions in Indonesia and that the organization's broader goal of creating an Islamic state through predication and education would be jeopardized by large-scale terrorist attacks. This faction contains many leaders of the Mantiqi II group (Java and Sumatra), including Ustadz Muhaimin Yahya (alias

150 This was contained on <www.istimata.com>, which was closed down soon after the Bali bombing. The Istimata Declaration was seemingly prepared by the JI leader Imam Samudra and several of his colleagues. He tipped off the press as to the existence of the website (*Kompas*, 5 December 2002) and several versions of the statement were also found on his laptop computer.

151 Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004) and Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside al-Qaeda* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002) regard JI as an integral part of al-qa'ida. Sidney Jones's reports for the International Crisis Group put the case for JI's relative autonomy from al-qa'ida. See, for example, International Crisis Group, "Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous."

152 International Crisis Group, "Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous," 26 August 2004, 29 and Sally Neighbour, *In the Shadow of Swords: On the Trail of Terrorism from Afghanistan to Australia* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2004), 260.

Ustadz Ziad), Ustadz Abdullah Anshori (alias Abu Fatih), Ahmad Roihan alias Saad and Ustadz Abdul Manan. The issue of the religious and tactical merit of pursuing extreme jihad remains a primary source of tension within JI, though observers are divided as to the seriousness of this dispute. Sidney Jones believes that JI is fragmenting, with sections of the organization conducting their own operations with little or no reference to the central leadership.<sup>153</sup> Zachary Abuza, possibly drawing on intelligence reporting, asserts that there is no serious falling out within the JI leadership and that the organization's outlook is broad enough to accommodate both mass casualty terrorism and propagation. It is difficult to assess independently the merits of these opposing views, but ICG has made the stronger case in public to support its interpretation.

While all these elements point to JI's international orientation, it would be wrong to see such violent Muslim extremism as largely an imported phenomenon. Some 40 years before JI, the Darul Islam (DI) rebellion in Indonesia provided one of the Islamic world's first major jihadist uprisings of the 20th century. There are a number of striking parallels between JI and DI, as well as some telling differences.

The DI rebellion against the central government began in 1948 and continued until the early 1960s. DI was overtly Islamist. It rejected the religiously neutral state ideology of the republic, known as Pancasila (literally, 'Five Principles'), and in 1949, established the Indonesian Islamic State (Negara Islam Indonesia; NII) based on shari'a. It described its struggle as a *jihad fi sabilillah* ('holy war in the way of God') which would continue "until all Islam's enemies were driven out."<sup>154</sup> At its height in the mid-1950s, DI had at

least 20,000 fighters, which it called *mujahid* (holy warriors), and it waged military and terror campaigns across 6 provinces. These included armed attacks on non-combatants in public places such as markets, cinemas and government offices, the use of assassination units (one of which almost succeeded in killing President Sukarno in 1957), assaults on Islamic schools and mosques in areas that refused to join DI, and the deployment of killing squads in conflict zones with monthly quotas for victims.

Estimates of the death toll during the 15-year DI rebellion range from about 15, 000 to 40, 000. Well over 1 million people were displaced and 500, 000 properties destroyed. Eventually, the rebellion was crushed by the Indonesian army in 1962.<sup>155</sup> Darul Islam reactivated itself in the early 1970s as an underground organization. From the mid-1970s, it experienced growing internal rifts and organizational fragmentation. It now has many thousands of members and sympathisers, only a small number of whom would appear to be involved in violent or terrorist activity.<sup>156</sup> The movement is more commonly known these days by the acronym NII.

DI, like JI, had, and continues to have, an absolutist and dichotomized view of the world. It believes that any Muslim who chooses not to live in an area where Islamic law is in force (*dar al-Islam*) is an apostate and therefore forfeits their rights to life and property. Such people are part of the 'region of war' (*dar al-harb*) and it becomes obligatory for all true Muslims to fight against them until they are vanquished. Importantly, DI's jihadism is based not on contemporary Middle Eastern sources, such as the more militant Brotherhood tracts that were beginning to appear at this time, but on interpretations of centuries-old classical jurisprudence (*fiqh*) texts.

153 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: Jihad in Central Sulawesi," i, 3 and 24.

154 Holk Dengel, *Darul Islam dan kartosuwirjo: 'Angan-Angan yang Gagal (Darul Islam and kartosuwirjo: 'The illusion that failed')* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1995), 73–86 and 127–154.

155 Ibid., and C. van Dijk, "Rebellion under the banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia." VKI no. 94 1981.

156 For one version of DI's murky post-1960s history, see Umar Abduh, *Al-Zaytun Gate: investigasi mengungkap misteri (Al-Zaytun Gate: an investigation to reveal a mystery)* (Jakarta: LPDI-SIKAT and al Bayyinah, 2002), 28–40.

There were other important differences between DI and JI. DI had none of the strict salafist approach of JI; its religiosity was highly heterodox, mixing mystical and village folk practices with traditional Islam. A cult of personality with millenarian overtones developed around the DI leader, SM Kartosuwirjo — something that JI figures would regard as tantamount to polytheism (*shirk*). Lastly, DI was an endogenous movement. It gained little or no financial or material support from outside Indonesia and unlike JI, had no aspirations to found a transnational caliphate. DI's sole political goal was to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia.<sup>157</sup>

The significance of DI for the present discussion is that it shows that contemporary Middle Eastern influences are not required to create a violent jihadist movement in Indonesia. Such influences may be a sufficient but not a necessary condition for the rise of extremism. Local factors, such as socio-economic marginalization, political or ethnic alienation and attraction to indigenous expressions of strict piety also play a powerful role.

Despite the differences in religious doctrine and outlook between DI and JI, there are powerful historical and contemporary links between the two. Many JI members regard Kartosuwirjo as an inspirational figure who martyred himself for the cause of founding an Islamic state. They also regard JI as continuing the DI struggle, albeit in a different form. Both Sungkar and Ba'asyir held senior positions in DI during the 1980s and early 1990s, and Sungkar commonly dated the start of the Indonesian state as August 7, 1949 (the proclamation of NII) rather than August 17, 1945, the date on which Sukarno declared Indonesia's independence.<sup>158</sup> DI communities remain a major source of JI recruiting; many of the Indonesians who went to Afghanistan from 1985 did so as DI members,

only later joining JI. Also, DI cadre trained as separate units in JI's Camp Hudaibiyah in Mindanao in the latter part of the 1990s and JI instructors continue to be involved in training DI groups in Java. Last of all, there is considerable intermarriage between DI and JI families, which serves to strengthen the ties between the two networks.<sup>159</sup>

Thus, it is misleading to see JI as purely, or even predominantly, a product of external and particularly Middle Eastern influences. JI is more accurately characterized as a hybrid of local and international forces. It has been moulded by the deep and bitter historical experience of radical Islam in Indonesia, overlaid with global jihadist tendencies. As with most regional terrorist movements around the world, it has distinctive local qualities. It is a hallmark of al-qa'ida to be able to inspire organizations such as JI and draw them into its network, while also allowing those groups to pursue their more parochial agendas.

## PALESTINE, IRAQ AND INDONESIA

JI's effort to align itself with al-qa'ida's struggle raises the broader issue of Indonesian identification with prominent Middle Eastern causes, notably that of Palestine and the conflict in Iraq. Pro-Palestinian sentiment has a long history and can be traced back to the 1940s when Indonesian Islamic organizations opposed the partition of Palestine and the creation of an Israeli state. Most have continued this stance until the present. Under pressure from the Muslim community, successive Indonesian governments have refused diplomatic and trade relations with Israel. By contrast, the PLO has had diplomatic representation in Jakarta since 1989. The ongoing sensitivity of this issue was apparent in late 1999, when newly elected President Abdurrahman Wahid created a furor by proposing

157 International Crisis Group, "Recycling Militants in Indonesia: Darul Islam and the Australian Embassy Bombing," 22 February 2005. Greg Fealy, "Half a Century of Violent Jihad in Indonesia: An Historical and Ideological Comparison of Darul Islam and Jemaah Islamiyah," in eds. Marika Vicziany and David Wright-Neville, *Terrorism and Islam in Indonesia: Myths and Realities* (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, Clayton, 2005), 13–26.

158 See interview with Sheikh Abdullah Sungkar, "Suharto's 'Detect, Defect and Destroy' Policy Towards The Islamic Movement," *Nida'ul Islam* no. 17 (February-March 1997), <<http://www.islam.org.au/articles/17/indonesia.htm>>.

159 Interviews with two former DI members, Jakarta, April 2004. International Crisis Group, "Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: the case of the 'Ngruki Network' in Indonesia," 8 August 2002, 3, 6–9. International Crisis Group, "Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia," 18 and 25.

the opening of trade ties with Israel. He was forced to back down shortly afterwards. More recently, the U.S.-led bombing of Afghanistan in 2001 and the Iraq war have also aroused strong sentiment among Indonesia's Muslims. There were small and occasionally violent protests against the Afghanistan campaign, and the invasion of Iraq drew large but peaceful crowds on to the streets of major cities to rally against the military action.

Despite the widespread expression of support for Palestine, there is evidence to suggest that many Indonesian Muslims regard this and other international 'Islamic issues' as being of secondary importance to domestic concerns. For example, surveys conducted by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) at the State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, showed that the Palestinian issue ranked highly with Muslim respondents but was seen as less important than local problems facing Indonesia's Islamic community.<sup>160</sup> Also, Islamic groups have found it difficult to maintain the momentum of mass protests over U.S. policies in Afghanistan and Iraq, as both the leaders and members of mainstream organizations have swung their attention back to local issues after several weeks of anti-U.S. comments and actions. Calls for boycotts on U.S. products and aid related funding have gained little support, even though international surveys record that anti-American sentiment in Indonesia is at its highest point in a generation. In general, most Muslim leaders have taken a pragmatic view, believing that boycotts and violent protests would harm local Muslims more than they would the United States.<sup>161</sup>

While the Islamic mainstream may not be preoccupied with bloodshed and injustice elsewhere in the Muslim world, radical activists have a higher awareness of

Muslim suffering and may be galvanized by events such as the Iraq war. JI activists have used images of Muslims killed in conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia to recruit new members, though the impact of these images may be less powerful than those from local Muslim-Christian bloodshed in Ambon or Poso.<sup>162</sup> Nonetheless, even in this case it is difficult to point to evidence that the war in Iraq is directly fuelling new recruits into JI, with most of its recruits drawn from groups and communities that have had a radical outlook stretching back at least several decades.<sup>163</sup>

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160 Interview with Dr Jamhari, Executive Director, PPIM-UIN, Jakarta, 28 April 2004.

161 See, for example, the 2003 Global Attitudes Survey conducted by Pew Research Center for People and the Press shows that 83 percent of Indonesian respondents had an unfavorable attitude toward the United States.

162 International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Background: How the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist network operates," 11 December 2003, 22.

163 Maxine McKew, "Interview with Sidney Jones, International Crisis Group, on the 7.30 Report," Australian Broadcasting Commission, 16 December 2004, <<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2004/s1267208.htm>>.

## CONCLUSION

Islamism and neo-fundamentalism from the Middle East have undoubtedly had an impact in Indonesia. Most often these ideas have been imported by Indonesian Islamists looking for new modes of thinking about the relationship between Islam, politics and society or indeed new models for activism. Various mechanisms have permitted the flow of these ideas, from Indonesian students who travelled to the Middle East to the jihadists who went to Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s to the proliferating sources of Islamist information available through the Internet and satellite television. These vectors have served, however, to mediate the transmission of a range of ideas, from the more mainstream thinking of the Muslim Brotherhood to the jihadist-salafism of al-qa'ida.

In specific instances, notably via Saudi propagation, these ideas have also been exported to Indonesia. Saudi support — financial and otherwise — has been critical to the emergence of a salafist current within the Indonesian Muslim community. Most salafists seem essentially concerned with questions of morality and religiosity — albeit of an intolerant form — limiting their activities to preaching and education. Nonetheless some salafist groups do cross into acts of vigilantism and sectarian violence. For the most part these groups should, however, be seen as distinct from those self-described salafist groups involved in terrorism. The clamp-down on Saudi funding for global

Islamic causes has placed a number of these organizations in difficult circumstances and may see some of them disappear.

Saudi propagation has also been an important source — if possibly unintentionally — for the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood. Indonesian Islamists seem, however, to have been selective in their appropriation of Brotherhood ideas. The gradualist approach of Hassan al-Banna has been utilized more than the revolutionary thinking of Sayyid Qutb and his radical heirs. In this respect there are parallels between PKS' pragmatic adaptation of its ideology and the shift occurring among some Islamists in the Middle East, notably Hizb al-Wasat. In Indonesia, however, the existence of democratic politics means this process is more likely to realize its full, moderating potential. Nonetheless some of the darker sides of the PKS also seem to have been influenced by thinking from the Middle East, notably the anti-Semitic views and anti-western conspiracy theories subscribed to by some of its members.

There have been other more insidious influences flowing from the Middle East, particularly with respect to the emergence of JI. Significant parts of its doctrine and operational techniques are drawn from Middle Eastern sources, making it a far more lethal jihadist organization than preceding movements such as DI in the 1950s and early 1960s. There is no denying that

al-qa'ida has had a significant impact on JI's supranational worldview, and how it chooses its targets, reflecting linkages forged in the Afghan jihad against the Soviet Union. It is not, however, a command and control relationship and there remains a tension within JI over national versus global objectives. Many within the movement are content to inhabit al-qa'ida's virtual umma and its vision of perpetual conflict with the West. But perhaps knowing that this is also a path to political marginalization, some in the movement may be keener to return to a more nationally focused, if still often violent, project that enables it to build a broader support base among Indonesian Muslims. It would hardly be surprising if these conflicting imperatives do exist within JI. In Iraq today, similar tensions exist between local insurgents and foreign fighters, and the fact that much of the Egyptian radical movement of the 1990s chose not to follow Ayman al-Zawahiri into al-qa'ida are further illustrations that in many cases it will not always be possible for Islamists to reconcile global and local imperatives.

This last point illustrates a key conclusion of this paper. That is, while we have been able to point to the influence of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas from the Middle East in Indonesia, rarely is this impact unmediated or unmodified. In most cases, a process of indigenization has taken place. In terms of Muslim Brotherhood thinking, the gradualist approach of Hassan al-Banna has been utilized more than the revolutionary ideas of Sayyid Qutb and his radical heirs because it was seen as more appropriate to political conditions in Indonesia. While the influence of Middle Eastern salafist sheikhs on their Indonesian followers has been significant, that influence is sometimes open to manipulation by Indonesian salafists. In turn, JI is as much an heir to the violent and largely endogenous DI tradition in Indonesia as it is a local branch of al-qa'ida.

### **THE VIRTUES OF A BROADER PERSPECTIVE**

In much of the literature on the impact of Middle Eastern Islam on Indonesia, there is a preoccupation

with radical and particularly terrorist influences. The case studies presented in this paper show the need for a broader perspective. It is undeniable that the Middle East has had a powerful effect on numerically small and ideologically extremist minorities within the Indonesian Muslim community. JI is a good example of this, though it also illustrates the point that even very small groups can have a disproportionately large impact on a nation's affairs and the perceptions of its Islamic community. A similar argument might be made regarding salafist groups. While salafists have greatly expanded their presence in Indonesia in recent decades, they remain a peripheral phenomenon whose ideas have little or no appeal to most mainstream Muslims.

Muslim Brotherhood-inspired movements such as the Tarbiyah or PKS has the potential for much wider impact than either salafism or salafist-jihadism because they seek mass support and are cautiously willing to compromise on some Muslim Brotherhood ideals in order to achieve this. If the PKS is to become a large party, with say 25 percent or more of the national vote, as some of its leaders predict, then further compromise is inevitable. It remains to be seen whether PKS can maintain its internal discipline and ideological coherence as it moves toward the middle ground. The things which make PKS unique in current Indonesian politics — its meritocratic cadre system, pietist culture and social activism — may be undermined as party membership and constituency interests expand and diversify. Nonetheless, Muslim Brotherhood influences have led to new patterns of thinking and behaviour within Indonesian political Islam. These have been, to date, both Islamist and constitutionalist, and thus should be seen as contributing to democratic consolidation.

It is worth noting that this discourse on liberal Islamic perspectives in Indonesia also draws heavily upon Middle Eastern thinking. Some of the more innovative Indonesian Muslim intellectuals have been directly influenced by scholars such as the postmodernist Moroccan philosopher Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri, the Egyptian 'leftist' academic Hasan Hanafi, and the

Moroccan feminist, Fatima Mernissi. The works of these and other liberal authors have been translated into Indonesian and have found a large readership. Their ideas have also become the basis for ‘transformative’ Islam projects run by liberal NGOs. These have used, *inter alia*, Middle Eastern thinking to promote reinterpretation of Islamic precepts on matters as diverse as religious tolerance, human rights, democracy, gender equality and environmental sustainability. The efflorescence in Muslim intellectualism in Indonesia since the 1970s is inextricably linked to new ideas and practices emanating from the Middle East.

Any reckoning of Middle Eastern influence on Indonesian Islam needs to look not just at the radical elements inclined toward violence or divisive sectarianism but also at those ideas that enhance democratic life and provide a legitimate form of expression for religious sentiment. The diverse flows of information that accompany globalization mean that the impact of the Middle East will continue to be felt in a wide variety of ways. This will never be a straightforward process. Indeed, as we have noted in this paper, if the idea of a ‘Middle Eastern Islamism’ ever made any sense — and we are not sure that it did — it certainly makes less sense now. The flow of Islamist ideas into Indonesia is less and less a function of specifically Middle Eastern influences than a broader, global process of intellectual exchange and adaptation.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To the extent that the paper helps policymakers understand the ongoing evolution of this important political, social and religious phenomenon — both in the Middle East and Indonesia — it will have served its purpose. But we would also like to draw attention to a number of policy implications raised by the conclusions of this paper.

### 1. In focusing on the global, don’t lose sight of the local

One of the goals of this paper has been to highlight the way globalization and the technologies associ-

ated with it — notably greatly enhanced means of travel and communication — have facilitated the spread of both Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas. At the same time, however, the paper has also sought to highlight the tension that exists between the global and the local in the transmission of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas; that is, in most cases where ideas have been transmitted to Indonesia, a process of localization or indigenization has taken place. And even in the case of JI, where the local aims of the organization run parallel to al-qa’ida’s global campaign, the tension between the global and the local is ever present, illustrated by signs of debate within the organization over its future directions.

This tension is relevant to the way that governments around the world fight terrorism. In forming al-qa’ida, Osama bin Laden sought to subordinate a range of Muslim conflicts to his theme of Manichean conflict between the Muslim and Western worlds. As the cases of JI and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s terrorist organization in Iraq demonstrate, he has been successful to a degree. Nevertheless, in focusing on the transnational dimensions of contemporary terrorism, governments should not lose sight of local causes. The global focus is exacerbated by the tendency of some governments around the globe to redefine their own long running internal political struggles against insurgent or separatist groups as a part of the global war on terror, thereby deeming themselves worthy of U.S. political or material support. At the very least, they would have the United States turn a blind eye to the use of harsh repressive measures in Kashmir and Chechnya, for example.

Efforts to deepen bilateral relations with Indonesia and regional counter terrorism cooperation, for example by the Australian government, are a positive recognition of the importance of considering the local. Nonetheless, there is still a tendency — for example in the Australian government’s White

Paper on terrorism<sup>164</sup> — to see the terrorism threat as largely a function of the spread of a global ideology. As our paper has underlined, while the transmission of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas is part of the problem, it is by no means a defining characteristic. JI is not a seed that al-qa'ida planted (though it did encourage it to grow in a particular way). JI's roots lie in a long history of indigenous Islamic radicalism in Indonesia that has little if anything to do with the Middle East or al-qa'ida's brand of violent neo-fundamentalism. The same applies to the impact of Middle Eastern issues in Indonesia. Continued violence in the Middle East — in Iraq or on the Israeli–Palestinian front — may well galvanize JI and others of its ilk, increase antipathy toward the West among Indonesian Muslims, and thus make the Indonesian government's anti-terrorism efforts more difficult. More important for the recruitment success of these organizations are developments in Indonesia, itself, from the dynamics of Muslim–Christian relations and the continuation of sectarian violence, to the relationship between Islamists and the state.

## **2. Adopt a more nuanced categorization of Islamists and neo-fundamentalists**

One of the things this paper has sought to highlight is that Islamism is far from monolithic. Not only do Islamist and neo-fundamentalist movements often reflect different approaches to politics (and to the use of violence) but they often adapt and indigenize the ideas of their Islamist counterparts. Moreover, traditional categories of radical and conservative do not necessarily hold true. The Muslim Brotherhood's ideas about the transformation of society are quite radical while the means they use to achieve this transformation have largely been gradualist. By contrast, al-qa'ida's worldview reflects the conservatism of its salafist underpinnings yet its activism is radical and militant to say the least.

It is, of course, sometimes necessary to use such descriptors as a shorthand (as we have in this paper). But one should always be cognizant of the complexity that lies behind such appellations. Western governments and commentators should avoid labelling Muslims or Islamists simply as radicals or moderates. Not only are these terms often misleadingly reductionist, they also carry connotations of 'good' versus 'bad' Muslims, 'friendly' versus 'hostile' Muslims. This has an alienating effect on Muslims, who see it as evidence of self-interested western stereotyping of the Islamic community. Similarly, where more specific terms such as 'Islamism' or 'salafism' are used, there is often too little appreciation of the diversity within these categories. A common assumption is that salafists always pose a threat (whether present or latent). We have sought to show that this is sometimes, but not always, the case.

## **3. Take a less timorous approach to engagement with Islamists**

In the aftermath of 9/11, concerns that the fight against terrorism might fuel broader tensions between the Islamic and western worlds prompted official and semi-official efforts to promote greater understanding through a range of initiatives, notably inter-faith dialogues to academic conferences on Islam. While such initiatives hold an important symbolic value, there are grounds for questioning whether they achieve much. Those who attend meetings aimed at promoting interfaith dialogue tend to believe in it already. In many cases these conferences tend to be elite-focused, and there is little effort to follow up with on the ground initiatives to reduce sectarianism and interfaith tension in vulnerable local communities.

A large part of the problem is that western governments tend to be far too timorous in whom they invite to such meetings. In most cases Muslim invitees end up being the usual suspects — namely,

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164 See Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government, "Transnational terrorism: the threat to Australia," 21 July 2004.

moderate and mainstream Muslim religious leaders. More would be achieved by pursuing a genuine dialogue with a broader range of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist views. This is not to say that the bin Ladens of the world should now be invited to conferences promoting understanding between Islam and the West. There is nothing to be achieved by pursuing dialogues with those for whom violence is an end in itself. But there are Islamists and neo-fundamentalists who eschew violence and may be receptive to new perspectives and the breaking down of stereotypes. In an Indonesian context this would include the PKS party together with a number of salafist groups. The messages that these groups have may be difficult for the West to hear — and in some cases may be unacceptable — but there seems much to be gained and little to be lost by pursuing these inevitably more challenging dialogues.

At the very least exposure to a wider range of groups will help western governments and specialists reach a greater and more nuanced understanding of the various manifestations of Islamism and neo-fundamentalism. In an Indonesian context it would, for example, help to distinguish between those salafist groups whose activities and ideas are of concern because they promote violence and those whose concerns are limited to religiosity. This will, in turn, help ensure that the efforts to prevent money going to groups involved in terrorism are appropriately targeted and do not unnecessarily promote antagonism toward the West by groups who feel unfairly targeted by western sanctions and pressure.

#### **4. Think about education and the ‘war of ideas’ in broad terms**

As many western governments have acknowledged, combating terrorism is not simply about fighting terrorists but also about preventing the ideas which underpin terrorism from spreading. Indeed, the

destruction of al-qa’ida’s physical base in Afghanistan and the disruption of its international networks increasingly mean that the main threat faced by the international community is that other Islamist or neo-fundamentalist movements will, independently of any organizational link, adopt al-qa’ida’s worldview and its methods. To a great degree this seems to have happened, for example, among the foreign elements fighting in Iraq. This means that bin Laden and other prominent jihadist preachers no longer need organizational links to partisans around the world, but can rely on pronouncements in the media or on the Internet to spark like-minded groups into action.

It is against this background that some outside observers have identified the radical teachings of a number of pesantren in Indonesia as part of the terrorism problem (in the same way that concerns have been expressed about radical teachings in *madaris*<sup>165</sup> in South Asia and the Middle East, or radical mosques in Europe). To counter these teachings, some have proposed pushing for the reform of Islamic education. Several points can be made about this. In Indonesia, the number of radical jihadist pesantren is very small, less than 1 percent of the more than 30,000 pesantren in the country. Secondly, Indonesian Muslims are highly wary of the motives of Australia and other western countries in offering assistance to pesantren. Many see this as attempted Christian intervention in and manipulation of Islamic education.

Furthermore, it would be unwise to over-emphasize educational institutions when considering the driving forces for terrorism. There is abundant research to show that the means for conveying radical ideas in a globalized world are multitudinous. Modern publishing, the Internet and satellite television are far more effective and influential conveyers of ideas than a few pesantren. In the best case scenario, promoting the reform of Islamic

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165 Plural of *madrasa*, a religious school.

education will not stop the spread of these ideas. In the worst case scenario it will be counter productive because it will be seen as yet another example of western interference and efforts to dilute Islam. With respect to education, it seems more productive for western efforts to focus on supporting mainstream educational systems, and strengthening the ability of these to equip individuals with the skills necessary to compete in a globalized economy.

### 5. Encourage transparency

The 'war of ideas' also raises the complex question of Saudi Arabian religious propagation. Leaving aside the role some Saudi-based non-government charities have played in the funding of transnational terrorism, there is a related though still separate question of whether the international community should also be worried about religious propagation by Saudi Arabian organizations — and others from the Middle East — of salafist forms of Islam. Saudi propagation is neither uniform nor always likely to produce the impact that its sponsors intend, as illustrated by the spread of more politically-minded Muslim Brotherhood thinking via ostensibly salafist institutions such as LIPIA. Moreover, while Saudi Arabia has made a singular contribution to the growth and spread of salafism in Indonesia, it is not necessarily the case that Indonesian salafists are drawn toward terrorism and violence. Nonetheless, some salafist groups in Indonesia sponsored and funded by organizations from Saudi Arabia have participated in acts of terrorism and violence.

Responding to international pressure, Saudi Arabia has taken a range of steps to regulate the operations of its international charities, and to some degree, agencies for religious propagation. In some cases it has dissolved particular charities or their international branches, for example those of

al-Haramain.<sup>166</sup> In the case of Indonesia, these new stringencies seem to have had the effect of, in some cases at least, reducing the flow of funds to local Islamic organizations. At the same time, as we noted, some Saudi organizations seem able to bypass their own government's growing regulation of such funding and propagation activities. In particular, the activities of the Eastern Province (in Saudi Arabia) Branch of the IIRO in Indonesia would bear some additional scrutiny.

The answer does not, however, lie simply in placing additional pressure on the Saudis to clamp down even harder on material support for Islamic propagation. At least in Indonesia, the Saudi effort to deflect international criticism by cutting funding to Islamic organizations seems to have been indiscriminate. Legitimate and non-jihadist educational and welfare institutions have suffered as a result of these cuts, leading to considerable resentment against the 'war on terror'. Meanwhile, those financiers from Saudi and elsewhere in the Middle East driven more by ideological or militant motives are still getting their money through. This situation creates additional resentment among Indonesian Islamic groups toward the West, which is blamed for their loss of external material support and makes it harder to build local support for counter-terrorism measures. It may also push Indonesian salafist organizations toward more militant sources of finance that are able to evade Saudi government regulation and stringencies.

The solution is to encourage Saudi Arabia to accompany regulation of its charitable and propagation activities with greater transparency. The latter will not necessarily prevent the more nefarious forms of funding from getting through (though it might make it easier to identify). However, it will help ensure that the pressure on Saudi Arabia to regulate

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166 See Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington D.C., "Initiative and actions taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to combat terrorism," <<http://www.saudiembassy.net/Issues/Terrorism/IssuesTer.asp>>. For an assessment of the effectiveness of Saudi measures see Maurice R. Greenberg and Lee S. Wolosky, "Update on the Global Campaign Against Terrorist Financing."

the activities of its organizations is not counterproductive. The message to the Saudi government should be that they will face fewer obstacles to the continuation of legitimate propagation activities provided they ensure greater transparency in terms of who and what is being funded in countries like Indonesia and elsewhere. Another step to encourage this process in Indonesia would be to promote a similar degree of transparency amongst all forms of missionary activity including that undertaken by Christian groups. This would also help defuse perennial suspicion among some Islamist groups that a campaign of conversion is being undertaken by Christian groups in Indonesia.

#### **6. Be conscious of double standards and the democracy dilemma**

The most damaging thing for western governments in the context of the 'war of ideas' is the perception among Muslims of western double standards. A common complaint is that while the West preaches democracy, western governments and the United States in particular, ignore dictatorships, illiberal regimes and human rights abuses in the Muslim world when this is convenient to their interests. Indeed, since the war on terror began, the United States seems even more oblivious to the human rights abuses that occur in countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia (and has, in Guantanamo Bay, replicated some of the arbitrary and extra-judicial methods of previously criticized regimes in the region). In Southeast Asia the muted official response — including of Australia and the United States — to the deaths of 82 Muslims in Thailand at the hands of the security forces in October 2004 has only reinforced the view among Muslims in the region that, for western governments, Muslim blood is cheaper than that of Christians or non-Muslims.

There is little doubt that current U.S. efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East have been undermined by the decades-long history of U.S. support for non-democratic regimes in the region.

This is neither the current U.S. administration's fault, nor is it a perception that it can change overnight. In encouraging or supporting processes of democratization in the Middle East or elsewhere in the Muslim world, western governments need to avoid the perception that they are in favor of democracy and elections provided they deliver an acceptable outcome. In the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world, the fact that Islamists may win elections should not be viewed as an obstacle to them taking place.

In the case of the PKS in Indonesia, Islamists have played a positive role in Indonesia's process of democratization. In Indonesia, Islamist parties and organizations have adhered strictly to the 'rules of the democratic game', pursuing their agendas through elections, legislatures and peaceful direct action, which is in every case preferable to the politics of the gun — even if the views held by some within PKS are abhorrent. The lesson from the PKS involvement in parliamentary politics (and that of Hizb al-Wasat in Egypt and the Justice and Development Party in Turkey) is that to be successful, Islamist parties need to adapt their political programs to incorporate the everyday concerns of voters. Their slogan of "Islam is the solution" is no longer enough. The point here is not that every Islamist's democratic credentials should be taken at face value. It is simply that Islamism's purported incompatibility with democracy should not be assumed, nor should the moderating impact of the successful participation by Islamist parties in democratic processes be underestimated.

## APPENDIX: ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF INDONESIAN ISLAMIC PARTIES.

Indonesia has had 9 general elections since independence in 1945. Of these, only those held in 1955, 1999 and 2004 were free and fair. All 6 elections of the Soeharto period (1966–98), were tightly managed by the New Order regime and were designed to guarantee large victories for its electoral vehicle, Golkar.

**TABLE 1. 1955 GENERAL ELECTION**

Party	Explanation	Percentage	Seats
Masyumi	Largely modernist Islamic party	20.9	57
Nahdlatul Ulama	Traditionalist party	18.4	45
Others (4)	Mixture of traditionalist and modernist parties	4.6	14
Total	---	43.9	116 (of 257 seats in Parliament)

**TABLE 2. 1971 GENERAL ELECTION**

Party	Explanation	Percentage	Seats
Nahdlatul Ulama	Traditionalist party	18.7	59
Parmusi	Revived Masyumi party	5.4	22
Others (2)	Mixture of traditionalist and modernist parties	3.1	14
Total	---	27.2	95 (of 360 seats in Parliament)

**TABLE 3. PPP PERFORMANCE IN 1977–97 GENERAL ELECTION**

Year	Percentage	Seats
1977	29.3	99 (of 360)
1982	27.8	94 (of 364)
1987	16	61 (of 400)
1992	17	62 (of 400)
1997	22.4	89 (of 425)

In 1973, the Soeharto regime forced the four Islamic parties — Nahdlatul Ulama, Parmusi, PSII and Perti — to amalgamate to form the United Development Party (PPP). In the next five general elections PPP was the only 'Islamic' contestant of the three legal parties.

PPP was the second largest party throughout the Soeharto period. By contrast, the vote for the New Order's Golkar was never less than 61 percent.

**TABLE 4. 1999 GENERAL ELECTION**

More than 100 political parties were formed following Soeharto's downfall in May 1998; only 48 of these contested the 1999 general election. Ten of these parties were formally based on Islam but another 11 relied primarily upon their Islamic identity or leadership for their electoral support, even though they had the religiously neutral state doctrine of Pancasila as their ideological basis. In the tables below, a distinction is made between Islamist and non-Islamist Islamic parties. Islamist parties, in addition to being formally based on Islam, are also committed to greater implementation of shari'a. Non-Islamist parties are Pancasila-based and have a more pluralist orientation.

Party	Explanation	Percentage	Seats
PKB (National Revival Party)	Largely traditionalist party based on Nahdlatul Ulama constituency; non-Islamist	12.6	51
PPP	Combined traditionalist and modernist party mainly NU and Parmusi elements; Islamist	10.7	58
PAN (National Mandate Party)	Largely modernist party based on Muhammadiyah constituency; non-Islamist	7.1	34
PBB (Crescent Star Party)	Modernist party which sees itself as inheritor of Masyumi tradition; Islamist	1.9	13
PK (Justice Party)	Based on campus Islam groups which are Muslim Brotherhood inspired; Islamist	1.4	7
Others (16)		4.2	10
Total		37.9	173 (of 500)

**TABLE 5: ISLAMIC PARTIES IN 2004 GENERAL ELECTION**

Twenty-four parties contested the 2004 election, seven were Islamic.

Party	Explanation	Percentage	Seats
PKB		10.6	52
PPP		8.1	58
PKS (Prosperous Justice Party)	Renamed Justice Party (PK)	7.3	45
PAN		6.4	52
PBB		2.6	11
PBR (Reform Star Party)	Based on PPP splinter group; Islamist	2.4	13
Other (1)		0.8	0
Total		38.3	204 (of 550)

The figures in these tables are drawn from Biro Humas Komisi Pemilihan Umum, *Pemilu Indonesia Dalam Angka dan Fakta Tahun 1955–1999* [Indonesian General Elections in Figures and Facts, 1955–1999], (Jakarta; Komisi Pemilihan Umum 2000) <[http://www.kpu.go.id/suara/hasilsuara\\_dpr\\_sah.php](http://www.kpu.go.id/suara/hasilsuara_dpr_sah.php)> and <<http://www.kpu.go.id/suara/dprkursi.php>> and Greg Fealy, "Islamic Politics: A Rising or Declining Force?," in eds. Damien Kingsbury and Arief Budiman, *Indonesia: The Uncertain Transition*, (Crawford House, Adelaide, 2001), 119–36.



## THE BROOKINGS PROJECT ON U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE ISLAMIC WORLD

The Brookings *Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World* is a major research program, housed under the auspices of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy. It is designed to respond to some of the profound questions that the terrorist attacks of September 11 have raised for U.S. policy. In particular, it seeks to examine how the United States can reconcile its need to eliminate terrorism and reduce the appeal of extremist movements with its need to build more positive relations with Muslim states and communities.

The Project has several interlocking components:

- The U.S.–Islamic World Forum, which brings together American and Muslim world leaders from the fields of politics, business, media, academia, and civil society, for much-needed discussion and dialogue,
- A Washington Task Force made up of specialists in Islamic, regional, and foreign policy issues (emphasizing diversity in viewpoint and geographic expertise), as well as U.S. government policymakers, which meets on a regular basis to discuss, analyze, and share information on relevant trends and issues,
- A Visiting Fellows program that brings distinguished experts from the Islamic world to spend time at Brookings, both assisting them in their own research, as well as informing the work ongoing in the Project and the wider DC policymaking community,
- A series of Brookings Analysis Papers and Monographs that provide needed analysis of the vital issues of joint concern between the U.S. and the Islamic world,
- An Education and Economic Outreach Initiative, which will explore the issues of education reform and economic development towards the Islamic world, in particular the potential role of the private sector,
- A Science and Technology Policy Initiative, which looks at the role that cooperative science and technology programs involving the U.S. and Muslim world can play in responding to regional development and education needs, and in fostering positive relations, and
- A Brookings Institution Press Book Series, which will explore U.S. policy options towards the Islamic world. The aim of the book series is to synthesize the project's findings for public dissemination.

The underlying aim of the Project is to continue the Brookings Institution's original mandate to serve as a bridge between scholarship and public policy. It seeks to bring new knowledge to the attention of decision-makers and opinion-leaders, as well as afford scholars, analysts, and the public a better insight into public policy issues. The Project convenors are Professor Stephen Cohen, Ambassador Martin Indyk, and Professor Shibley Telhami. Dr. Peter W. Singer serves as the Project Director. For further information: [www.brook.edu/fp/research/projects/islam/islam.htm](http://www.brook.edu/fp/research/projects/islam/islam.htm)

## THE SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY

The Saban Center for Middle East Policy was established on May 13th, 2002 with an inaugural address by His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan. The creation of the Saban Center reflects the Brookings Institution's commitment to expand dramatically its research and analysis of Middle East policy issues at a time when the region has come to dominate the U.S. foreign policy agenda.

The Saban Center provides Washington policymakers with balanced, objective, in-depth and timely research and policy analysis from experienced and knowledgeable scholars who can bring fresh perspectives to bear on the critical problems of the Middle East. The center upholds the Brookings tradition of being open to a broad range of views. The Saban Center's central objective is to advance understanding of developments in the Middle East through policy-relevant scholarship and debate.

The center's foundation was made possible by a generous grant from Haim and Cheryl Saban of Los Angeles. Ambassador Martin S. Indyk, Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies, is the director of the Saban Center. Kenneth M. Pollack is the center's director of research. Joining them is a core group of Middle East experts who conduct original research and develop innovative programs to promote a better understanding of the policy choices facing American decision makers in the Middle East. They include Tamara Cofman Wittes, who is a specialist on political reform in the Arab world; Shibley Telhami, who holds the Sadat Chair at the University of Maryland; Shaul Bakhash, an expert

on Iranian politics from George Mason University; Daniel Byman, a Middle East terrorism expert from Georgetown University, and Flynt Leverett, a former senior CIA analyst and senior director at the National Security Council, who is a specialist on Syria and Lebanon. The center is located in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at Brookings, led by James B. Steinberg, director and Brookings' vice president.

The Saban Center is undertaking path breaking research in five areas: the implications of regime change in Iraq, including post-war nation-building and Gulf security; the dynamics of Iranian domestic politics and the threat of nuclear proliferation; mechanisms and requirements for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; policy for the war against terrorism, including the continuing challenge of state-sponsorship of terrorism; and political and economic change in the Arab world, in particular in Syria and Lebanon, and the methods required to promote democratization.

The center also houses the ongoing Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World which is directed by Brookings' Senior Fellow Peter W. Singer. The project focuses on analyzing the problems in the relationship between the United States and the Islamic world with the objective of developing effective policy responses. The Islamic World Project includes a task force of experts, an annual dialogue between American and Muslim intellectuals, a visiting fellows program for specialists from the Islamic world, and a monograph series.



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