



Editor:  
H.E. Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid

# THE ILLUSION OF AN ISLAMIC STATE

Prologue & Preface:  
Prof. Dr. Ahmad Syafii Maarif  
C. Holland Taylor

Epilogue:  
KH. A. Mustofa Bisri

PRAISE AND CONDEMNATION  
FOR  
*THE ILLUSION OF AN ISLAMIC STATE*

“People who are convinced that they know more than anyone else about Islam, and yet are full of hatred towards any of God’s creatures who do not travel the same path as they; and those who claim to be in possession of the absolute truth, and for that reason entitled to act as God’s vice-regents on earth (caliphs) and to dictate how everyone else must live—clearly, their words and behavior will not lead us into the presence of God. Their dream of an Islamic state is merely an illusion, for the true islamic state is not to be found in the structure of any government, but rather, in hearts which are open to God and all His creatures.”

~ Former Indonesian President Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid,  
from his introduction to *The Illusion of an Islamic State*

“The goal [of this book] is to raise our awareness, and counter the spread of extremist ideology in a peaceful and responsible manner. Although its title is challenging and some Muslims may not like it, LibForAll has published this book not to create enemies, but to facilitate a positive, constructive dialogue, both among Muslims and between Muslims and those of other faiths.”

~ Dr. Syafii Maarif, Former Chairman of  
the Muhammadiyah Organization

“*The Illusion of an Islamic State* conveys an extremely firm and clear message. The hidden danger that lies at the heart of extremist attempts to establish an Islamic state consists of the unconscious juxtaposition of profound ignorance regarding Islam’s true nature,

and a false conviction that they possess perfect knowledge of the same.... Perhaps all would agree that ignorance is highly dangerous. Yet not everyone is aware of the hidden dangers of ignorance, which dwell within.”

~ Kyai Haji A. Mustofa Bisri  
Deputy Chairman, Nahdlatul Ulama Supreme Council

“A path-breaking new report by the LibForAll Foundation.”

~ *Wall Street Journal*, “Indonesia Rejects Extremism,”  
by Sadanand Dhume

“Throwing a gauntlet down at the feet of radical Islam, a group of mainstream Muslim leaders led by former President Abdurrahman Wahid on Thursday announced the release of a book asserting that Indonesia is being infiltrated by foreign-funded extremists bent on turning the country into an Islamic state.”

~ *The Jakarta Globe*

“Just days before Indonesians go to the polls, a study has been released charging that an Islamic party is spreading radical and extremist ideology—undermining the country’s moderate Islamic tradition.... [T]he findings will certainly have some bearing on the country’s politics.”

~ *Channel News Asia*

“LibForAll has been exceptional in a regional context for issues involving innovative forms and communicating the message of anti-extremism. One guiding star in these efforts has been selecting methods with maximum impact and that reach the largest possible audience.... LibForAll’s coordinated media strategy has had a decisive political effect in terms of curbing political parties with an extremist agenda. Exposing the true nature of the parties has enabled marginalization of corrosive, subversive forces.”

~ *Preventing Violent Radicalization and Terrorism: The Case of Indonesia*  
by Dr. Magnus Ranstorp, Director of Research  
The Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies  
at Sweden’s National Defense College

“The LibForAll Foundation is one of the rare success stories of an initiative in which moderate and liberal Muslims—too often the silent and disorganized majority—have organized effectively to counter radical Islamist groups by promoting democracy and tolerance.”

~ *Democracy Digest*,  
published by the National Endowment for Democracy

“C. Holland Taylor doesn’t look like a man radical Muslims should fear.... He possesses no arsenal of weapons, holds no government post and operates no intelligence service. Yet he runs the world’s most potent and innovative anti-extremist network and may hold a key to defusing the ticking bomb of Islamist terrorism.”

~ *The Weekly Standard*, “In Defense of Moderation,”  
by Jennifer Rubin

“LibForAll Foundation, an NGO which cares deeply about Islam and Muslims... strives to express, clarify and widely disseminate a true understanding of Islam not only to non-Muslims, but also to Muslims in general. LibForAll aims to present the moderate and tolerant face of Islam, and explain the importance of [Muslims] returning to the essence of Islamic teachings which, until now, have been poorly understood by many groups [both in Islam and the West].”

~ *Al-Ahram* (one of the oldest & most widely-read newspapers in the Arab world) “Extremism is Alien to Islam,” by Alaa Amer

“The [Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated] PKS has accused the authors of *The Illusion of an Islamic State: The Expansion of Transnational Islamist Movements to Indonesia* of being agents of former American President George W. Bush. But the various researchers involved in the book take said accusations in stride, and joke about them.”

~ *Inilah.com*, a popular Indonesian website that  
closely monitors the PKS

“A researcher from LSI, Burhanudin Muhtadi, explained that if the Wahhabi rumors are believed by the public, it will curtail the acceptability of a vice-presidential candidate put forward by the

PKS.... According to Burhan, who also wrote a thesis on the PKS and Social Movements at the Australian National University, the Wahhabi rumors are in fact true....”

~ *Inilah.com*

“*The Illusion of an Islamic State* really scourged Wahhabism.... The Justice and Prosperity Party (PKS) fell victim and was gravely wounded [by the book’s publication].”

~ Abu Rusdan, former commander of al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah’s Military Region III (Borneo, Sulawesi and the southern Philippines), quoted in *Sabili* (“*The Path*”) magazine

“Here is the book from that accursed Satanic network. Read, Study and Anticipate. This is the link (to download *The Illusion of an Islamic State*).”

~ *alJamaah*, website affiliated with the terrorist organization Jemaah Islamiyah and its founder, Abu Bakr Ba’asyir

“Infidels may not be killed if they do not oppose [radical] Islam. We can live alongside them. But people who are involved in movements that oppose Islam, even on the level of thought, not only may be killed, but should and must be.”

~ Abu Bakr Ba’asyir, as reported in *Tempo* magazine, following release of *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, which linked terrorism to the spread of Islamist ideology

“Since the explosion of the bombs in Kuningan [Jakarta] in July of 2009, the terms Wahhabism and transnationalism have suddenly been on everyone’s lips. Many national television stations and other mass media outlets have been quoting a number of leading national figures about the relationship between terrorist bombs and Wahhabism.

“Whether this is intentional or not, one thing is certain: the assistance of media (especially TV) has caused the term Wahhabi to become a new stigma that is terrorizing many [extremist] Muslim organizations. It may be that those behind the spread of this stigma hope to divide Indonesian Muslims and turn them against each other....

“The people behind this are identical to those who were behind the book *The Illusion of an Islamic State*.... I can’t stop thinking about LibForAll, which financed and published this project, and how it claims to be liberal and promoting liberalism, but in reality is extremely conservative, sectarian and exclusive, unwilling to tolerate differences [i.e., extremist interpretations of Islam].”

~ *Hidayatullah (Allah’s Guidance)* magazine

“Through its book *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, LibForAll has backed [radical] Islam into a corner.”

~ *Swara Muslim (The Voice of Muslims)*, a website whose slogan is “Jihad never sleeps; holy warriors never die”

“The authors of this book are intolerant of their fellow Muslims, as evidenced by their unrelenting attacks, stigmatizing their fellow Muslims as close-minded literalists, in addition to other pejorative abuse. On the other hand, while they themselves are incapable of behaving in a tolerant manner towards their fellow Muslims, they call for tolerance towards infidels.... Indeed, they reinterpret Qur’anic verses and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad which command [us] to wage war against them....”

~ *Syabab (Youth)*, a webzine and media production company affiliated with the transnational extremist group Hizb ut-Tahrir

“*The Illusion of an Islamic State: Screams of the Syphilitic Crowd*.... There is a new book from the Syphilitic [secularism, religious pluralism and liberalism] School of Thought that perhaps has not yet found its way into your hands.... In order to save Muslims the trouble of reading the book (and indeed, perhaps there is no need to read it at all), nahimunkar.com has summarized everything you need to know about this book.”

~ *Nahimunkar (Forbidding Evil)*, Islamist website

“The enemies of Islam never cease in their efforts to destroy the Muslim community. They use not only physical methods, but ideological warfare as well. They regard this methodology as more inexpensive and effective. Just look at what happened before the bombing of the J.W. Marriott and Ritz Carlton hotels. A couple months

earlier we were ‘treated’ to the book *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, which attacks political Islam.”

~ *Sabili (The Path)* magazine

“[In 2004], Indonesia’s best-selling magazine was an Islamic weekly called *Sibili* [i.e., *Sabili*], which offered a mix of wild anti-American conspiracy theories and cheerleading for jihad.... Today the tide seems to have turned.... *Sibili*, meanwhile, has toned down its anti-Western rhetoric. ‘We now see bigger potential for sales among moderate Muslims,’ said Lufti Tamimi, the magazine’s editor and part-owner. In January [2010], Tamimi ditched *Sibili*’s hard-line editor and commissioned a series of articles denouncing Salafism, a purist strain of Islam that underpins extremist ideology.”

~ *Washington Post*, “Indonesia steps up pressure on Islamist militants,”  
by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Andrew Higgins

“*The Illusion of an Islamic State*... has given rise to enormous polemics, which is precisely what [its authors] intended. All kinds of people are now following the lead of Gus Dur and Syafii Maarif, [criticizing Wahhabism and transnational Islamist movements]. But what is clear is that this book was created by LibForAll.... They are attacking “transnational Islam,” using deep-rooted local power structures.”

~ *Hidayatullah (Allah’s Guidance)* magazine

# THE ILLUSION OF AN ISLAMIC STATE

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How an Alliance of Moderates Waged a  
Successful Campaign Against Radicalization and Terrorism  
in the World's Largest Muslim-Majority Country



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## **Epilogue**

Kyai Haji A. Mustofa Bisri

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and C. Holland Taylor

LibForAll Foundation Press publishes works that further LibForAll's mission to promote a pluralistic, tolerant and spiritual understanding of Islam, at peace with itself and the modern world.

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Radicalization and Terrorism in the World's Largest Muslim-Majority  
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*Preface to the English Edition*

FIGHTING FIRE WITH WATER

*By C. Holland Taylor*

*The Illusion of an Islamic State* represents a landmark achievement in the field of counter-radicalization, which demonstrates how an alliance of moderate Muslim leaders can effectively isolate, and discredit, the ideology of religious hatred, supremacy and violence that underlies and animates terrorism. As such, it warrants serious study—as well as the wide dissemination, and application, of its findings—by public policy makers, journalists and people of good will of every faith and nation, who care about the threat to humanity posed by Islamist ideology, terrorism and a rising tide of Islamophobia in the West.

If the Muslim world, including the contemporary Middle East, is to navigate a path between the Scylla and Charybdis of temporal and religious authoritarianism—and, at long last, provide its inhabitants with the kinds of civil liberty, and rule of law, that people in the West have come to take for granted—it can only do so by applying the principles articulated in this visionary work. For the renowned Muslim theologians who authored *The Illusion of an Islamic State* have issued a stirring *theological* defense of freedom, grounded in a profoundly spiritual understanding of Islam that is capable of deepening and broadening, rather than destroying, Muslims' faith. As such, it represents a unique contribution from Indonesia to the world, offered in the spirit of love, compassion and respect.

For Muslim societies in the midst of intense political transformation, this book offers a model for dealing responsibly with the threat of both violent and non-violent extremists, including the

Muslim Brotherhood, by using democratic methods rather than those of a brutal police state. In Europe and North America, *The Illusion of an Islamic State* may help to illuminate the increasingly polarized and strident debate on Islam that has paralyzed Western societies, and led to institutional deadlock in the face of a profound threat that jeopardizes the prospects of a peaceful and harmonious future for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

An immediate publishing phenomenon upon its “hard launch” in May of 2009 in Indonesia—the country with the world’s largest Muslim population and democracy—*The Illusion of an Islamic State* exposed extremist ideology to public ridicule and rejection, and decisively influenced the outcome of Indonesia’s national elections that year.

Active participation by the most respected Muslim leaders in Indonesia was crucial to the project’s success. Former president Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid (1940 – 2009)—whom Bret Stephens of the *Wall Street Journal* once called “the single most influential religious leader in the Muslim world,” and “easily the most important ally the West has in the ideological struggle against Islamic radicalism”—served as the book’s editor. In this capacity, he wrote an extensive introduction (“The Enemy Within”) that served both as an executive summary of the report, and a dramatic appeal for Indonesians “to restore honor and respect to Islam, which the extremists have desecrated,” and to “restore the majesty of Islamic teachings as *rahmatan lil-‘alamîn*—a blessing for all creation—[which] represents a vital key to building a peaceful world.”

*The Illusion of an Islamic State* also includes contributions by Kyai Haji Mustofa Bisri, a renowned leader of the world’s largest Muslim organization (the 40-million-member Nahdlatul Ulama, which President Wahid himself once led), and Dr. Syafii Maarif, the immediate past chairman of the 30-million-member Muhammadiyah organization, and 2008 recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award, Asia’s equivalent of the Nobel Prize. The fact that the book was co-published with two widely known and respected NGOs—The Wahid Institute and Maarif Institute—further strengthened the dramatic impact of its launch.

Western journalists quickly identified *The Illusion of an Islamic*

State as “a path-breaking new report” (*Wall Street Journal*) that exposed “Islamist groups... systematically infiltrating Indonesian mosques, institutes, universities and government, posing an even greater threat to the country than regional terrorist groups” (*International Herald Tribune*), “rais[ing] concerns that Indonesia’s moderate form of Islam and its secular ideology are under siege” (*Sydney Morning Herald*).

Yet except for Channel News Asia, which reported that “the [study’s] findings will certainly have some bearing on the country’s politics,” the international press generally overlooked a far more significant angle to the story, which was immediately evident to the Indonesian media and public alike. Backed by Abdurrahman Wahid, Syafii Maarif and Mustofa Bisri—the most prominent spiritual leaders associated with “the country’s two major Muslim organizations, the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama and the modernist Muhammadiyah... [which] together command the allegiance of 70 million people” (*Jakarta Globe*)—*The Illusion of an Islamic State* did not passively “report” on the phenomenon of Wahhabi/Muslim Brotherhood infiltration of Indonesian institutions.

Instead, as Indonesia’s largest web portal, with over 10 million visitors a day, was quick to proclaim following the book’s launch: “*The Illusion of an Islamic State* is the NU and Muhammadiyah’s Response to the [Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated] PKS and Hizb ut-Tahrir” (*Detik.com*). “Throwing a gauntlet down at the feet of radical Islam, a group of mainstream Muslim leaders led by former President Abdurrahman Wahid on Thursday announced the release of a book asserting that Indonesia is being infiltrated by foreign-funded extremists bent on turning the country into an Islamic state” (*Jakarta Globe*).

The Nahdlatul Ulama prominently featured the book on its website, as did the NU’s 10-million-member youth wing, Ansor. Within weeks of its launch, *The Illusion of an Islamic State* went from zero results on Google to over 556,000, and dramatically influenced Indonesia’s 2009 national elections: helping to prevent the Muslim Brotherhood-linked Justice and Prosperity Party (PKS) from merging its political platform with that of incumbent president (and 2009 winner) Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY); de-

railing PKS ambitions to nominate its cadre as Yudhoyono's vice presidential candidate, and thereby obtain the legitimacy required to secure the presidency in 2014; facilitating the nomination of Javanese nationalist Boediono as SBY's vice president; and providing a robust theological justification and defense of Indonesia's largely secular constitution, which rejects the notion of an "Islamic" state.

Unlike anything previously published on the subject of counter-radicalization—either in the Muslim world, or the West—*The Illusion of an Islamic State* seamlessly incorporated four distinct elements to achieve its unprecedented results:

- Field research, during which a team of 27 academicians from a network of Islamic State Universities and Institutes traveled to 24 districts in 17 provinces of Indonesia, and interviewed 591 extremist agents, in order to ascertain their ideology, agenda and affiliation with various transnational and domestic Islamist movements;
- Consultative research, in which the book's editorial team met with dozens of top Muslim clerics, educators, political leaders, high ranking government officials, military officers, businessmen and media professionals, in order to obtain first-hand information regarding extremist infiltration of Indonesian society from moderate Muslim leaders who have direct, personal knowledge of these developments, and also to request said leaders' advice regarding the issues covered by this book;
- Literature research, concerning the origins, ideology and spread of Islamist extremism in the Middle East and Indonesia, and the reaction of moderate Muslim organizations, such as the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, to this threat;
- Theological refutation of the ideology articulated, and generally shared, by the 591 extremist agents interviewed by the project's field research team, and widely propagated not only in Indonesia, but among Muslim communities throughout the world, including Europe and North America. This theological refutation was written under

the direct supervision of Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid by his disciple, the Muslim theologian and *'alim* (scholar) Kyai Haji Hodri Ariev, who is LibForAll Foundation's Director of Programs for Southeast Asia, and head of Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Ulum ("Ocean of Knowledge Madrasa") in Jember, East Java.

Launched in September of 2006, the project required more than two and a half years to complete. The project team confronted numerous difficulties, ranging from the mundane to significant—including implicit and explicit threats of character assassination, and/or violence, directed towards those involved with the project. I recall discussing the latter with President Wahid, after informing him that a prominent Muslim figure involved with one phase of the project had suggested we not publish *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, "to avoid being attacked by extremists." President Wahid immediately replied, "Let them attack us! Then at least people will hear about the controversy, and can decide whether or not they agree with us. If we remain silent, only the extremists will be heard."

On another occasion, I informed President Wahid of the advice of a sympathetic but fearful Muslim leader, who knew of the book's imminent release, and asked that we not speak up (by publishing it). When asked his opinion, President Wahid laughed and replied loudly, "Holland, I made that decision forty years ago. Should we speak up? YES!!!!"

### **Historical Background**

President Wahid was referring to the brutal massacre of half a million to a million Indonesians in 1965/'66, in the wake of an abortive communist coup attempt. Because General Suharto's troops were insufficient in number to comb the Javanese countryside, his subordinates enlisted Muslim militias (including many members of the Nahdlatul Ulama, which Abdurrahman Wahid's grandfather had established in 1926) to help exterminate the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). In 1965, PKI had been the third largest communist party in the world, its membership rolls exceeded only by those of China and the Soviet Union. By the end

of 1966, the PKI had been virtually annihilated.

Abdurrahman Wahid—whose father and paternal grandfather played key roles in Indonesia’s independence struggle, and establishing the new nation as a pluralistic and largely secular state—was twenty-five at the time, and enrolled at Egypt’s famed al-Azhar University in Cairo. During this period, he also worked part-time at the Indonesian embassy. There, the young Wahid was privy to diplomatic cables that described the bloody massacres underway back home, engendering a period of introspection that led to his fateful decision: never to remain silent in the face of injustice.

Upon his return to Indonesia, Wahid (popularly known as “Gus Dur”) became prominent in intellectual circles and the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), assuming the role of general chairman of the mass-based Islamic organization in 1984. A lifelong devotee of freedom, Wahid promptly mobilized the NU to oppose President Suharto’s authoritarian regime, and lay the foundation for Indonesia’s eventual transition to democracy.

As one Indonesian activist told *Wall Street Journal* columnist Bret Stephens in April of 2007, “Gus Dur was the only person in Indonesia who, having dared to oppose Suharto at the height of his power, was never broken (by Suharto’s regime)... Anyone who could do that must be very, very *sakti* (possessed of immense spiritual power)... And one who is that *sakti* must be very close to being *wali allah* (i.e., a saint).”

The massacres of 1965/’66, which eviscerated the PKI, also had the unforeseen consequence of altering the balance of socio-religious forces within Indonesia. For hundreds of years, rural Javanese society in particular was divided between *santri* (observant) and *abangan* (non-observant) Muslims, the latter generally adhering to a syncretic, mystical set of beliefs referred to as *kejawen* (or “Javaneseness”). Like Sufism (Islamic mysticism), *kejawen* maintains that Truth is universal, with many paths leading to the divine goal of human existence: i.e., union with God. Unlike Sufism, *kejawen* practitioners often disavow the need to observe Islamic law (or any other formal religious teaching/dogma) in order to attain to the Truth, which they maintain is synonymous with the inner state of enlightenment.

As President Wahid—the leader of Indonesia’s *santri* population—once said to me, “The reason Indonesian Islam is so tolerant is not because of *santris*. It’s because of *kejawen*, and the fact that *santris* have always had to live alongside the *kejawen*.”

The 1965/‘66 rural massacres—which specifically targeted *abangan* Javanese—disrupted the historic balance between Islam and *kejawen*. Although few *abangan* were familiar with the details of Marxist-Leninist ideology, or the geopolitical stakes involved in the struggle between capitalism and communism, the PKI had managed to build a mass movement by infiltrating *abangan* villages, and networking *abangan* communities throughout Central and East Java. Thus, destruction of the PKI resulted in the wholesale massacre of thousands of *abangan* communities.

In 1968, President Suharto issued a decree that required all Indonesian citizens to list one of five state-sanctioned religions on their identity cards: Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, Hindu or Buddhist. Because of the *abangan* link to PKI, *kejawen* and other indigenous belief systems (*kepercayaan*) were not an option. Disgusted by the massacres they had just witnessed, millions of *abangan* and *priyayi* (Javanese aristocrats) chose to convert to Christianity, or revert to Hinduism. However, the vast majority of *abangan* Muslims listed Islam on their identity cards. Haunted by the recent holocaust, which had transformed vast areas of Java into a killing field, many felt it wise to inoculate their children against future risk (i.e., massacre) by teaching them to observe the formal practices of Islam, while neglecting their *kejawen* roots.

Suharto, himself a *kejawen* Muslim and nationalist—but above all, a brilliant opportunist—promptly cracked down on Islamist extremism, as he consolidated power in the late ‘60s. Yet when confronted by Abdurrahman Wahid’s, Nurcholish Madjid’s and other Muslim leaders’ mobilization of the Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah and civil society in general to promote democracy in the late ‘80s and ‘90s, Suharto cynically mobilized Islamist ideologues to counter his opponents.

Establishment of the Suharto-backed Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI)—which advocated the social, political and economic dominance of Muslims—and of a “green gener-

als” faction in the military, occurred in tandem with the rise of a Saudi-funded *da'wa*, or proselytism movement on university campuses, whose Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated alumni were quick to establish political parties when Abdurrahman Wahid and his democracy-movement allies finally toppled the Suharto regime in 1998.

The reform era launched by Suharto's downfall brought dramatic changes to Indonesia, such as freedom of the press; the revocation of state-sanctioned discrimination against ethnic minorities, including the Chinese; and the subordination of military to civilian authority, which constitute three of Abdurrahman's Wahid's greatest achievements during his brief tenure as President (1999 – 2001), before remnants of the Suharto regime managed to impeach and remove him from office, on the alleged grounds of “incompetence.” Yet the very freedom that liberated Indonesians from the arbitrary dictates of Suharto's regime also permitted the blossoming of religious extremism, as Wahhabi/Muslim Brotherhood ideology and Arab petrodollars encouraged indigenous extremists to revive the dream of an Islamic state, which Indonesia's founding fathers (including President Wahid's own father and grandfather) had firmly rejected.

Few people, today, recall the fact that Kyai Haji Hasyim Asyari and other traditional religious scholars founded the Nahdlatul Ulama in January of 1926, in direct response to the Wahhabi conquest of Mecca and Medina approximately sixteen months before. After a delegation of Indonesian *ulama* failed to persuade the new Saudi rulers to allow Muslims freedom of worship in the Haramain (the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina), President Wahid's grandfather and other Indonesian Muslims called for a spiritual “awakening of the *ulama*” (literally, *nahdlatul ulama*), to prevent the spread of Wahhabi influence to the East Indies. Within a few years, the organization they established had become the world's largest Muslim organization, whose followers currently number well over 40 million.

The historical antecedents of the NU—which traces its spiritual heritage to the saints who propagated Islam in Java, and one in particular known as Sunan Kalijogo—are also significant. For

the sixteenth century was a time of great upheaval and bloodshed on the Indonesian island of Java, as newly Muslim city-states along its northern coast destroyed local Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms, and extended their power to the island's interior.

Flush with victory, fanatical adherents of the new religion—many of Arab or Chinese descent—spread terror as they sought to eradicate the island's ancient cultural heritage, and obtain a monopoly on economic and political power, under the pretext of serving the One True God. Opposing them were indigenous Javanese—now led by Islamic saints and political figures, such as Sunan Kalijogo—who sought continuity and a common ground between religions, based on the precepts of tolerance and mysticism.

For nearly a hundred years, the opposing forces struggled for the soul of Java—and, ultimately, for that of Islam—in a war whose decisive engagements occurred not only on the field of battle, but in the hearts and minds of countless individuals scattered across its lush, tropical landscape. For in this conflict between orthodox, self-described “jihadists” and Sufi (mystically-inclined) Muslims, the Sufis' profound spiritual ideology—popularized among the masses by storytellers and musicians—played a role even more vital than that of economics or pure military force, in defeating religious extremism in Java.

In the end, a new dynasty arose, founded on the principle of “the throne for the people,” which established religious tolerance as the rule of law, and guaranteed freedom of conscience to all Javanese—two centuries before the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom and Bill of Rights separated church and state in America. The founder of that dynasty was a Javanese Sufi Muslim and disciple of Sunan Kalijogo named Senopati ing Alogo. The basis of Senopati's victory was the popular appeal of his message of freedom, justice and profound inner spirituality, in contrast to the fanaticism and tyranny of his political opponents.

Today, more than four centuries later, Kalijogo's and Senopati's legacy remains, in the form of Java's distinctly tolerant and pluralistic culture. Their ideological descendants continue to resist the tide of religious extremism, now funded by Gulf petrodollars and entrenched local elites, who use radical Islam for personal advance-

ment, or to attack and undermine the process of reform in Indonesian society.

Contemporary leaders—including those who produced *The Illusion of an Islamic State*—are not alone in their efforts, but supported by tens of millions of Indonesians, who wish to preserve their culture’s enlightened embrace of religious tolerance and diversity.

Muslim extremists generally hate and fear Indonesian Islam, just as they despise and denounce other forms of Sufism throughout the Islamic world. The fact that the largest Muslim population in the world (Indonesia’s) does not share the radicals’ intolerant Wahhabi/Salafi views is a constant source of irritation to many Saudis and other Islamists. As a result, Indonesia is in the cross-hairs: the target of a sustained militant Islamist campaign to destroy the most liberal and tolerant form of Islam on earth, by: 1) trying to rewrite and/or reinterpret the Indonesian constitution, to incorporate Islamic law; 2) funding terrorism; 3) instituting piecemeal legislative change; and 4) domination of towns and provinces where the militants can impose their views through local support or by intimidation.

In many ways, Indonesia resembles Britain in World War II. Hitler’s failure to seize the UK cost him that war, as Britain transformed itself into an “unsinkable aircraft carrier,” and the base from which the liberation of Europe was launched. Similarly—given its rich spiritual traditions, and extensive population of *ulama* (Muslim religious scholars) who possess a profound knowledge of both the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of Islam—Indonesia can serve as a launching pad for an intellectual and cultural assault upon extremist ideology throughout the Muslim world.

Muslim extremists are determined to prevent this from happening. For decades, the Wahhabis have been quietly promoting strict Islam in Indonesia: financing educational institutions; providing scholarships to study at Saudi universities; funding radical Islamist groups to wage jihad against Christians, Westerners and even Muslims whose understanding and practice of Islam differs from their own; building mosques and hiring Islamist imams (religious leaders); churning out translations of militant Islamist texts from Arabic to Indonesian and subsidizing their distribution to

millions; and attempting to discredit spiritual and progressive Islamic leaders.

As Paul Marshall of Hudson Institute’s Center for Religious Freedom has written, “The struggle against extremist Islam is not only military and diplomatic, it is also a war of ideas. In this battle there are few more important countries than Indonesia, whose 230 million people make it by far the largest Muslim country and democracy. It is also the home of the largest concentration of Muslims developing an understanding of Islam at home in a democratic and diverse world, and committed to resisting the reactionary versions being exported from Saudi Arabia.”

The enormous popularity, controversy and impact of *The Illusion of an Islamic State*—upon the fourth most populous country in the world, after China, India and the U.S.—suggests its relevance to the world at large, where Muslims and non-Muslims alike continue to grapple with issues concerning the nature of Islam and its proper role in society, as well as the ongoing threat of terrorism.

### **Project Objectives and Overview**

When President Wahid and I conceived and designed the project in the fall of 2005, it was in the context of this global struggle for the “soul of Islam,” and with four distinct objectives in mind, as articulated soon thereafter in LibForAll’s business plan (*cf.* Appendix 3, “Project Description”):

- Help stem the tide of radical Islam in Indonesia and use it as a “launching pad” from which to stimulate opposition to the Wahhabi/Salafi agenda in the rest of the Islamic world;
- Mobilize traditional Muslim leadership and masses, who are not yet radicalized, to consciously oppose the spread of militant Islam;
- Expose and discredit Wahhabi/Salafi proselytism activities, which are a crucial factor in the spread of Islamist extremism worldwide; and
- Establish a proven template for discrediting Wahhabi/Salafi extremism, which can be effectively replicated in other parts of the Muslim world.

In order to document the project's impact—and enable readers to evaluate the extent to which it has, and has not, achieved the goals outlined above—this English language edition includes not only the complete text of the original, translated from Indonesian, but several new appendices that contain over 150 pages of selected media/internet coverage of *The Illusion of an Islamic State* and its impact, which appeared in the weeks, months and years following its launch.

In the interest of providing a brief overview of the book's contents for those who may not have time to read the entire document, the work opens with a prologue by Dr. Syafii Maarif, whose pointed reference to “fundamentalist Christian groups” as the “primary supporters” of “President George W. Bush's... neo-imperialist regime” reflects the diversity of views held by the Muslim leaders who joined in making this project successful.

What united President Wahid, Mustofa Bisri and Syafii Maarif was not their political views (which differ dramatically), but rather, their resolute opposition to Islamist movements and their “totalitarian-centralistic” ideology, based on a harsh, narrow and rigid understanding of Islam. The fact that President Wahid (who deeply appreciated the American founders' ideal of limited government); Kyai Haji Mustofa Bisri (who is apolitical) and Dr. Syafii Maarif (whose views incline towards a European social-democratic model) could set aside these differences so readily, provides an implicit rebuke to those in the West who allow their disdain for political opponents to lead them into a misbegotten alliance with Wahhabi/Muslim Brotherhood activists, whose “civilizational jihad” against the West parallels the infiltration of Indonesian society documented by this book.

President Wahid's introduction to *The Illusion of an Islamic State* constitutes an executive summary of the work as a whole; a theological rejection of Islamist ideology, by one of the world's leading Muslim scholars, who was trained in the classical traditions of Islam; and a ringing call to action, to “[h]alt in its tracks and eliminate—using responsible methods—the vicious cycle of radicalization that spreads extremist ideology and doctrine.” Significantly, President Wahid singles out and condemns the insidious link between

extremist movements and opportunistic politicians and political parties, which have “joined the extremists in driving our nation towards a deep chasm, which threatens destruction and national disintegration... [due to] the fact that radical movements have already succeeded in infiltrating to the heart of government institutions, and are using these to accomplish their goals.”

Chapter I (“A Study of Transnational Islamist Movements and Their Accomplices in Indonesia”) describes the study’s purpose and methodology, and highlights a number of its key findings. These include the fact that—far from leading a socially or economically marginalized existence—the overwhelming majority of the 591 extremists interviewed for the study were “‘white collar’ professionals, and included government employees, university professors, university students, teachers, businessmen, regional legislators (DPRD), college deans and local chairmen of political parties.”

Another prominent characteristic of respondents that should be noted is that of *dual membership*, whereby a respondent maintained simultaneous memberships in both a moderate and an extremist group. Nearly all of the field researchers encountered this *dual membership* phenomenon, which was especially prevalent in the Muhammadiyah community. This demonstrates that extremist groups have already engaged in systematic infiltration of the Muhammadiyah and NU. They are conducting guerilla-style campaigns to transform the Muhammadiyah and NU from moderate Islamic organizations into radical movements, remade in the image of the extremist organizations that are infiltrating them.

Chapter II (“The Origins and Global Spread of Wahhabi/Muslim Brotherhood Ideology”) provides extensive background regarding the ideology and history of these movements in the Middle East, and as “transplanted” to Indonesia over the past 40 years, as part of a “global Wahhabization” campaign heavily funded by Arab petrodollars. Among its notable findings:

The primary factors that induce local extremist leaders and activists to affiliate themselves with one of the above-mentioned transnational Islamist movements are: financial opportunism; a desire for power; social environment and/or social dislocation; and/or a weak understanding of religious teachings, especially in regard to spiritual matters... However, the most important causal factor leading to infatuation with extremist movements is a shallow understanding of religion (i.e., Islamic teachings)...

Anyone who is unfamiliar with the complexity of *ta'wil* (exegesis of religious texts), as widely practiced by Sunni Muslim theologians, may have difficulty confronting the theological claims asserted by extremist groups, which base their interpretations on a literal reading of the texts in question. Even those with a conventional university education can be easily deceived to support the radicals' political agenda, as proven by this study, which found that a disproportionate number of college students and professionals not only sympathize with, but have become active cadres in the PKS and Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia... *Significantly, it is spirituality, more than any other aspect of life, that extremist groups reject.*

Chapter III ("The Ideology and Agenda of Extremist Movements in Indonesia") begins with an essay, written by Nahdlatul Ulama theologian Kyai Haji Hodri Arieu under President Wahid's supervision, which dissects and refutes the extremist understanding of *shari'a*, and instead positions *shari'a* as

a path to attain the level of actually knowing, and fulfilling, God's will (*ridlâ*) through spiritual apprehension... Every attempt to formalize religion [through the imposition of Islamic law, and the establishment of an Islamic state, and/or caliphate] has a pure political objective: viz., to seize power. When extremists claim that their actions

are based on the fact that God—Pure and Exalted is He!—dictates every aspect of human life, this constitutes a blatant theological error that must be refuted and rejected. No specific form of government, nor the formalization of religion, are needed to create a good *muslim*. All that is actually required is self-transcendent spiritual awareness, so that one may constantly feel the presence of God (*ihsân*). Thus, extremist claims that they will create an “Islamic society” by implementing *shari‘a* or establishing an Islamic state or caliphate are nothing more than political maneuvers employed to justify the seizure of power.

Chapter IV (“The Infiltration of Indonesian Islam by Extremist Agents”) examines the success radicals have achieved infiltrating the Muhammadiyah; the Nahdlatul Ulama; the quasi-governmental Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars (MUI); schools and universities; government institutions and businesses. Among its many trenchant observations, the chapter describes how:

The combination of a virulent ideology, backed by enormous financial resources deployed in a systematic manner, has enabled extremist infiltration to become increasingly broad, deep and threatening to the people and nation of Indonesia....

In an official document published by the PKS itself, the Justice and Prosperity Party explicitly talks about spreading its cadres [throughout Indonesian society] through a three-stage process: *first*, the spread of *da‘wa* (proselytism) cadres to organizations/institutions in the various fields of life, with these cadres focusing their efforts on reaching the respective organizations’/institutions’ centers of power and policy; *second*, to ensure these *da‘wa* cadres have a successful career within the target organizations/institutions; and *third*, for these *da‘wa* cadres to play a key role influencing, formulating, interpreting and implementing these organizations’/institutions’ public

policies, to ensure they are consistent with Islamic *manhaj* (methods).

Chapter V (“Conclusion and Recommendations”) summarizes the study’s findings, and provides twelve strategic recommendations to the Indonesian public, to “prevent extremist groups from dominating Indonesia, and guarantee that moderate Muslims once again ‘color’ the life of our people, and government, in such a way as to protect the rights of minorities, and ensure that religion truly functions as a blessing for all sentient beings.”

In his concluding essay, “Never Cease Learning,” Kyai Haji A. Mustofa Bisri writes:

If Muslims were all driven by a passion to learn, and to listen to others, their understanding of Islam would become progressively more wise and complete. As a consequence, they would not seek to reduce Islam to a mere ideology or rule of state. They would realize that Islam is too great to be boxed into a narrow ideology, or confined by the limits of state laws. For that reason, the vital insight contained in this book is the struggle (*jihad*) to constantly inspire every person to learn without ceasing; to oppose ignorance; to inspire all people to open their hearts and minds to humanity; and the struggle (*jihad*) to free every man, woman and child on earth from ideological and dogmatic strictures which have long prevented them from understanding the glorious teachings of religion, and instead confined their comprehension to those elements of the message that they can squeeze into a narrow box of their own or others’ construction.

To repeat: we may overcome our ignorance by seeing, listening and paying close attention; that is, by constantly learning. What halts this process dead in its tracks, and poses a threat to oneself and others, is when people feel that their knowledge is already perfect, and consider themselves to be in possession of the absolute Truth, and

thus no longer in need of learning, or seeking the truth. Perhaps all would agree that ignorance is highly dangerous. Yet not everyone is aware of the hidden dangers of ignorance, which dwell within.

*WaLlāhu A‘lam.* God alone knows the truth of all things.

Appendix 1 (“Policy of the Muhammadiyah Central Board Concerning the Consolidation of Organizations and Charitable Enterprises within Muhammadiyah”) reproduces the text of a Muhammadiyah Central Board Decree banning the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated PKS from the Muhammadiyah, and warning its members to

adopt a critical attitude which recognizes that every political party in this nation—including those that claim to represent ‘*da‘wa*’ or Islamic proselytism activities, such as Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)—are in fact mere political parties. Every political party is focused on the acquisition of political power. For that reason, in dealing with any political party, we must always remain committed to the true Path of the Muhammadiyah and must free ourselves from, and never engage ourselves with, the mission, interests, activities or goals of the above-mentioned political parties.

Appendix 2 (“Documents from the Nahdlatul Ulama Central Board Rejecting Transnational Extremist Movements and Their Ideology”) reproduces the text of an NU *fatwa* regarding whether or not Muslims have a religious duty to establish a caliphate and/or formalize *shari‘a*, or Islamic jurisprudence, as the basis of a nation’s legal system. Readers may be especially interested in the theological argument presented by *ulama* (religious scholars) from the world’s largest Muslim organization, in rejecting extremist demands to establish a caliphate—which has no basis either in the Qur’an, or the life of the Prophet Muhammad—and their citation of over a thou-

sand years of Islamic jurisprudence in support of their position.

As mentioned previously: the remaining appendices in this book were assembled especially for the English language edition of *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, and did not appear in the original Indonesian edition. When read in conjunction with the rest of the book, Appendix 3 (“Project Description from LibForAll Foundation’s 2006 Business Plan”) demonstrates the remarkable extent to which this ambitious project was able to achieve its original objectives. Appendix 4 (“PKS Derailed by Wahhabi Issue”) contains selected news coverage of the sequence of events that led to PKS being denied the Vice Presidential nomination by incumbent Indonesian president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in the 2009 national election. Instead, President Yudhoyono appointed a Javanese nationalist/technocrat, with a profoundly tolerant understanding of Islam, to this vital position. The election of Vice President Boediono—who received his doctorate from the Wharton School of Business at Pennsylvania University—was a profound disappointment to the PKS and its cadres, who continue to roil Indonesia’s parliament in their efforts to undermine this widely-respected economist and former governor of the Bank of Indonesia.

Appendix 5 (“Selected Indonesian Media/Internet Coverage of *The Illusion of an Islamic State* as the Book Went Viral”) provides a sampling of articles about the book that appeared between 16 May and 4 June 2009, and following terrorist attacks on the Marriott and Ritz-Carlton Hotels in Jakarta on 17 July 2009, as well as the book’s continuing impact. Of particular note is the explosive coverage of *The Illusion of an Islamic State* on the internet, where a Google search for the three word string “Ilusi Negara Islam” turned up virtually no results prior to the book’s publication, and soared dramatically—to over 556,000 results (i.e., individual webpages containing these three words, in sequence)—within three weeks of the book’s hard launch in Jakarta.

Also noteworthy was the turbo-charged “second wind” the book received in the wake of the July 2009 terrorist bombings mentioned above. Citing President Wahid and *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, the former head of Indonesia’s national intelligence agency (BIN), A.M. Hendropriyono, immediately declared, in print and

on national television, that “Wahhabi ideology” lay behind the attacks carried out by al-Qaeda’s Indonesian affiliate, Jemaah Islamiyah.

Following on the heels of the book’s enormous success in May/June of 2009, this unleashed a second firestorm of controversy, to the extent that the two most widely-circulated extremist publications in Indonesia (*Sabili* and *Hidayatullah*) each devoted an entire issue to *The Illusion of an Islamic State* and the ensuing “Wahhabi controversy,” as they sought to defend extremist ideology from widespread public revulsion. Indeed, the general reaction was so strong that by May of 2010, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Andrew Higgins was able to report, in the *Washington Post*, that *Sabili* itself had undergone a profound transformation: “*Sibili* [sic], meanwhile, has toned down its anti-Western rhetoric. ‘We now see bigger potential for sales among moderate Muslims,’ said Lufti Tamimi, the magazine’s editor and part-owner. In January [2010], Tamimi ditched *Sibili*’s hard-line editor and commissioned a series of articles denouncing Salafism, a purist strain of Islam that underpins extremist ideology.”

Finally, Appendix 6 (“Excerpts from *Preventing Violent Radicalization and Terrorism: The Case of Indonesia*”) provides further documentary evidence of the project’s success, from a study conducted by the Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies at Sweden’s National Defense College, at the behest of the Swedish international development agency, or SIDA. This report has found a home in government libraries from Brussels (the European Union) to the White House, and has been widely cited by news media and governments alike, including Indonesia’s foreign minister, as evidence of the positive contribution Indonesian civil society can make, to overcoming the ideology that underlies and animates terrorism.

Yet for all these indications of success, it is critical to note that *The Illusion of an Islamic State* represents merely a single battle on a single front in what is actually a global conflict, whose outcome will profoundly influence the future not only of Muslim-majority nations, but the entire world.

Even in Indonesia itself, *The Illusion of an Islamic State* has by no means led to the defeat of Islamic extremism. Stunned by pub-

lic revelations of its Wahhabi/Muslim Brotherhood origins, at the height of the 2009 election season, the PKS “fell victim and was gravely wounded” (*Sabili* magazine), yet managed to cling to its alliance with Yudhoyono’s Democrat Party, and secure four key cabinet positions in his second term administration.

The spotlight which *The Illusion of an Islamic State* focused on the PKS and its systematic infiltration of the Muhammadiyah, did force the PKS to suspend its efforts to gain control of the mass organization, and provided the Muhammadiyah with sufficient breathing room to cleanse its leadership of many Islamist radicals associated with the PKS and Hizb ut-Tahrir. Extremists notably failed to achieve their goal of dominating the Muhammadiyah’s 2010 Congress, and LibForAll associates within the Muhammadiyah report that the organization is now systematically vetting potential leaders to weed out those who adhere to extremist ideology.

Yet PKS efforts to penetrate the Nahdlatul Ulama, and its traditional redoubts in rural communities, is proceeding apace. While rebranding itself as an “open and inclusive” political party and adopting a new slogan transparently inspired by LibForAll Foundation, “*PKS untuk semua*” (“PKS for All”), the party continues to infiltrate Indonesian society, and prepare for the 2014 elections.

At the Nahdlatul Ulama’s 2010 Congress, LibForAll senior advisor Kyai Haji A. Mustofa Bisri was appointed Deputy Chairman (and functional day-to-day head) of the NU’s Supreme Council. In that position, he is seeking to “mobilize the NU to help stop extremist infiltration of government, the MUI and other strategic fields; help develop Indonesia into a more just and prosperous nation; and position the NU to assume the lead in efforts to free the world from the crisis of misunderstanding about Islam, and thus rescue humanity from the dangers of religious extremism” (Chapter V, Strategic Recommendation # 5). Yet he and his allies face an enormous uphill battle. As the largest single voting bloc in Indonesia, the NU must grapple with systematic infiltration not only by extremist movements, but also by opportunistic political parties and politicians that seek to prevent the NU from uniting to speak with a single voice, and thereby hold the government accountable for its policies.

To cite just one example: in February of 2011, I was visiting

Kyai Haji Mustofa Bisri in his home in Rembang, Central Java, when two gentlemen from an Islamic institution arrived to seek his advice, in conjunction with a project funded by a major government ministry in Jakarta.

The head of the ministry is affiliated with an Islamist political party that is involved in the extremists' prolonged and intense campaign to ban the Ahmadiyah sect, which mainstream Muslims often regard as heretical. Following the death of President Wahid—who tirelessly defended the Ahmadiyah for decades, along with Christians, Confucians, Bahais and other religious and ethnic minorities—extremist attempts to ban the Ahmadiyah appear to be on the verge of success in Indonesia.

Asked about their funding, the visitors explained, with embarrassment, that the ministry in question had provided 3.5 billion rupiah (close to US\$400,000), of which 50% had to be disbursed, off the top, to local cadres affiliated with the Minister's political party. Sources within the Nahdlatul Ulama indicate that these cadres, in turn, are systematically using the funds generated by this and other Ministry grants to mobilize support within the NU, and obstruct its leadership from coalescing around the vision of pluralism, tolerance and moral responsibility espoused by Kyai Haji Mustofa Bisri and his allies.

The fact that this one grant, to a single institution, provided extremists with nearly half the funds LibForAll spent on the entire project described in this book, provides some idea of the enormous scale of funding that is available to political opportunists and their extremist allies. As President Wahid warned in his article “Right Islam vs. Wrong Islam,” which the *Wall Street Journal* published in December of 2005: “Islamic fundamentalism has become a well-financed, multi-faceted global movement that operates like a juggernaut in much of the developing world, and even among immigrant Muslim communities in the West.”

With an unflinching instinct for the critical role played by finance in any organized movement, extremists not only seek to maximize the resources available to themselves, but also to starve their opponents of funding. A well-coordinated media campaign conducted by extremists—which portrayed the Asia Foundation and

Ford Foundation as Zionist/CIA agents—was apparently enough to frighten both foundations, and the U.S. embassy/USAID in Jakarta, away from funding so-called “liberal” Muslims, as reported by Andrew Higgins in another front-page story in the *Washington Post*, “As Indonesia Debates Islam’s Role, U.S. Stays Out” (28 October 2009).

Just before *The Illusion of an Islamic State*’s hard launch in May of 2009, Indonesia’s largest print media conglomerate, which owns the nation’s largest newspaper and a chain of approximately 300 bookstores, purchased every copy of the book’s first print run, other than a few hundred required for distribution at the launch itself. The group’s head of retail asked for an immediate reprint, and estimated that their bookstores would sell over 100,000 copies in the weeks ahead. Less than 24 hours later, this same man called me personally to apologize, and asked to return the books from his company’s warehouse, where they had been delivered. His frank explanation: his office had already received credible threats that bookstores would be burned down, if they stocked *The Illusion of an Islamic State*.

Prior to these developments, LibForAll had prepared an electronic version of the book, and set up a website ([www.bhinekatunggalika.org](http://www.bhinekatunggalika.org)) where it could be downloaded for free. In the weeks following the book’s hard launch, nearly 45,000 copies were indeed downloaded from this site, with hundreds of thousands of additional copies of *The Illusion of an Islamic State* apparently downloaded from other websites that posted the pdf file online, including 12 sites advertising such downloads (e.g., “Download Gratis Buku Illusi Negara Islam”) whose rank, on Google, consistently exceeded our own.

Ironically, when some of the largest media outlets in Indonesia reported that the book’s unavailability in stores was due to the threat of terrorism, extremist publications responded that this was merely a clever pretext, to “slander Islam” and justify LibForAll giving away hundreds of thousands of copies for free on the internet.

Another issue arose when three members of the “Yogya Team” that conducted field research for this project (out of 27), and one of their six supervisors, held a press conference at the height of

the controversy surrounding the book. At this press conference, they protested the inclusion of their names in the book (in a table that specifically identified, by name, those who conducted the field research in each of 24 districts in Indonesia). The gentlemen also stated that the book included material beyond the scope of their own research/findings, and objected to not having been consulted prior to its publication.

There was some element of truth to these complaints. Inclusion of the field researchers' names in the first Indonesian edition of the book apparently exposed at least one of the protestors to death threats from members of the extremist group he had interviewed. And as explained in Chapter I, the research contained in this book was conducted by two separate teams, managed by a "Jakarta Team" operating under the direct supervision and authority of President Wahid. This Jakarta Team (whose key members are identified in the English edition of this book as "Principal Authors/Editorial Team") exercised provisional control over the book's contents, subject to President Wahid's review and approval as chief editor.

The Yogya Team's field research, including its interviews with 591 Muslim extremists, was only one of three research components contained within the book. And while the Jakarta Team extensively reviewed and revised the final product in consultation with the chairman of the Yogya Team (Dr. Abdul Munir Mulkhan) and other prominent Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama figures, individual researchers and supervisors from the Yogya Team were not involved in reviewing the final product, other than one supervisor (Dr. Ratno Lukito) who belonged to both the Jakarta and Yogya Teams, and played a key role in integrating their respective findings.

As it turned out, this protest by four ideological allies cast the only real (though minor) shadow on the book, whose heavily-documented findings could not be refuted by the extremists themselves, however much they tried to obfuscate the matter. *The Illusion of an Islamic State* nailed its case shut by reprinting an official decree of the Muhammadiyah Central Board—banning the PKS from its organization—as Appendix 1; and also reprinting fifty-five pages of

official NU documents that warned, in no uncertain terms, about the threat posed by transnational Islamist movements and their ideology to Indonesia, and Islam (“Appendix 2”).

Rather than refute the book’s theological arguments and/or its academic findings, the extremists—unaccustomed to being on the defensive—were reduced to expedients such as denying their ties to Wahhabism (*cf.* Appendix 4, “PKS Derailed by Wahhabi Issue”) or hurling baseless and humorous accusations such as, “My guess is that funding for the book’s research came from Bush. It represents Bush’s final project, before his fall from power” (PKS Vice Secretary Fahri Hamzah, quoted by *inilah.com*, in the wake of the book’s “soft launch” on 2 April 2009).

In fact, the money for this project (except for the book’s printing and subsequent hard launch) was provided by a single high net worth donor from the U.S., who has no affiliation with any government or government agency. The printing and launch itself was financed by a grant from the Security Policy Department of Sweden’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as part of a project entitled “The Smiling Face of Islam,” whose goal was to facilitate “the spread of pluralistic and tolerant ideas between Indonesia and other parts of the Islamic world.”

To cite one more example of the extremists’ response (many more of which may be read in Appendix 5): shortly after the July 2009 terrorist bombings in Jakarta—and the ensuing “anti-Wahhabi” firestorm that swept through Indonesia’s mainstream media, and much of the general public—*Sabili* magazine sought to deflect criticism of Wahhabi ideology. It did so by claiming that “foreign intelligence agencies” and other “enemies of Islam” are “deliberating maintaining terrorist groups,” so that “whenever the plans of those who wish to destroy Muslims and Indonesia are ripe, they simply click their fingers and launch a deadly terrorist strike,” in conjunction with the “ideological warfare” represented by “the book *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, which attacks political Islam... [and] is more powerful, and dangerous, than bombs.” (*Sabili*, 12 August 2009).

Far more serious than the reactive and generally delusional response of extremists, was President Wahid’s own ill health during and after the book’s launch. On the day of the launch itself, the

major figures associated with *The Illusion of an Islamic State* gathered in Jakarta to establish a movement (Gerakan Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, or the Oneness Amid Diversity Movement) to systematically implement the book's strategic recommendations, contained in Chapter 5 ("Summary and Recommendations").

When the meeting ended and everyone else had left the boardroom to rest prior to the launch that evening, I remained behind with President Wahid, and sat alone with him for about 45 minutes, in complete silence. Finally, he said, "You know, Holland, my entire body is wracked with pain." When I expressed sympathy for his condition, he replied, "Every time I undertake something really important, I feel pain throughout my body." We were silent again for a few moments, and he added, "I know from the tremendous pain I feel right now, that what we're doing today will be enormously successful." Then President Wahid called his assistant Sulaiman, who was waiting outside with several of his bodyguards, to take him upstairs in his wheelchair, to rest prior to the launch.

Perhaps the single greatest disappointment, amid the project's otherwise remarkable success, was LibForAll's (i.e., my) failure to immediately organize and set in motion the widespread civil society movement we discussed that day in Jakarta. Having exhausted LibForAll's financial resources in bringing the book to market, I returned to the U.S. immediately after the launch, to engage in fundraising. And while we did secure the resources necessary to keep LibForAll afloat, and drive forward another, potentially far more significant program (LibForAll's International Institute of Qur'anic Studies), we were unable to simultaneously exploit the unique opportunity at hand. Severe time, personnel and monetary constraints prevented us from following up on the success of *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, to organize the millions of Indonesians who spontaneously voiced agreement with its denunciation of religious extremism, into a systematic movement for social and political change (i.e., the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Movement).

As the Greek historian Polybius wrote in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, "Those who have won victories are far more numerous than those who have used them to their advantage." The British military historian B.H. Lidell Hart made a similar point, when he observed

about the Roman general and consul, Scipio Africanus (who defeated Hannibal and ended the Carthaginian threat to Rome): “Masterly as were his battle tactics, still more remarkable perhaps were the decisiveness and rapidity of their exploitation, which find no parallel in military history until Napoleon came to develop the pursuit as the vital complement of battle and one of the supreme tests of generalship.”

Failure to exploit strategic advantage, to systematically isolate and discredit Islamist extremists and sever their relationship with opportunistic political allies, allows the extremists precious time to recuperate and regain their momentum, as can be clearly seen in Indonesia today. To use a military analogy: among the many valuable lessons that can be derived from this “path-breaking” project—for anyone who seeks to discredit Islamist ideology—is the necessity of having sufficient “troops” in reserve (i.e., trained personnel and resources) to ensure the determined pursuit of a defeated and demoralized opponent, in order to secure lasting victory.

A single battle rarely determines the outcome of any widespread conflict, and history is replete with generals who “won a major battle, but lost the war.”

This, in turn, sheds light on the enormous confusion that has prevailed in the West ever since 9/11, regarding how best to confront (or *not* confront) Islamist extremism. As President Wahid warned in his 2005 article “Right Islam vs. Wrong Islam”:

All too many Muslims fail to grasp Islam, which teaches one to be lenient towards others and to understand their value systems, knowing that these are tolerated by Islam as a religion. The essence of Islam is encapsulated in the words of the Quran, “For you, your religion; for me, my religion.” That is the essence of tolerance. Religious fanatics—either purposely or out of ignorance—pervert Islam into a dogma of intolerance, hatred and bloodshed. They justify their brutality with slogans such as “Islam is above everything else.” They seek to intimidate and subdue anyone who does not share their extremist views, regardless of nationality or religion. While a few are quick

to shed blood themselves, countless millions of others sympathize with their violent actions, or join in the complicity of silence.

This crisis of misunderstanding—of Islam by Muslims themselves—is compounded by the failure of governments, people of other faiths, and the majority of well-intentioned Muslims to resist, isolate and discredit this dangerous ideology. The crisis thus afflicts Muslims and non-Muslims alike, with tragic consequences. Failure to understand the true nature of Islam permits the continued radicalization of Muslims world-wide, while blinding the rest of humanity to a solution which hides in plain sight.

The most effective way to overcome Islamist extremism is to explain what Islam truly is to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Without that explanation, people will tend to accept the unrefuted extremist view—further radicalizing Muslims, and turning the rest of the world against Islam itself.

Accomplishing this task will be neither quick nor easy. In recent decades, Wahhabi/Salafi ideology has made substantial inroads throughout the Muslim world. Islamic fundamentalism has become a well-financed, multifaceted global movement that operates like a juggernaut in much of the developing world, and even among immigrant Muslim communities in the West. To neutralize the virulent ideology that underlies fundamentalist terrorism and threatens the very foundations of modern civilization, we must identify its advocates, understand their goals and strategies, evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, and effectively counter their every move. What we are talking about is nothing less than a global struggle for the soul of Islam....

Only by recognizing the problem, putting an end to the bickering within and between nation-states, and adopting a coherent long-term plan (executed with international leadership and commitment) can we begin to apply the brakes to the rampant spread of extremist ideas and hope to resolve the world's crisis of misunderstanding before the global economy and modern civilization itself begin to crumble in the face of truly devastating attacks.

Muslims themselves can and must propagate an understanding of the “right” Islam, and thereby discredit extremist ideology. Yet to accomplish this task requires the understanding and support of like-minded individuals, organizations and governments throughout the world. Our goal must be to illuminate the hearts and minds of humanity, and offer a compelling alternate vision of Islam, one that banishes the fanatical ideology of hatred to the darkness from which it emerged.

Having lived three years in Iran as a child (from 1965 - '68); traveled extensively in Afghanistan and Pakistan prior to the Soviet invasion; and spent much of the past 12 years in Java, I have enjoyed the good fortune of having been surrounded, for much of my life, by the “right” Islam President Wahid described so well in his many writings, and through the example of his life.

One day, while reviewing the manuscript of this book shortly before its publication, President Wahid said, “You know, Holland, I often tell Muslims: ‘It’s impossible to understand Islam, if you don’t understand other religions.’” We both knew that he was not referring to dogma, but rather, the spiritual essence of religion, which is to reunite with the Source—the Alpha and Omega of all existence.

Or as a Christian friend said to me, after meeting President Wahid when he visited the U.S. in May of 2008, to accept the Simon Wiesenthal Center’s Medal of Valor for his role in the Bali Holocaust conference, at which he had publicly branded Mahmud Ahmadinejad a liar: “Holland, I keep asking myself: how do these

Muslim leaders you introduce me to, know what I know?”

“What do you mean?” I asked, hoping that she would be more explicit, although I understood her question full well.

“It’s obvious that President Wahid is filled with the Holy Spirit.”

“How do you explain that?” I asked.

“Well,” my Pentecostal friend replied, “I wouldn’t be comfortable saying this to anyone at church... but the only explanation that makes sense to me, is that Jesus is far, far greater than I ever realized.”

I mention these conversations for a specific reason. More than seven years after President Wahid and I established LibForAll, it has become painfully obvious that one of the primary challenges faced by the West, in dealing with Islamist extremism, is a profound lack of understanding about Islam and the actual dynamics of the Muslim world. By and large, Westerners and Muslims live in “parallel universes,” which few can navigate at ease. Those who can readily traverse this enormous gap are often Wahhabi/Muslim Brotherhood agents, who seek to achieve an end state completely inimical not only to the West, but also the spiritual traditions of Islam itself.

Westerners who study the ideology of al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood have developed an increasingly acute, and accurate, awareness of its key elements. Yet for a variety of reasons, this very insight often leads Westerners (whether Christian, Jewish or atheist) to conflate said ideology with Islam itself, as if the religion were monolithic (with only one “true” expression), and to overlook those elements within Islam and the Muslim world which—if effectively mobilized—are capable of dismantling extremist movements and their underlying ideology.

In August of 2009, I visited President Wahid at his home in Cijangur, a suburb of Jakarta, to wish him a happy birthday. As I entered the spacious grounds of his home, which is flanked by a mosque and *pesantren* (*madrassa*), I heard the beautiful yet mournful sound of his students reciting Surah Yasin from the Qur’an, which Muslims often read in supplication to God, including on behalf of one who is near death. In doing so, they ask God to restore

the person to health, or accept his or her soul in paradise. At that moment, in hundreds if not thousands of mosques and *pesantren* throughout Indonesia, Muslims were gathered to recite the Surah Yasin for President Wahid, aware of his grave illness.

I entered his home to find the furniture in the reception room cleared away, and my friend lying on the floor, covered by a loose sarong and surrounded by visitors and family. His adjutants asked me to come close, and President Wahid whispered in my ear, in a barely audible voice, “You know, Holland. It’s very important if you can describe how America can help Islam.” Even on the threshold of death, his heart and mind were filled with compassion for humanity.

I thought deeply about his statement for the next two weeks, and when President Wahid experienced a remarkable recovery—which lasted for some time prior to his death on 30 December 2009—we discussed a new project at length, based on the idea he whispered to me that day. We decided to write a new book called *How the West Can Help Islam*, and outlined its key elements together. Given that many Westerners, to the extent they even think about Islam, are primarily concerned with defending themselves from it, President Wahid’s concept was both counter-intuitive and profoundly insightful.

Never, for an instant, did President Wahid “buy” the notion—widely propagated by Islamists, and many in the West—that European or American support for Muslim moderates, in their struggle with Islamist extremism, will somehow discredit the former. He considered LibForAll’s track record of success—including with *The Illusion of an Islamic State*—to be proof positive thereof. When asked whether the name LibForAll should appear on the cover of the original Indonesian edition of this book, he replied, “No. But I’ll describe what LibForAll is in the opening paragraph of my introduction, so that when people see the name, they’ll also realize who’s involved with the organization, and what our purpose is.”

Confident of his own “Islamicity,” and revered as a saint by tens of millions, from the East Indies archipelago to the Middle East, President Wahid knew that moderate/spiritual Muslims alone (and, by the same token, Westerners acting alone) can no

more derail the Islamist juggernaut than the Russians, Chinese or even Americans could have defeated the combined forces of Nazism and Japanese militarism in World War II, acting alone and without allies. Thus, although this book describes in great detail how to “fight fire with water”—i.e., how to marginalize and discredit Islamist ideology by drawing on universal spiritual principles deeply rooted within Islam itself—it does not ignore the practical dimensions of this challenge.

Nor should readers fall into the trap of assuming that Muslims who embrace the spiritual principles articulated in this book are pacifists or religious quietists, unable to address the threat of violence, or engage effectively with the world at large. While non-violent extremists (who seek to use the repressive apparatus of the state to impose their views on others) felt the intense heat of public opprobrium generated by this book, their ideological brethren from Jemaah Islamiyah and other terrorist groups were being hunted night and day, with dozens captured or killed by Indonesia’s elite counter-terrorist task force, Detachment 88. In the fall of 2009, former Muhammadiyah chairman and LibForAll advisor Dr. Syafii Maarif—who was also advising Indonesia’s security officials, in the wake of the July attacks—informed me that the top leadership of Indonesia’s police and military hierarchy viewed *The Illusion of an Islamic State* as an invaluable tool for understanding, and countering, terrorists and the ideology they share with a far broader spectrum of society, on which they rely for recruitment and support.

Upon hearing of the book’s dramatic impact in Indonesia, a former chairman of Pakistan’s armed forces—who is part of LibForAll’s counter-extremist *rahmatan lil-‘ālamīn* network—dispatched a similar message to us: “This is a great achievement, and I wish you all success as you move on in this direction.”

Since the attacks of 9/11, America and the West have played into al-Qaeda’s hands, by focusing the overwhelming preponderance of their energy on “fighting fire with fire,” while merely talking about, pretending to address or actively ignoring the hate-filled supremacist ideology that underlies and animates Islamist terrorism. All too often, Western governments and civil society institutions have been infiltrated by, or aligned themselves with, the Wah-

habi/Muslim Brotherhood lobby, which seeks to prevent the West from establishing an alliance with truly moderate and progressive Muslim leaders, who espouse a loving, merciful and compassionate vision of Islam.

Soon after Indonesia's presidential election in July of 2009, a key figure from the *istana*, or presidential palace, asked to meet with me to discuss *The Illusion of an Islamic State*. Over dinner she remarked, "*Para pejabat menganggap LibForAll sebagai sebuah yayasan yang luar biasa kuat dan sakti.*" ("Many government officials regard LibForAll as a remarkably powerful foundation, possessed of sacred, and supernatural, abilities"—like those of a magical *keris*, or dagger, that can fly through the night and strike its opponents to the quick.)

To use language more familiar to those living in the West, what she was saying was simple yet profound: LibForAll's success is directly attributable to the selfless Muslim leaders who form the backbone of its global network, and their heart-felt desire to work in a spirit of mutual cooperation and respect with others—whether Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim or atheist—who share a common love for humanity, and a desire to see Islamic teachings reconciled with the modern world of freedom, democracy and human rights. Current upheavals in the Middle East—and the escalating controversy about Islam and Islamophobia roiling North America and Europe—demonstrate the urgent need for such a process to occur.

Those who are uncomfortable with talk about God, or with any conception of God that differs from their own, may find *The Illusion of an Islamic State* a challenge to their settled notions of reality. Yet those who seriously read and reflect upon the message of this book may find themselves rewarded with the unique ability to cross over the vast gulf that separates Islam and the West, and make common cause with what President Wahid liked to call the vast, silent majority of Muslims, so that together we may strive "to illuminate the hearts and minds of humanity... and banish the fanatical ideology of hatred to the darkness from which it emerged."

Jakarta, 16 March 2011

## *Prologue*

### THE FUTURE OF ISLAM IN INDONESIA

*By Ahmad Syafii Maarif*

From a purely numerical perspective, there is no need to fear about the future of Islam in Indonesia. The 2000 census recorded that 88.22% of Indonesia's inhabitants are Muslim, which is very high. Others need not worry about this statistic, either, because the two great pillars of the Muslim community, the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, have from the outset worked hard to develop an Islam that is warm and friendly towards all, even towards those with no religious faith, as long as everyone respects each others' differences of opinion. However, disaster may occur when a religion's adherents lose the ability to reason, and begin to condemn everyone who does not agree with their monolithic line of thought. It's not difficult to find examples of such behavior, stemming from a monopolization of truth, in various civilizations throughout history. Rivers of blood have flowed as a result of one group condemning another, because of religious or ideological differences.

Nor is it difficult to trace, within the history of Islam, groups that have proclaimed themselves to be the most pure and genuine in their faith. To the extent that individuals or groups feel this way without condemning others, it may not be too dangerous. Yet danger will certainly arise the moment those who claim to speak in the name of God condemn, and then seek to eliminate, beliefs different from their own. Insofar as I have read and understood the Qur'an, it is far more tolerant, for the most part, than that distinct minority of Muslims who refuse to accept or tolerate differences.

The phenomenon of religious intolerance may be encountered in many nations—those that are economically developed and those that are not—and not simply in the Muslim world. Fundamentalist movements, of whatever religion, often fall into this camp. For example, in America during the era of President George W. Bush, fundamentalist Christian groups became the primary supporters of his neo-imperialist regime. In recent decades, fundamentalist tendencies have been highly visible in many parts of the Muslim world. The most radical of these groups easily fall into the trap of terrorism.

Various theories have been advanced to explain the rise of fundamentalism in the Islamic world. The one most often cited is the Muslim community's failure to successfully confront the tide of modernity, which many claim is "boxing Islam into a corner." Because they are unable to deal with the swift tide of modernity, fundamentalist groups seek a religious pretext to comfort themselves with the dream of [recapturing] a world they imagine to have been pure and uncontaminated [i.e., that of early Islam].

To the extent this is limited to providing them with comfort or solace, it may not give rise to many problems. But when fundamentalists seek to employ the repressive apparatus of government to oppose modernity in various ways, it's impossible to avoid conflict with other Muslim groups that do not agree with their methods or beliefs. This does not mean that Muslims who don't agree with the fundamentalists' approach are all fully at ease with modernity. Many who oppose fundamentalist groups are no less critical of modern trends, but the methods they use in confronting the problems posed by modernity are guided by the power of reason and calm deliberation, although of course they do not always succeed in their efforts.

Another theory holds that the rapid growth of fundamentalist groups in many Muslim countries is driven primarily by a feeling of loyalty towards their suffering brothers in Palestine, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Iraq. In fact, this feeling of solidarity is shared by Muslims throughout the world. But what differentiates fundamentalists from others is that the majority of Muslims studiously avoid violence as much as possible and continue to display the banner

of peace, even when the suffering of those in conflict regions is more than one can bear. When linked to conditions in Indonesia, which are relatively peaceful and secure, the emergence of fundamentalist forces that run the gamut from mild to the most extreme (terrorism), appears completely irrational. Take, for example, the murderous practice of suicide bombing (as in the case of the Bali, Marriott and other attacks), which is absolutely incomprehensible. Indonesia is not Palestine, Kashmir, Afghanistan or Iraq. So why is this barbaric practice occurring here?

A third theory, especially for Indonesia, holds that fundamentalism stems from our nation's failure to realize the goals of independence in the form of social justice and prosperity for all people. The corruption that is so deeply ingrained in our society is proof of this failure. Everyone acknowledges this bitter reality. But because fundamentalist groups have an extremely weak grasp of Indonesia's sociological makeup, which is truly complex, they seek short-cuts on the path to achieving justice: namely, to implement Islamic law through the exercise of political power. If this is not yet possible to do on a national level, then they attempt to institute *shari'a* through regional regulations. Fundamentalists imagine that through this implementation of *shari'a*, God will bless Indonesia. The strange thing is, most fundamentalist groups are anti-democratic, and yet they manipulate democratic state institutions in order to achieve their political goals. This fact alone demonstrates one ugly reality: for Islamic fundamentalists, a conflict between theory and practice does not pose any moral dilemma. In other words, they are dishonest in the practice of politics. In theory, democracy is *haram*, or forbidden; yet in practice, it is useful and exploited as a means to achieve extremist goals.

Finally, I must acknowledge that I share the fundamentalists' concern regarding the condition of Indonesia, which is far from just. Yet the methods they employ cannot possibly bring this nation closer to the noble goals of independence. Rather, they will strangle these aspirations on the very path to realization. The problems of Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population on earth, cannot be solved by simplistic minds that choose to adopt shortcuts, often in the form of compulsion or violence. I am fully aware that

Indonesia's current form of democracy is not yet healthy, and if not soon improved, may quickly give rise to disaster. But for the long term there is no other way to achieve the goals of independence, except through a democratic system that is strong and healthy, and a moderate and inclusive Islam which will lead Indonesia into the future.

Yogyakarta, 18 February 2009

*Editor's Introduction*

THE ENEMY WITHIN  
*By Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid*

The book you are reading is the result of over two years' research conducted by LibForAll Foundation, a non-governmental organization inspired by Indonesia's rich traditions and culture, and whose mission is to encourage the growth of peaceful, free and tolerant societies throughout the world. I established LibForAll Foundation in 2003 with American businessman and author C. Holland Taylor, and serve as a member of its board of directors and as an advisor, along with Kyai Haji A. Mustofa Bisri, Prof. Dr. Ahmad Syafii Maarif, Prof. Dr. M. Amin Abdullah, Prof. Dr. Azyumardi Azra, Prof. Dr. Nasr Hamid Abu-Zayd, Shaykh Musa Admani, Prof. Dr. Abdul Munir Mulkhan, Dr. Sukardi Rinakit, and Father Franz Magnis-Suseno, S.J. In addition, the Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar University in Cairo—Sayyid Muhammad Tantawi—expressed his desire to advise LibForAll Foundation in its efforts to present Islam as a blessing for all creation (*rahmatan lil'alamîn*), during the visit of LibForAll CEO C. Holland Taylor to Egypt in May of 2008. And in reality, those whose hearts are filled with sincerity and goodwill, and who strongly embrace efforts to achieve peace, freedom and tolerance, are, in a cultural sense, members of LibForAll Foundation's global family.

To accomplish its mission, LibForAll Foundation employs a spiritual approach, to raise individual and social consciousness and thereby transform individuals and society for the better. This approach is predicated upon the fact that the innate struggle between the spiritual (higher) and animalistic (base) natures of humanity ex-

erts a major impact upon the external world. The tension between spiritual and carnal impulses frequently ignites conflict, within both individuals and society at large. In this context, it is vital that we contemplate what the noble Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, told his companions following their triumph in the battle of Badr: “*Raja‘nâ min jihâd al-ashghar ilâ jihâd al-akbar*” (“We have returned from the lesser *jihad* to the greater”).<sup>1</sup> Hearing his words, the companions were surprised. They asked, “What kind of war (*qitâl*) could possibly be greater than the one we just fought, against overwhelming odds?” When the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, replied, “the war

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1. This hadith (saying of the Prophet Muhammad) is extremely popular among traditional *ulama* (religious scholars) and Sufis, although various parties regard it as weak (*dlâ‘if*), and members of the Wahhabi sect reject it altogether. In terms of its line of transmission (*riwâyah*), this hadith is indeed regarded as weak. But in terms of its meaning and content (*dirâyah*), it is consistent with Islam’s highest teachings regarding *jihad*. This is clear from other hadith which differ slightly in terms of redaction, but are consistent with the above-quoted hadith’s message in terms of meaning (*ma‘nâwî*), such as those conveyed by Ahmad ibn Hanbal in hadith numbers 24678, 24692 and 24465, “*Al-Mujâhid man jâhada nafsahu li-Llâh atau fi Allâh ‘azz wa jall*” (“A *mujahid* (holy warrior) is one who wages *jihad* against himself for the sake of Allah,” or, in a different version, “in (the path which leads to) God the Most Noble and Great”) [read in: Abu ‘Abdillah Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal, *Masnad Ahmad*, (Cairo: Mauqi‘ Wizârat al-Auqâf al-Mishriyyah, undated)]. One may also consult a hadith found in *Fath al-Qadîr* by al-Syaukânî, “*Al-Mujâhid man jâhada nafsah fi thâ‘at Allâh*” (A *mujahid* is one who wages *jihad* against himself, in order to be obedient to God), conveyed by Ibn Jarîr and confirmed by al-Hakim as being valid; conveyed also by Ibn Mardawaih from ‘Aisyah [al-Syukânî, *Fath al-Qadîr* (Cairo: Mauqi‘ al-Tafâsir, undated), Vol. 5, p. 142]. An important point to stress in this context is that *jihad* greatly emphasizes efforts to control and subdue one’s own carnal nature, in the form of ego and its attendant lusts. Al-Razy, for example, even states that *jihad* in the context of war (*qitâl*) must first and foremost be preceded by victory over oneself, so as not to engage in the actions of a hypocrite, or one who seeks praise, glory, profit or other benefits for himself. All must be conducted in a completely selfless manner, after having tamed oneself, so that one’s actions are not dictated by egotism or personal desire (read in: Fakhruddin al-Râzî, *Mafâtih al-Ghaib* (Cairo: Mauqi‘ al-Tafâsir, undated), vol. 7, p. 474). In summary, the hadith *Raja‘na min jihâd al-ashghar ilâ jihâd al-akbar* (“We have returned from the lesser to the greater *jihad*”) is accepted by traditional *ulama* and Sufis because, in terms of meaning and content, it is consistent with other hadith which are fully valid in terms of their transmission.

against one's own carnal nature," his companions fell silent, recognizing how difficult it is to overcome this enemy within. Besides being difficult to identify, the struggle against internal enemies requires tenacity and emotional steadfastness, since base and carnal impulses constitute an inseparable part of every human being.

Base instincts are a powerful force which always harbor a destructive potential, rendering individuals discontented and incapable of experiencing peace. Islamic scholars often compare this lust (for power, wealth, sexual satisfaction, etc.) to a wild beast. Whoever succeeds in taming his carnal nature achieves inner peace, and can employ his vital energies to achieve far-reaching, lofty and noble goals. On the other hand, whoever is still dominated by egotism and lust is in a state of constant, restless anxiety/desire, and is a danger to himself and others.

From this perspective, there are two categories of human beings: *First*, those who have tamed their carnal nature, and act in a manner beneficial to others and to society at large. These calm and peaceful souls (*al-nafs al-muthmainnah*) are the embodiment of spirituality: the true vice-regents of God on earth (i.e., caliphs). Within the context of the ancient *Mahabharata* epic, these are the Pandavas. *Second*, those who are dominated by egotism and various forms of lust, and are thus a source of constant dissension, creating problems for others and society at large. These discontented souls (*al-nafs al-lawwamah*) give rise to countless social upheavals and strife, and represent the embodiment of selfish lust. They are the true polytheists.<sup>2</sup> Within the context of the *Mahabharata*, they

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2. "Experts on Qur'anic exegesis say that a polytheist is one who performs ritual worship, or gives charity, for reasons other than devotion to God. Thus the verse, '*Wa lam yusyrik bi 'ibadati Rabbihi ahada*' ('and does not associate anything whatsoever in worship of his God'). For example, if one says that he is fighting for Islam, but in reality, his motivation is selfish and egotistical, then he has already associated (himself) with God." "Don't be trapped by worldly temptations, or the sparkle of material existence; for example, the flattery of women. Don't be tempted by status or power and become arrogant, forgetting yourself.... Don't allow yourself to be entrapped by snares that give the appearance of devotion to God, humanity or jihad ("strenuous effort on the Divine path"), when in reality they're not. These are snares that truly mire us (in forgetfulness of God) and doom us (to separation from God). For example, arrogance may emerge after one has already become a (religious) leader, giving countless sermons to

are the Kuravas.<sup>3</sup> These two types of people are present, in varying degrees, in our every day lives and at every social and economic level of society—local, national, and international; and in the realms of education, religion, business and politics.

In reality, this conflict between tranquil and discontented souls informs and colors the history of every corner of the earth, including the struggle between the Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, and the infidels/polytheists in the Hijaz. Yet one thing unique about Nusantara (the East Indies) is that every time this epic struggle has repeated itself, since the days of our ancient ancestors, the spiritual teachings and sublime values of tranquil souls have emerged triumphant in our beloved archipelago. For example, Mpu Tantular's principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* ("Oneness Amid Diversity")<sup>4</sup> has inspired the rulers of these

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wide applause, and with people everywhere respecting you. The snares of ego and self-importance mire us (in forgetfulness of God), and those who fall prey to this are called, in Arabic, hidden polytheists." "The antidote to polytheism is self-transcendence. A polytheist is one who is not self-transcendent; who is motivated by ego and self-interest, or the interests of his group, rather than engaging in actions moment by moment (guided by and) purely for the sake of the Divine." (In sequence, statements by Prof. Dr. Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Prof. Dr. Kyai Haji Said Aqil Siraj, and Kyai Haji Masdar F. Mas'udi in: *Ocean of Revelations: Understanding Islam as a Blessing for All Creation*, Episode 4: "People of Faith," Program Supervisor: Kyai Haji Mustofa Bisri, ©LibForAll Foundation 2009).

3. [Translator's note: As in India, the *Mahabarata* and *Ramayana* represent two of the great national epics of Java, and are deeply embedded in Javanese and Indonesian awareness. The *Mahabarata* tells of the struggle between two sets of cousins, the Pandavas and Kuravas, who represent the forces of *dharma* (virtue or right action, which arises from spiritual awareness) and *adharma* (lack of virtue or sinful action, which arises from egotism and lust).]

4. [Translator's note: Indonesia's state motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, literally means, "(Although) different, yet simultaneously One." Emerging from Java's Hindu-Buddhist past, the phrase references not only social and political unity amid diversity, but also a spiritual apprehension regarding the Unicity of Being, or the emergence of all creation from a Divine Source from which it is inseparable, and to which it shall inevitably return (as individual waves arise from, and return to, the ocean). This principle is also a key tenet of Sufism, or Islamic mysticism. The Old Javanese verse by Mpu Tantular in which this phrase appears, reads as follows: "The diverse forms of the universe are expressions of the One Buddha/Shiva; They are indeed different (bhinneki), yet it is impossible to

islands from Hindu-Buddhist times until the present; and the Muslim saint and mystic Sunan Kalijogo—who is famed for having accommodated local traditions—taught indigenous rulers a peaceful, tolerant and spiritual understanding of Islam. Through his disciples, including Sultan Adiwijoyo, Juru Martani and Senopati ing Alogo, Sunan Kalijogo succeeded in rescuing and preserving these sublime values which, thanks to his efforts, we can still enjoy today.<sup>5</sup>

In the history of modern Indonesia, we also witness the presence of tranquil souls (*al-nafs al-muthmainnah*) during the birth and evolution of our national awareness—especially in the dialogue between Islam and Indonesian nationalism. In fact, not many people know about one of the key factors in the conceptual development of Indonesian nationalism.<sup>6</sup> In 1919, three cousins began intensive weekly discussions concerning the relationship between Islam, as a set of religious teachings, and nationalism. They were H. O. S. Tjokroaminoto, Kyai Haji Hasjim Asy'ari<sup>7</sup> and Kyai Haji Wahab Chasbullah. In addition, the future son-in-law of Tjokroaminoto, Sukarno—who at the time was just 18 years old—was soon actively

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perceive them as *fundamentally* different, when one apprehends the underlying Unity of existence; for the Truth of Buddha and the Truth of Shiva is One (tunggal); (the diverse forms of the universe) are indeed different, yet simultaneously One (bhinneka tunggal ika).”]

5. [Translator’s note: Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid was directly descended from both the last Hindu-Buddhist kings of Java, and from Sunan Kalijogo and Sultan Adiwijoyo. The story of their successful efforts to preserve a pluralistic, tolerant and spiritual understanding of religion in the face of radical Muslim attempts to annihilate indigenous Javanese culture (in the 16<sup>th</sup> century) is told in the national epic, *Babad Tanah Jawi*, or *History of the Land of Java*.]

6. The seed of awareness of Indonesian nationalism is generally traced to 20 May 1908 with the establishment of Boedi Oetomo, the first indigenous political society in the Dutch East Indies.

7. [Translator’s note: Kyai Haji Hasjim Asy’ari (the grandfather of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid) founded the Nahdlatul Ulama in 1926, in order to stimulate a spiritual awakening among ulama, and defend traditional Sunni Muslim teachings in the face of contemporary developments, including the Wahhabi conquest of Mecca and Medina and the spread of extremist ideology, which rejects Sufism (Islamic spirituality) and the accommodation of local cultural practices. The Nahdlatul Ulama, or NU, has since grown to become the largest Muslim organization in the world.]

involved in the weekly meetings, which occurred for many years. This national awareness was inherited by the following generation, including such figures as Abdul Wahid Hasjim (the son of Kyai Haji Hasjim Asy'ari), Kyai Haji Kahar Muzakir from Yogyakarta (a leading Muhammadiyah figure), and Haji Ahmad Djoyo Sugito.

During a Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) congress held in Banjarmasin, Borneo in 1935, the NU decided not to support the formation of an Islamic state. Rather, it urged Muslims to practice Islamic teachings, so as to establish a truly Islamic (i.e., virtuous and enlightened) populace within the framework of a pluralistic nation state. Ten years later, East Indies Muslim leaders who were involved in the Independence struggle accepted the concept of a Pancasila state presented by Sukarno, as did most heads of Islamic organizations at the time.<sup>8</sup> Based upon a concept of nationality enriched by the religious and cultural values of our people, on 17 August 1945 Sukarno and Muhammad Hatta proclaimed Indonesia's independence in the name of its people, establishing a nation whose basic constitution and state ideology acknowledge and protect the traditions of cultural and religious pluralism that have long been integral to the lives of Indonesia's inhabitants.

The idea to create this Pancasila nation state [as opposed to an explicitly Islamic state] was the fruit of bitter experience garnered from the history of the East Indies archipelago itself. On the one hand, the long history of the East Indies—which has given birth

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8. [Translator's note: Pancasila is the official philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state. Pancasila consists of two Sanskrit words, "*panca*," meaning five, and "*sila*," meaning principle(s). It comprises five principles held to be inseparable and interrelated: belief in the one and only God; a just and civilized humanity; the unity of Indonesia; democracy guided by inner wisdom, and arising out of deliberations by elected representatives; and social justice for all the people of Indonesia. In adopting the term *pancasila* to describe the newly-independent state of Indonesia's official ideology, the nation's primarily Muslim founders established a conscious link with the past. In Buddhism, *pancasila* (the Five Precepts) refers to the basic Buddhist code of ethics, undertaken by lay followers of Gautama Buddha in the Theravada and Mahayana traditions. The Five Precepts are commitments to abstain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication. They are not formulated as imperatives, but as training rules that lay people undertake voluntarily to facilitate practice on the path to spiritual liberation.]

to many great Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic civilizations, during the Sriwijaya, Sailendra, first Mataram, Kediri, Singosari, Majapahit, Demak, Aceh, Makasar, Goa, second Mataram and other kingdoms—has created a strong awareness of the need to preserve the rich and diverse culture and traditions of our people. On the other hand, the continuous dialogue between Islam as a system of religious teachings, and nationalism—which dialogue is deeply rooted in the experience of the Indonesian people—strengthened our founders’ awareness that a nation state which accepts and protects the diverse beliefs, cultures and traditions of Indonesia represents the best foundation upon which to build the life of our nation and people. Mpu Tantular’s saying (“Oneness Amid Diversity”), the teachings and religious-cultural-political movement led by Sunan Kalijogo, as well as other such examples, aptly express the profound spiritual awareness which ultimately became the foundation of modern Indonesia, and has preserved it from disintegration since the proclamation of independence in 1945.

This was not an easy process, given the fluctuating relationships that have occurred between religion and nationalism. The difficulties which have arisen constitute historical facts that we must recognize and understand. A number of periods in the history of the East Indies are drenched in blood because of conflicts that occurred, often in the name of religion. Muslim religious scholars such as Abikusno Tjokrosujoso, Kyai Haji A. Kahar Muzakir, Haji Agus Salim, Kyai Haji A. Wahid Hasjim, Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, Kasman Singodimejo, Teuku Mohammad Hassan, and other founders of Indonesia, understood that the country they struggled to create and defend was not based upon a single religion, but instead was a nation state which acknowledged and protected all the various religions, cultures and traditions that have always been an integral part of life for the people of Indonesia.

Our founding fathers recognized that Pancasila does not contain a single principle that conflicts with religious teachings. On the contrary, its principles reflect the highest values of all religions, including that which, in Islam, is known as *maqâshid al-sharî‘ah*, (the purpose of *shari‘a*) namely, the common good (*al-mashlahat al-‘ammah*). With this insight and awareness, Indonesia’s founders

renounced the formal establishment of religion, and instead emphasized its spiritual essence. They positioned the state as an institution which acknowledges pluralism, protects all interests, and guards all beliefs, cultures and traditions within Indonesian society. In other words, they instituted Pancasila so as to foster religion as the manifestation of God's blessing for all creation (*rahmatan lil-'alamîn*) in its true sense. In the idealized context of Pancasila, everyone may assist everyone else in achieving worldly prosperity; and everyone is free to worship in whatever way he or she considers best suited to attain eternal prosperity in the hereafter, without sacrificing the former.

As previously mentioned, there has been a fluctuating relationship between religion (i.e., Islam) and nationalism (Pancasila) throughout the history of Indonesia as a nation state. There have been groups that sought to establish an Islamic state through constitutional means (e.g., the 1950s' Constitutional Assembly), and others through force of arms (such as Darul Islam/TII).<sup>9</sup> And yet the majority of Indonesians, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, have always agreed with Pancasila and struggled to realize the vision of our founding fathers. This tumultuous history provides invaluable lessons concerning how to build our nation state. The behavior of mass religious organizations such as the NU and Muhammadiyah, as well as nationalist political parties—all of which strongly affirm that the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (which rejected the establishment of an Islamic state), represent the final form and consensus for the building of our nation state—does not represent opportunistic political behavior, but rather, a mature and genuine awareness based on historical reality, the culture and traditions of our people, and the substance of religious teachings of whose truth

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9. [Translator's note: From 1949 - 1962, the Darul Islam guerilla movement waged an armed struggle to overthrow the Indonesian state and replace it with a theocratic Islamic state, based upon a fundamentalist understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Offshoots of the Darul Islam rebellion include the contemporary terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which has been responsible for dozens of bombings in Indonesia since the fall of Suharto, including the notorious attack in Bali that killed over 200 in October of 2002, and led to the establishment of LibForAll Foundation.]

we are certain.

This nationalistic approach serves to assure our nation's future, so that developments will remain consistent with our own culture and traditions, as well as with the substantive teachings of the various religions which have long been an integral part of Indonesian national life. The stand adopted by nationalist-religious figures, who have struggled to maintain the structure of our national unity based on Pancasila and the Basic Constitution of 1945 (UUD 1945), may be likened to the incarnation of tranquil souls (*al-nafs al-muthmainnah*)—individuals who constantly seek to assist others, regardless of any difference in their religious or cultural beliefs. In doing so, they ardently strive to share God's infinite love and compassion (*rahmat*) with all sentient beings.

Such behavior is not reflected in various mass organizations and political parties that have appeared in Indonesia since shortly before, and after, the collapse of Suharto's New Order regime. These new organizations remind us of the Darul Islam (DI) movement since, like DI, they seek to transform Indonesia into an explicitly religious state, replacing the state ideology of Pancasila with their own version of Islam, or even to eliminate NKRI and replace it with an Islamic caliphate.

Concerning the implicit claim of hardline activists that they completely understand the meaning of holy scripture and are therefore entitled to become God's vice-regents (caliphs) and rule this world, compelling others to follow their "perfect" understanding—this claim is totally unacceptable and must be rejected, both theologically and politically. The extremists are correct that power belongs to God alone (*lā hukm illā li Allāh*), but not a single human being completely grasps or comprehends God's power. That is why the Prophet once said, "You do not understand what is truly God's law."<sup>10</sup> In brief, although based upon the Qur'an and Sunnah, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*)—which extremists generally cite, to theologically justify their rule—is actually the product of human

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10. Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Atas Nama Tuhan: dari Fikih Otoriter ke Fikih Otoritatif* (*In the Name of God: From Authoritarian Islamic Jurisprudence to Authoritative Islamic Jurisprudence*), translated from *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (Jakarta: Serambi, 2003), p. 48.

understanding and efforts which are constrained by time, place and the respective abilities of the *fiqh* authors of such jurisprudential texts.

Unaware of these facts, or consciously disregarding them for the sake of power, hardline activists are striving to transform Islam from a religion into an ideology. In their hands, Islam becomes a weapon to attack and discredit anyone who holds political views or religious beliefs different from their own. In other words, their call to “struggle for Islam” masks the reality that they are in fact struggling for a specific political agenda, and employing Islam as a lethal weapon to advance their worldly ambitions. This strategy is highly effective, since anyone opposing them can be accused of being an enemy of Islam itself, even when such statements are blatantly false.

Under the pretext of “promoting and defending” Islam, extremists are simultaneously hard at work to displace expressions of local culture and tradition that form an integral part of Indonesians’ daily lives. They wish to replace these with foreign culture and traditions from the Middle East—especially Wahhabi and Muslim Brotherhood practices—due to their inability to distinguish between religion and the culture of the land in which Islam was revealed. The extremists adopt a harsh and violent demeanor, and refuse to compromise with other viewpoints—as if Islam had no tradition or command to create peace (*islah*), but rather, merely commanded its followers to employ compulsion and violence. Because of such attitudes and behavior, Islamist radicals are frequently referred to as “hardliners.”<sup>11</sup>

We must be aware that whenever Islam is transformed into an ideology, it becomes narrow and restricted, constrained by ideological limits and political platforms. Any contrary view of Islam, not to mention those that directly conflict with the extremists’ narrow understanding, will readily be cast as inimical to Islam itself, because the fundamental nature of an ideologically-driven inter-

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11. [Translator’s note: The terms “hardliner,” “extremist” and “radical” are used interchangeably in this book. In Indonesia, the term “hardliner” (*garis keras*) has a derogative connotation, describing someone who has a coarse and superficial understanding of Islam, as opposed to a deep and nuanced understanding based upon wisdom and experience.]

pretation of Islam is to eliminate opposition and justify political supremacy and power. It is in this context that extremists often accuse their opponents of being infidels and/or apostates. This transformation of Islam into an ideology clearly amputates, and emasculates, the supreme teachings of Islam, by attempting to stuff a religion that embodies compassion and tolerance into a narrow and rigid ideological framework.

In general, the aspirations of hardline movements in Indonesia—especially those that have a Wahhabi or Muslim Brotherhood view of Islam, or a mixture of the two—are strongly influenced by transnational Islamist movements from the Middle East. Indonesian extremist movements, including political parties, thus pursue an agenda that differs markedly from those of moderate Islamic mass organizations such as the Muhammadiyah, NU and nationalist political parties. Since their appearance after the fall of Suharto, extremist movements have begun to succeed in changing the face of Indonesian Islam to become more aggressive, furious, intolerant and full of hate.<sup>12</sup> This, despite the fact that Indonesian Islam has long been known as gentle, tolerant and peace-loving (the international magazine *Newsweek* once called it “Islam with a smiling face”).

Hardliners seek to obtain the sympathy and support of Muslims by employing jargon which claims to promote and defend Islam; by using the subterfuge of “Islamic” education; and through what they call *da‘wa amar ma’rūf nahyi munkar* (proselytism by commanding the good deed and forbidding evil). Such rhetoric misleads even those who are highly educated in the modern sense of that term, but unaccustomed to thinking about spirituality and the essence of Islamic teachings. Such people are easily hooked by extremists, since they may be fascinated and attracted by the hardliners’ use of religious symbols.<sup>13</sup> In fact, the extremists themselves

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12. For instance, read the Wahid Institute’s 2008 annual report on *Religious Pluralism in Indonesia*, “Contemplating a Nation that is Increasingly Fractured” (*Pluralisme Beragama/Berkeyakinan di Indonesia*, “Menapaki Bangsa yang Kian Retak”).

13. [Translator’s note: Extremists often make a show of their supposed devoutness, employing religious symbols such as beards and so-called “Muslim” clothing (long, white shirts or robes for men), quoting the Qur’an, ostentatiously

“grasp” Islam without comprehending the essence of its teachings, as understood by saints, religious scholars and Indonesia’s founding fathers. Their understanding of Islam is framed by narrow ideological definitions and political agendas, which render them incapable of grasping any truth that is opposed to their narrow viewpoint, literal interpretation and/or political agenda. This inability to comprehend the truth drives them to accuse anyone who holds a different view of Islam, or does not support their agenda, of being an infidel or apostate.

With regard to rank and file extremists, many people associate with and support radical movements because they’re genuinely attracted to, and fascinated by, the religious symbols bandied about by extremist leaders. On the other hand, there are those who deliberately mobilize and manipulate the public by shouting religious formulae, when their actual goal is to satisfy their own egotistical and materialistic agenda. In order to short-circuit this process of radicalization, we must strive to encourage and inspire the public to be humble, to constantly raise their level of knowledge about Islam and to be open-minded, so that they may understand the spirituality and essence of Islamic teachings, and themselves become tranquil souls.

In addition, we must realize—as a nation—that what hardline activists are doing, and seeking to accomplish, not only conflicts with and threatens Pancasila and the Basic Constitution of 1945, but may ultimately destroy the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Anarchistic actions, proclaiming others to be infidels and/or apostates, and other forms of character assassination in which extremists often engage, are in reality attempts to destroy our national unity.

I have often been accused of being an infidel or apostate, but remain tranquil in the face of such baseless accusations. Extremist movements measure the truth of religious understanding in terms of ideology and politics, while we [traditional Muslims] base our understanding and practice of religion on an enthusiasm for love, mercy and compassion, and a spirituality that leaves one open to

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praying and fasting, etc., in order to appear “Islamic” and thereby don a mantle of religious authority.]

all sentient beings. We who produced this study/report base our Islamic teachings on the understanding of *ahlussunnah wal-jamâ'ah*, the great traditions of Sunni Islam, while radicals have inherited the extreme practices of the *Khawârij*,<sup>14</sup> who blithely condemned all who disagreed with them as infidels and apostates—an evil and corrupt practice that is still propagated today by many Wahhabis and their accomplices.<sup>15</sup>

Because hardline movements consider every Muslim who is different from them as less Islamic, or even an infidel or apostate, they are engaged in systematically infiltrating mosques, institutes, educational establishments, government, businesses, and moderate Islamic mass organizations, especially the Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), in order to transform the various institutions of Indonesian society, and Islam itself, into their own harsh and rigid likeness. The extremists claim to be promoting and defending Islam, yet what they actually promote and defend is a narrow understanding of Islam trapped within the boundaries of their own political platform and ideology, *not* Islam itself. They are engaged in strenuous efforts to seize control of the Muhammadiyah and NU, because these two powerful organizations have more followers than any other Islamic mass organization, either in Indonesia or the world. In addition, these hardline groups regard the Muhammadiyah and NU as the primary obstacles in the path of

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14. [Translator's note: The Khawârij, or Kharijites, were an early Islamic splinter group that sought to annihilate everyone who did not agree with their views. The most notorious of their terrorist acts was the assassination of the fourth Caliph, the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law, 'Ali.]

15. "Furthermore, there are those who understand faith in a monopolistic fashion, so that anyone whose understanding is different from theirs, is considered unfaithful. In reality this is an old phenomenon, not just contemporary. At the time of Sayadina Ali, may God give him honor and praise, there was a group called the Khawârij who denounced everyone outside their narrow sect as infidels. This phenomenon has now reincarnated once again, to the point where someone like (the terrorist) Azhari comes to Indonesia setting off bombs and imagines that he'll be rewarded in heaven for such actions." ~ Kyai Haji Hasyim Muzadi, Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board, in *Ocean of Revelations: Understanding Islam as a Blessing for All Creation*, Episode 3: "Faith Communities," Program Supervisor: Kyai Haji A. Mustofa Bisri, ©LibForAll Foundation 2009).

achieving their political agenda, because both have long promoted the essence of Islamic values while rejecting the formalization of Islam through the establishment of an Islamic state, or the implementation of *shari'a* as positive law.

Extremist infiltration has already provoked a great deal of upheaval within both of the afore-mentioned Islamic mass organizations. In this context, we recall the never-ending struggle that occurs within human beings themselves, and society at large (*insân shaghîr*), i.e., the struggle between tranquil souls (*al-nafs al-muth-mainnah*) and those that are selfish and discontented (*al-nafs al-law-wâmah*), or the struggle between the Pandavas and Kuravas, which lies at the heart of the *Mahabarata*. While the former strive to create peace and tranquility for all, the latter constantly give rise to trouble and disturbances for others.

Transnational extremist movements and their accomplices in Indonesia have long been engaged in infiltration of the Muhammadiyah. This came to a head at the July, 2005 Muhammadiyah Congress in Malang, East Java, when extremist agents, including PKS and Hizb ut-Tahrir cadres,<sup>16</sup> dominated many forums and succeeded in having a number of hardline movement sympathizers elected to the Muhammadiyah's central board. But it was only after Professor Abdul Munir Mul Khan visited his native village of Sendang Ayu in Lampung Province, Sumatra, that the problem of radical infiltration of the Muhammadiyah grew into a major controversy, whose ramifications were observed even at an international level.<sup>17</sup>

A Muhammadiyah mosque in the small, remote village of Sendang Ayu, which had long been calm and tranquil, was suddenly thrown into chaos when a visiting PKS activist (in the form of an itinerant imam) introduced political issues into the mosque—de-

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16. [Translator's note: The Justice and Prosperity Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, or PKS) is an Indonesian political party inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, while Hizb ut-Tahrir is a subversive organization that seeks to establish a global caliphate. For more on both organizations, see Chapter II, "The Origins and Global Spread of Wahhabi/Muslim Brotherhood Ideology."]

17. Read Bret Stephens, "The Exorcist: Indonesian man seeks to create an Islam that will make people smile," at <http://www.libforall.org/news-WSJ-the-exorcist.html>.

faming other organizations, including the Muhammadiyah itself—and began denouncing his opponents as infidels. When Professor Munir visited Sendang Ayu to celebrate the end of Ramadan with his mother and other relatives, he took the opportunity to explain to his fellow villagers the Muhammadiyah way of addressing differences of opinion, without questioning others' faithfulness. As a result, the villagers no longer allowed PKS members to deliver sermons in their mosque. Dr. Munir subsequently described his experience, and expressed his wider concern, in *Suara Muhammadiyah* (*The Voice of Muhammadiyah*), the organization's official magazine.<sup>18</sup> This article evoked a serious discussion within the Muhammadiyah about extremist infiltration of the organization that had already occurred in many regions of Indonesia, using methods both subtle and blunt, even to the point of force.

Professor Munir's article inspired Farid Setiawan—General Chairman of the Regional Board of Directors of the Muhammadiyah Student Movement, in the province of Yogyakarta—to discuss radical infiltration of the Muhammadiyah more widely, in two articles that also appeared in *Suara Muhammadiyah*. In the first, "Ahmad Dahlan [founder of the Muhammadiyah] in Tears (Reflections on the Writing of Abdul Munir Mulkhan),"<sup>19</sup> Farid advised the Muhammadiyah to immediately amputate the extremist "virus" which, in his opinion, had already reached the critical stage of a category 4 cancer. He warned that if moderate Muhammadiyah members remained silent, "it's entirely possible that the Muhammadiyah will not outlive its current leadership. And it's also possible that if Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan could rise from his tomb, he would be shocked and in tears seeing the condition of the Muhammadiyah's membership and cadres,"<sup>20</sup> which are in the process of being taken over by extremist movements.

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18. Abdul Munir Mulkhan, "Sendang Ayu: Pergulatan Muhammadiyah di Kaki Bukit Barisan," ("Sendang Ayu: Muhammadiyah Battle at the Foot of Barisan Mountain,") *Suara Muhammadiyah*, 2 January 2006.

19. Farid Setiawan, "Ahmad Dahlan Menangis (Tanggapan terhadap Tulisan Abdul Munir Mulkhan)," *Suara Muhammadiyah*, 20 February 2006.

20. *Ibid.*

In the second article, “Three Actions (to Improve the Muhammadiyah’s) Male and Female Teachers Schools,” Farid wrote that “the ‘Tarbiyah virus’<sup>21</sup> produces cadres who have an extreme and radical understanding of Islam. And the systematic effort to produce such cadres has already spread far and wide in the Muhammadiyah. This phenomenon has led to great disappointment among the Muhammadiyah’s leadership and wider family. The sons and daughters who, they hoped, would drive the Muhammadiyah’s future developments have, in fact, been transformed into enemies of the Muhammadiyah itself.”<sup>22</sup>

Recognizing just how far this Tarbiyah virus had infiltrated the Muhammadiyah, Farid recommended three steps to save the organization from extremist domination. *First*, to dissolve the schools which train Muhammadiyah cadres, because these have already been thoroughly corrupted by the Tarbiyah virus; *second*, to discard the system and curriculum employed in these schools, and expel all Muhammadiyah leaders and teachers who are involved in non-Muhammadiyah ideological movements and political agendas; and *third*, to re-energize all autonomous organizations within the Muhammadiyah movement.<sup>23</sup>

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21. “At the time of its birth in the 1970s and ‘80s, the Tarbiyah movement was a campus proselytism movement that used the Tarbiyah system of education employed by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. This militant group represented a new direction, as an ideological Islamic movement, that was entirely different from the major streams of Indonesian Islam represented by the Muhammadiyah and the Nahdlatul Ulama, which are moderate and culturally-oriented Islamic movements. Activists from the Tarbiyah movement established the Justice Party (Partai Keadilan, or PK) in 1998, which changed its name to become the Justice and Prosperity Party (PKS) in 2004. The PKS established Tarbiyah a la the Muslim Brotherhood as a system for the education and recruitment of its party members. Thus, the Tarbiyah movement cannot be divorced from the PK/PKS, as both derive the breath of their ideological inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood, while Tarbiyah serves as the medium/vital instrument of the PKS, which is famed for combining *da’wa* (proselytism) and politics.” (from the back cover of Haedar Nashir’s book, *Manifestations of the Tarbiyah Movement: How Should the Muhammadiyah Respond?*, 5<sup>th</sup> printing, Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2007).

22. Farid Setiawan, “Tiga Upaya Mu’allimin dan Mu’allimat,” *Suara Muhammadiyah*, 3 April 2006.

23. *Ibid.*

Munir's and Farid's articles provoked a bitter controversy and polemic between Muhammadiyah leaders who agreed with their criticisms, and those who did not. A primary concern of those who did agree was that the Muhammadiyah's institutions, facilities, membership and resources were being used by extremist movements to promote the interests and goals of groups other than the Muhammadiyah. In the midst of this heated polemic concerning the Tarbiyah virus, a member of the Muhammadiyah's central board, Dr. Haedar Nashir, clarified the various issues in a thin book entitled *Manifestations of the Tarbiyah Movement: How Should the Muhammadiyah Respond?*<sup>24</sup>

Less than three months after the book's publication, the Muhammadiyah's central board issued Muhammadiyah Central Board Decree Number 149/Kep/I.O/B/2006, in order to "rescue the Muhammadiyah from various activities that are damaging the organization" and free it "from the influence, mission, infiltration and interests of a political party which is engaged in religious proselytizing, and (thus flies on) the wings of *da'wa* (religious proselytism)," because said party is exploiting the Muhammadiyah to achieve its own political goals, which conflict with the supreme vision and mission of the Muhammadiyah as a moderate Islamic organization:

"The Muhammadiyah has a right to be respected by others, and to be free of all agendas, interference and influence by other parties which may disrupt the unity and progress of its movement" (Preamble, Point 4). "All Muhammadiyah members need to be aware, understand and adopt a critical attitude which recognizes that every political party in this nation—including those that claim to represent '*da'wa*' or Islamic proselytism activities, such as Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)—are in fact mere political parties. Every political party is focused on the acquisition of political power. For that reason, in dealing with any political party, we must always remain commit-

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24. Haedar Nashir, *Manifestasi Gerakan Tarbiyah: Bagaimana Sikap Muhammadiyah?* 5th printing (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2007).

ted to the true Path of the Muhammadiyah and must free ourselves from, and never engage ourselves with, the mission, interests, activities or goals of the above-mentioned political parties (Decree, Point 3).<sup>25</sup>

The issuance of this decree is understandable, because in fact the PKS does not merely “provoke problems and conflict within other Islamic organizations, including the Muhammadiyah,”<sup>26</sup> but according to political experts, represents a greater threat than [the terrorist group] Jemaah Islamiyah to Pancasila, the Basic Constitution of 1945 and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). In the words of Sadanand Dhume, an expert on Indonesian politics and extremist movements:

Despite the Justice Party's social work, little separates its thinking from Jemaah Islamiyah's. Like Jemaah Islamiyah, in its founding manifesto, the Justice Party called for the creation of an Islamic caliphate. Like Jemaah Islamiyah, it has placed secrecy—facilitated by the cell structure both groups borrowed from the Brotherhood—at the heart of its organisation. Both offer a selective vision of modernity—one in which global science and technology are welcome, but un-Islamic values are shunned. The two groups differ chiefly in their methods: Jemaah Islamiyah is revolutionary; the Justice Party is evolutionary.

Of the two, the Justice Party is by far the larger threat to Indonesia. With its suicide bombings Jemaah Islamiyah has set itself up for a confrontation with the government that it cannot hope to win. In contrast, the Justice Party uses its position in parliament and its metastasizing network of cadres to advance the same goals incrementally, one vote at a time.... Ultimately, Indonesians alone will decide whether their future lies with the rest of Southeast

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25. Muhammadiyah Central Board Decree Number 149/Kep/I.0/B/2006. To read the full text of the decree, see Appendix 1.

26. *Ibid.*, Haedar Nashir, p. 66.

Asia, or with a backward-looking movement cloaked in religious fundamentalism. The Justice Party remains on the march. How far it goes may well determine Indonesia's future.<sup>27</sup>

As demonstrated by the research published in this book, although the Muhammadiyah central board's Decree was issued in December of 2006, it has not been effectively implemented to this date. Transnational Islamist movements (Wahhabi, Muslim Brotherhood and Hizb ut-Tahrir) and their Indonesian accomplices have succeeded in deeply infiltrating the Muhammadiyah, and establishing alliances with other radicals who have long found harbor inside the organization itself. Both groups are actively recruiting other Muhammadiyah leaders and members to follow their extreme ideology, as occurred when the entire leadership of the Bantul branch of Nasyiatul Aisyiyah, the Muhammadiyah women's movement, joined the PKS en masse.

While Farid Setiawan expressed concern that the Muhammadiyah might not outlive its current leadership, extremist organizations are busy attempting to seize control of the Muhammadiyah and employ it as a vehicle to achieve their goals in Indonesia for countless years to come. Many moderate Muhammadiyah figures are worried that extremists may dominate the next Muhammadiyah Congress in 2010, because radical activists within the Muhammadiyah have become progressively more strong and numerous.

Precisely because of this increasingly deep infiltration, moderate Muhammadiyah leaders regard the situation as profoundly dangerous, both for the Muhammadiyah itself and the Indonesian nation. In confronting such problems, wherever they exist, we must be honest, transparent and direct, so that our actions may serve to educate all Muslims, helping them to become mature in their faith and good citizens.

One finding which shocked those engaged in the field research component of this study was the phenomenon of dual member-

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27. Sadanand Dhume, "Indonesian Democracy's Enemy Within: Radical Islamic party threatens Indonesia with ballots more than bullets," in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 2005.

ship, especially between the Muhammadiyah and extremist movements. In fact, the field research team estimated that up to 75% of the radical leaders interviewed for this study had ties with the Muhammadiyah.

Besides the Muhammadiyah, extremist infiltration of the Nahdlatul Ulama is also systematically underway. The strategic function of mosques within Muslim society leads radical groups to constantly attempt to seize control of them, using every possible method, including many which no one could possibly imagine other than the infiltrators themselves. Kyai Haji Mu'adz Thahir, Regional Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama in Pati, Central Java, informed our researchers that radicals were successfully infiltrating NU mosques in his area using the stratagem of providing a free cleaning service.

According to Kyai Thahir, the process works as follows: at first, a group of youths come and voluntarily clean the mosque, not just once but many times. Attracted by their apparent religious sincerity, the mosque board gives them an opportunity to issue the call to prayer, and eventually involves them as members of the board itself. These new members cleverly and conscientiously discharge their responsibilities, because in reality they're extremist agents tasked with the job of seizing control of the mosque. As their position becomes increasingly powerful, they begin to invite other friends to join the board, and eventually control who may or may not serve as imam, deliver the Friday sermon, or provide religious education to attendees at the mosque. Slowly but surely, the mosque falls into the hands of radicals, until local religious leaders who once gave sermons and lectures at the mosque are denied the opportunity to teach Islam to their own congregations, and in fact lose control of the mosque and the local people, unless they prove willing to accept and promote the extremists' ideology.

This case from Pati is only one of countless instances in which radicals have seized control of NU mosques. If this particular example were portrayed in film, viewers would likely assume it was merely the director's wild imagination at work. But in fact, it is the logical manifestation of *a virulent ideology, backed by immense funding, and operating in a systematic manner*, as transnational Islamist move-

ments and their local accomplices work nonstop to undermine and ultimately seize control of our nation. The research contained in this book demonstrates that the groups most often involved in the infiltration and seizure of NU mosques are the PKS and Hizb ut-Tahrir.

After realizing that many of its mosques and congregations had already been seized by extremist groups, the NU launched a campaign to consolidate and tighten the structure of its organization, both in mosques and other locations. The Nahdlatul Ulama's central board firmly proclaimed that transnational Islamist movements such as al-Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood (represented in Indonesia by the PKS) and Hizb ut-Tahrir are dangerous political movements which threaten Sunni teachings and have the potential to destroy the nation.<sup>28</sup> The radicals' ability to dissimulate and pretend to accept NU teachings and tradition makes them even more dangerous, because this enables them to infiltrate anywhere, anytime. While in regard to the issue of a caliphate, the NU's official forum for discussing Islamic law, the *Majlis Bahtsul Masa'il*, formally declared that there is no theological basis for an Islamic caliphate, either in the Qur'an or the hadith [the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad].<sup>29</sup>

Although in some places the NU has succeeded at reclaiming its mosques from extremists, the radical infiltration and capture of mosques and NU congregations continues to accelerate. As demonstrated by this study, in general the infiltration of extremists is far more dynamic than NU efforts to drive them out. If this situation is allowed to persist, it is very possible that the NU will lose a significant percentage of its mosques and followers, and itself be transformed into an organization that is less spiritual, and more extreme.

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28. The NU Central Board has pressed Indonesia's government to halt the infiltration of transnational ideology. Much earlier, the respected NU leader Kyai Haji Yusuf Hasjim asked the NU Central Board to cut off the flow of transnational ideology because of its danger to the NU and to Indonesia itself. (Memorial speech delivered 100 days after the death of KH. Yusuf Hasjim in Jombang, East Java; see *NU Online*, "PBNU Desak Pemerintah Cegah Ideologi Transnasional," *Ahad*, 29 April 2007, which appears in Appendix 2 of this book).

29. See Appendix 2 of this book.

Radical infiltration of NU environs, and the failure of the world's largest Muslim organization to halt extremist infiltration of Indonesia's government, the Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars (MUI) and other strategic fields in general, is due in large part to the widespread phenomenon of "materialistic kyais," or religious leaders.<sup>30</sup> Materialistic kyais are more interested in their personal well-being than the interests of the NU's followers or the nation as a whole. The forty million NU followers, who are concentrated in specific villages and districts, represent the largest single group of voters in Indonesia. Their votes can determine who is elected to regional or national legislatures, and who becomes a regent, governor or even president of Indonesia. This demographic reality tempts many political parties to manipulate the NU and exploit their relationships with materialistic kyais to achieve their own political interests. Because of human nature, there are kyais who long to receive cash-filled envelopes from political operatives, or elected office, and thus seek to fulfill their personal ambitions by acquiring a leadership position in the NU, whether at a local, regional or national level. Membership in the NU's formal leadership structure thus serves as a bridge to exploiting, and being exploited by, certain political parties and politicians.

At the same time, many spiritual kyais have withdrawn from the above-mentioned arena of egotism and self-interest, and share their wisdom only with those who come, without self-interest, seeking God rather than worldly position. With a following of about 40 million, the NU—together with the Muhammadiyah—can truly serve as a pillar capable of supporting and maintaining Indonesia's national integrity. However, in order to fulfill this vital role, the

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30. [Translator's note: The original etymological meaning of the Javanese term *kyai* was "lord," referring to nobles, aristocrats and/or landed gentry who exerted political, military, economic and religious authority in a specific region. During the Dutch colonial era, the military and political aspects of this authority waned, and the term *kyai* evolved to refer specifically to Muslim leaders who exert religious authority within a given geographic region. The term is in many ways similar to the Arabic "shaykh," which can refer either to a tribal leader/elder, or to a religious figure. Historically, the top leadership of the Nahdlatul Ulama consisted of kyais who were descended from Javanese nobility, but increasingly this is no longer the case.]

NU must conduct a spiritual revitalization and return to its highest values. In this manner, its *ulama* (religious scholars) may guide those in power, and not permit themselves to be manipulated or exploited in return. Our ancestors proclaimed such a relationship between spiritual and worldly leaders to be the path of *dharma*, and that is why *wayang kulit* always portrays kings acting not only with respect, but also obedience towards *rishis*, and not the reverse.<sup>31</sup>

These days, *wayang* culture—which is distinctly Indonesian and full of sublime values—is rapidly being shunted aside by foreign culture. The unwise adoption of foreign culture is causing the Indonesian people to lose their own identity as a nation. One example of this process may be glimpsed through an event that occurred in Cairo in the middle of 2004. A Nahdlatul Ulama Vice Chairman had been invited to deliver a paper to an international seminar on the topic of “Education and an Emancipatory Islamic Law-giving Body,” in conjunction with professors Hassan Hanafi and Youhana Qaltah. One day before the paper was to be delivered, the President of the Egyptian chapter of the Association of Indonesian High School and University Students (PMII) and his companions barged into the Sonesta hotel, where the event was to be held, and demanded that the NU Vice Chairman withdraw from the event. They threatened that if he failed to do so, the students would take any step necessary to prevent him from delivering his paper, even to the point of murder. “If you go forward [and participate], I’ll kill you myself,” threatened Limra Zainuddin, the President of PPMI.<sup>32</sup> Subsequent research revealed that the students in question were PK (PKS) activists in Cairo.<sup>33</sup>

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31. [Translator’s note: Prior to the spread of television, *wayang kulit*, or shadow puppet performances, were the most popular form of public entertainment in Java. The extensive repertory of *wayang kulit* tales—which are primarily derived from the ancient Hindu epics the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*—seek to educate viewers about the nature of good and evil, and life’s ultimate Truth. Kings and *rishis* (enlightened sages) appear in most *wayang kulit* performances, with the latter imparting the knowledge required for good governance, and spiritual liberation, to the former.]

32. See “Gertak Mati Pengawal Akidah (Threatening to Murder in the Name of Islamic Morality)” in *Gatra*, edition 14, published on 13 February 2004.

33. Interview with an Indonesian alumnus of al-Azhar University in Cairo, who began his study at al-Azhar in the year 2000.

As Muslims, those students were obliged to behave humbly (*tawâdlu'*), respecting elders while acting with love and kindness towards those who are younger (*laisa minnâ man lam yukrim kibâranâ wa lam yarham shighâranâ*). However, this did not occur, because the students in question had neither understood nor internalized the teachings of Islam that are full of spirituality, and instead had already adopted a foreign culture, in a manner that was foolish and unwise. Both an immature grasp of Islam, and the adoption of Wahhabi/Muslim Brotherhood culture, can easily trap one in a narrow and rigid understanding of Islam. Anyone who lacks a profound understanding of Islam, especially those elements which concern ultimate Truth/Reality (*haqiqa*) and Gnosis (*ma'rifa*, or mystical knowledge of, and union with, the Divine), will tend to think that what extremist groups proclaim is identical to that which is understood and believed by the majority of Muslims worldwide. Radicals employ the same language as Muslims in general, such as *da'wa* (proselytism), *amar ma'rûf nahy munkar* (enjoining the good and forbidding evil) or *Islam rahmatan lil-'âlamîn* (Islam as a blessing for all creation), but in reality they understand these terms differently.<sup>34</sup>

In their hands, *amar ma'rûf nahy munkar* becomes a formula for legitimizing compulsion, violence and attacks against anyone who differs from them. They excuse themselves by claiming to promote the good and forbid evil every time they commit such acts of violence or defame others. As for the concept of *rahmatan lil-'âlamîn*: in the mouths of extremists, it becomes an excuse to

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34. "Because ideological movements are often neither felt nor recognized by those who are infiltrated by them, they can systematically penetrate organizations and grow quite large. All the more so when the ideological movements in question convey a puritanical and militant Islamic ideology, so that whoever views them as problematic will himself be accused of causing problems. To oppose them means to be Islamophobic, or opposed to religious unity. In this way such ideological movements become ever more deeply rooted and expand systematically, until by the time they are finally recognized as a serious problem, it's too late and they can no longer be halted or controlled, because they have already developed a mass base of followers. Ideological movements' mode of infiltration is truly broad and systematic, something which is seldom realized by most people." (Haedar Nashir, *Manifestasi Gerakan Tarbiyah: Bagaimana Sikap Muhammadiyah?* Fifth printing [Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2007], p. 59).

formalize Islam; to force others to agree with their interpretation of Islam; and to accuse everyone who thinks differently, or rejects their interpretation, of rejecting the concept of *rahmatan lil'alamîn*, as a prelude to finally branding them as infidels and apostates. And with regard to proselytism: the fundamental spirit of *da'wa* is to provide information and to gently invite, for Islam guarantees freedom of religion (*lâ ikrâh fi al-dîn*).<sup>35</sup> Here we see the fundamental contradiction between the activities of extremist groups and the teachings of Islam, which are full of love, tolerance and openness.

This use of a common religious language makes radicals extremely dangerous, because it enables them to easily deceive many Muslims and to infiltrate almost anywhere, anytime. Through this strategy, combined with militancy and strong financial support from abroad and within our country, extremist movements have deeply infiltrated most sectors of Indonesian society and are seeking to influence the majority of Muslims to follow their understanding of Islam. Until now, the Muslim community at large, and the government of Indonesia, have been deceived and/or permitted the activities of extremist movements, to the point that radical groups are increasingly large and powerful, and more and more easily force their agendas not only upon Islamic mass organizations but also upon the government, political parties, the mass media, the business world and educational institutions.

The militant behavior and truth claims asserted by radical groups often leaves the majority of Muslims, including opportunistic politicians, confused how to respond, because any rejection will be construed as opposing Islamic *shari'a*, although in fact this is not the case.<sup>36</sup> Thus it is not surprising that many government authori-

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35. "The proper role of government, concerning (extremists' use of force and calling it) *da'wa* is to have the ulama and intellectuals advise and correct those who are wrong. If (the extremists) fail to immediately accept this advice, the government must enforce the law by arresting and sentencing them to prison, in accordance with their wrongdoing." ~ The Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar, Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, in *Ocean of Revelations: Understanding Islam as a Blessing for All Creation*, Episode 5: "Da'wa" ("Proselytism,") Program Supervisor: KH. A. Mustofa Bisri, ©LibForAll Foundation 2009).

36. [Translator's note: for a detailed discussion of *shari'a*, see Chapter III of this book ("The Ideology and Agenda of Extremist Movements in Indonesia"), especially the section entitled "Prefatory Remarks."]

ties and opportunistic political parties prefer to simply follow the dictates of extremist groups. One common example is the issuance of unconstitutional regional *shari'a* regulations, which in fact are jurisprudential (*fiqh*) regulations that do not convey the true message or teachings of *shari'a* itself. Their issuance is characterized by intolerance, and they violate both universal civil rights and the rights of religious minorities. Because they are derived from a jurisprudential understanding of Islam that is narrow and time-bound, they also fail to reflect the essence of religious teaching, which is full of spirituality, tolerance and love for all humanity.

In short, opportunistic politicians who work with extremist political parties or groups are also highly dangerous. They have joined the extremists in driving our nation towards a deep chasm, which threatens destruction and national disintegration. They care nothing about, and indeed, are actively engaged in sacrificing the future of our multi-religious and multi-ethnic nation. It appears that they place importance only upon their private political ambitions, in order to acquire wealth and power.

The hardline movement in Indonesia consists of various groups that support one another in achieving their common agenda, whether outside or within the institutions of government. Two extremely clear and present dangers are their persistent efforts to identify Islam with Wahhabi/Muslim Brotherhood ideology, and their attempt to annihilate our nation's culture and traditions and replace them with foreign culture and traditions that reek of Wahhabism, but are claimed to represent the culture and traditions of Islam. Extremist success in either or both of these endeavors will place the Indonesian nation and its people beneath the thumb of the global Wahhabi/Muslim Brotherhood ideological network. And what is most disturbing about their activities, is the fact that radical movements have already succeeded in infiltrating to the heart of government institutions, and are using these to accomplish their goals.

Extremist agents have also infiltrated the Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, or MUI), which knowledgeable observers have identified as a bunker of fundamen-

talist and subversive movements.<sup>37</sup> This quasi-governmental organization, which was established by Suharto's New Order regime in order to control Indonesia's Muslim community, has largely fallen into the grip of radicals, and is now dictating to, and in many ways controlling, the actions of government. Thus it is not surprising that *fatwas* originating with the MUI are counter-productive and provoke controversy, such as those banning secularism, pluralism and liberalism, and branding as deviant certain groups within society, thus provoking violent actions in the name of Islam.

Numerous acts of violence committed by radical groups such as the Front for the Defense of Islam (FPI)—which injure and destroy the property of those proclaimed “deviant” by the MUI—and the support by MUI's leadership of those linked to such actions, confirms that the MUI is now playing a key role among extremist movements in Indonesia. At present, there is even a Hizb ut-Tahrir member of MUI, although Hizb ut-Tahrir explicitly aims to establish a global Islamic caliphate, which ideologically conflicts with Pancasila and necessarily entails the destruction of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

The low degree of attention and concern paid to the extremist phenomenon is not confined to radical ideology, movements and infiltration. The flow of Wahhabi money—which not only subsidizes terrorism, but also the spread of extremist ideology through global Wahhabization efforts—also goes largely unmentioned.<sup>38</sup>

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37. See “MUI Bunker Islam Radikal,” posted on the Wahid Institute's website at [http://www.wahidinstitute.org/Program/Detail/?id=47/hl=id/MUI\\_Bunker\\_Islam\\_Radikal](http://www.wahidinstitute.org/Program/Detail/?id=47/hl=id/MUI_Bunker_Islam_Radikal).

38. In his book *The Two Faces of Islam: Saudi Fundamentalism and its Role in Terrorism*, Stephen Sulaiman Schwartz clearly and convincingly describes the flow of Wahhabi money to finance global Wahhabization efforts and acts of international terrorism committed in the name of Islam. During the Balkan conflict, for example, Wahhabis used the pretext of defending Bosnian Muslims from ethnic cleansing, to spread their ideology by building infrastructure for education and worship. The Wahhabis specifically employ education (*tarbiyah*) and worship (*ubūdiyyah*) as ideological camouflage to spread their narrow and rigid understanding of religion. While in the case of the World Trade Center, it is already clear who was the mastermind behind that tragedy. (Stephen Sulaiman Schwartz (2002). *The Two Faces of Islam: Saudi Fundamentalism and Its Role in Terrorism*. New York: Doubleday. Published in Indonesian as: *Dua Wajah Islam: Mod-*

Until now, the flow of Wahhabi money to Indonesia has not attracted serious public attention, although the phenomenon of extremist infiltration is backed by extraordinary financial support, to the point that radicalism has become a major business that delivers profit to many of its agents.

Some people are aware that huge amounts of Wahhabi petrodollars are flowing into Indonesia, but it's difficult to prove the details in the field, because those who receive the funds in question are highly sensitive to this issue and generally refuse to speak about it. It appears that extremists refuse to discuss the issue of Wahhabi funding because they're ashamed to have it known that they've made a business out of religion, and are serving Wahhabi goals, and also in order to conceal Wahhabi and Muslim Brotherhood infiltration of Indonesian Islam. On the other hand, Indonesian government authorities responsible for supervising the flow of funds in and out of the country also do not publicize this issue, although high-ranking officials responsible for state security privately admit that they are extremely concerned about this phenomenon.

To cite one example of Wahhabi funding, it has long been an open secret among experts that the Wahhabi proselytism group *Rabita al-'Alam al-Islami* (the Muslim World League), financed by Saudi Arabia, directs large sums of money to radical movements in Indonesia, via Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (the Indonesian Council for Islamic Proselytism, or DDII).<sup>39</sup> Numerous campus *da'wa* activities conducted by the organization known as Lembaga Dakwa Kampus (the Institute for Campus Proselytism, or LDK)—which gave birth to the Tarbiyah movement, which in turn gave birth to the political party PKS—enjoy Saudi funding, and have been responsible for spreading the Tarbiyah virus throughout Indonesia.

In Central Java, one of our researchers obtained information from a former Muhammadiyah executive from a local sub-regency in Magelang that PKS was currently seeking mosques that needed

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*eratisme vs Fundamentalisme dalam Wacana Global*. Jakarta: LibForAll Foundation, the Wahid Institute, the Center for Islamic Pluralism, and Blantika.)

39. Noorhaidi Hasan, "Islamic Militancy, *Sharia*, and Democratic Consolidation in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," Working Paper No. 143, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (Singapore, 23 October 2007).

renovation, and villages that needed new mosques. The PKS activist responsible for this project openly admitted to the former Muhammadiyah executive that all the funding for this project came from Saudi Arabia. If a mosque was to be built or renovated, the local inhabitants were merely requested to support the PKS electorally. According to the activist, “In 2008, 11 mosques are already scheduled for renovation or construction with Saudi money” in Magelang Regency alone. Nearly all the mosques in Magelang that are infiltrated by the PKS using this strategy are attended by NU followers.<sup>40</sup> If the Saudis and PKS are working on 11 mosques in one regency alone (out of more than 400 regencies in Indonesia), imagine how much Wahhabi money is going to build mosques in all of Indonesia, motivated by political calculations!

After a PKS candidate unexpectedly triumphed in the West Java gubernatorial election in July of 2008, a Nahdlatul Ulama vice chairman informed our researchers that this victory was marked by PKS success in capturing numerous NU mosques and their congregations. Although the NU vice chairman was shocked by this occurrence, the PKS success in capturing NU mosques and congregations should not surprise anyone. A virulent ideology—supported by vast sums of foreign money, deployed in a systematic manner—can infiltrate nearly anywhere, and overcome disorganized opposition. In other words, as *ulama* often state: *al-haqq bi lâ nizhâm tughlab al-bâthil bi al-nizhâm* (truth which is not organized may be readily defeated by evil that is).

Extremist agents often shout that foreigners, including Western foundations and governments, employ their money to destroy Islam in Indonesia, and hurl accusations that a Zionist/Christian conspiracy lurks behind such efforts. In reality, Western governments and foundations such as Ford Foundation and the Asia Foundation openly publicize the programs they conduct, so that the public may know what they are actually doing, and how much money they’re spending on the projects in question.<sup>41</sup> Although

40. Research interview conducted in Magelang Regency in August, 2008.

41. The United States government heavily funds training to build human resources capacity in conjunction with democracy, throughout the developing world. The National Democratic Institute, a quasi-governmental institute from the United States that seeks to promote democracy in Indonesia, “typically works

LibForAll Foundation's funding is extremely small, and the majority of its board members, advisors and management are native Indonesians, it too reports its programs in an open and transparent manner.

This is completely different from foreign Wahhabi/Muslim Brotherhood movements and their various accomplices in Indonesia. The research contained in this book clearly demonstrates that while extremists scream that foreigners are coming to Indonesia with vast sums of money to destroy Islam.... of course that is *true*, because the foreigners are activists from transnational movements from the Middle East, who spend fantastic sums of petrodollars to Wahhabeize and destroy an Indonesian Islam that is polite, tolerant and spiritual, and to transform Indonesia in accordance with their utopian dream of an ideal Islamic state which does not exist anywhere in the world, including the Middle East.<sup>42</sup>

Wrapped in Arab-looking turbans, baggy white robes and beards, which several Indonesian figures have described as the garb

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with parties from across the ideological spectrum to foster a genuine multiparty political system. However, in most countries, resource limitations and other considerations prevent the Institute from working with all registered political parties. In such cases, the Institute typically selects its partners based on their commitment to democratic principles and non-violence rather than by their political beliefs. In addition, as appropriate, NDI considers objective criteria such as: political viability and base of popular support, as evidenced by legitimate election results; level of grassroots organization; [and] the ability to absorb assistance.... NDI continues to support reform efforts within Indonesia's major political parties. In response to issues parties face—such as training of activists and members, direct election campaigns, policy development, leadership selection, analysis of voter attitudes and political party development and reform—NDI continues to provide comparative global expert advice, information, and skills-building training to party leaders and instructors at national, provincial, and local levels.” (See: <http://www.ndi.org/indonesia>). Interviews with key NDI officials in March of 2008 indicate that the party which most actively participates in, and benefits from, the NDI's Political Party Development program in Indonesia is the PKS.

42. Saudi activities in Indonesia represent only a small fraction of a more than US\$70 billion campaign (from 1979 to 2003, and still rising) to spread the fundamentalist Wahhabi sect throughout the world. These constantly intensifying Wahhabi proselytization efforts constitute “the largest worldwide propaganda campaign ever mounted—dwarfing the Soviets' propaganda efforts at the height of the Cold War.” (See: “How Billions in Oil Money Spawned a Global Terror Network,” in *US News & World Report*, 7 December 2003).

of robed thugs, they wish to convince others that the extremist views they scream at the top of their lungs and try to force on everyone else represent the true message of Islam, for which all must struggle. Yet in reality they are damaging the religion of Islam, and are responsible for countless acts of violence which they and their allies have committed in the name of Islam, both in Indonesia and throughout the world. And the rest of us, as Muslims, should be deeply ashamed of their actions.

The primary reason we must oppose hardline movements is to restore honor and respect to Islam, which the extremists have desecrated, while at the same time preserving Pancasila and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Victory in the struggle against extremists will restore the majesty of Islamic teachings as *rahmatan lil'alamîn*—a blessing for all creation—and this represents a vital key to building a peaceful world.

We have conducted and published this study in order to raise awareness among all components of Indonesian society, particularly the elite and mass media, concerning the dangers of extremist ideology and doctrine with which Middle Eastern transnational movements are flooding our nation, and which have sprouted like mushrooms in the rainy season over the past decade, during our democratic era. This work is also intended as a call to defend and preserve Pancasila, which reflects the essence of *shari'a* and transforms Islam into a true blessing for all creation.

In chapter five, this study recommends a number of strategic steps to guard and preserve Pancasila, the Basic Constitution of 1945 and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and our nation's glorious cultural and spiritual heritage and traditions. These strategic steps include:

- Encourage and inspire the public, including Indonesia's elites, to be open-minded, humble and devoted to constant learning, so that they may comprehend the spirituality and essence of religious teachings, and thus become tranquil souls.
- Halt in its tracks and eliminate—using responsible methods—the vicious cycle of radicalization that spreads extremist ideology and doctrine, by promoting enlightened educa-

tion (in the broadest sense of the term), and by teaching and practicing the sublime commands of Islam, which foster an awareness of the need to become a humble, tolerant and peaceful servant of God.

Working together, while reminding each other of the truth (*wa tawāshau bil-haqq*) and always being patient (*wa tawāshau bil-shabr*), are vital keys in this endeavor. We must be polite, tolerant, open-minded and transparent in our efforts to preserve the glorious vision of our ancestors and founding fathers. A noble purpose should not be disgraced by the use of unethical methods, hatred towards others or harsh actions. Exalted goals must be accomplished using methods that are truthful, sincere, resolute, wise and responsible, without the slightest admixture of arrogance, compulsion or the like.

In this context, it's appropriate that we recall Shaykh Ibn 'Atailah al-Iskandari's advice, from his opus *Hikam*: "Do not closely associate with anyone whose spiritual state does not inspire you, and whose speech does not lead you to God" (*lā tash-hab man lā yunhid-luka ilā Allah hāluhu, wa la yahdika ilā Allāh maqāluhu*). People who are convinced that they know more than anyone else about Islam, and yet are full of hatred towards any of God's creatures who do not travel the same path as they; and those who claim themselves to be in possession of the absolute truth, and for that reason entitled to act as God's vice-regents on earth (caliphs) and to dictate how everyone else must live—clearly, their words and behavior will not lead us into the presence of God. Their dream of an Islamic state is merely an illusion, for the true Islamic state is not to be found in the structure of any government, but rather, in hearts which are open to God and all His creatures.

Truth and falsehood are abundantly clear. Extremists wish to compel the entire Indonesian people to prostrate before their extreme and rigid doctrines concerning Islam. The history of our nation—including the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, the Padri War, the Darul Islam rebellion and other such bloody eruptions—clearly demonstrates that restless, discontented souls will constantly shove our nation towards the brink of destruction until they succeed in ac-

quiring total power, or we stop them, as earlier generations of tranquil souls—i.e., *our ancestors*—have done so many times before. Now it is *we* who must decide the fate of our nation.

Jakarta, 8 March 2009