

Lowy Institute Paper 05

joining the caravan?

THE MIDDLE EAST, ISLAMISM
AND INDONESIA

Anthony Bubalo

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Executive summary

Against the background of the ‘war on terror’, many people have come to view Islamism as a monolithic ideological movement spreading from the centre of the Muslim world, the Middle East, to Muslim countries around the globe. To borrow a phrase from Abdullah Azzam, the legendary jihadist who fought to expel the Soviet Union from Afghanistan in the 1980s, many today see all Islamists as fellow travellers in a global fundamentalist caravan. This paper explores the truth of that perception. It does it in part by looking at the way Islamism has evolved in the Middle East. It then assesses the impact that Islamist ideas from the Middle East have had in Indonesia, a country often cited as an example of a formerly peaceful Muslim community radicalised by external influences.

The evolution of Islamism in the Middle East has always been reflected in the social, political and economic changes that have taken place in the region. Over the course of that evolution three themes have been evident: an effort toward Islamic revival in the first half of the twentieth century as the Muslim world attempted to deal with the dissolution of the Ottoman Caliphate and the physical and intellectual encroachments of the West; a radicalisation of thought in the second half of the century, as young Islamists, stimulated by social, economic and political crises, came into conflict with ruling regimes; and finally a reassessment at the end of the century, prompted in part by political failure which has seen Islamists either seek greater political integration in their own societies

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or head towards new supranational forms of activism.

Many Islamists, some of whom had clashed violently with their own societies in the past, now seek political integration and advocate democracy. On the other hand, exploiting the opportunities provided by globalisation, some Islamists focus on the supranational. Among the latter are so called salafists, or what Olivier Roy has called 'neo-fundamentalists', who emphasise the effort to purify Islam of historical, cultural and national accretions and the creation of a generic transnational Islamic identity. By and large peaceful, neo-fundamentalism nonetheless includes an ultra-violent element, led by al-Qaeda and its partisans who launch acts of terrorism in the name of defending a global, if virtual, Islamic community against those they claim to be its existential enemies, namely the United States and its Western allies.

The transmission of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas from the Middle East to Indonesia reflects this diversity. Most often these ideas and models of activism are imported by Indonesian Islamists looking for new ways of thinking about the relationship between Islam, politics and society. Indonesian students who travelled to the Middle East came back influenced by the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood. This helped inform their participation in Indonesia's process of democratisation. Similarly, Indonesian jihadists who went to Afghanistan in the 1980s and 90s, and forged links with the future leaders and activists of al-Qaeda, were critical to the emergence of the Indonesian terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). In some cases, ideas from the Middle East are more purposefully exported to Indonesia, with Saudi Arabia playing a critical role in the emergence of a *salafi* current within the Indonesian Muslim community.

The impact of these ideas has varied. Muslim Brotherhood ideas have helped the Islamist Prosperity and Welfare Party (PKS) play a positive role in Indonesian politics, though some of the darker sides of the PKS, notably the anti-Semitic views and anti-Western conspiracy theories subscribed to by some of its members, also seem to have been influenced by thinking from the Middle East. Many of the Indonesian groups supported by Saudi Arabia are essentially concerned with questions of

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morality and Islamic piety — albeit in a fairly puritanical form. They limit their activities to preaching and education. But some *salafi* groups do cross into acts of vigilantism and sectarian violence. More insidious has been the influence al-Qaeda and other Middle Eastern sources have had on JI's doctrine and operational techniques.

Nonetheless, Indonesian Islamists and neo-fundamentalists have also been selective in their appropriation and application of ideas from the Middle East in Indonesia. A process of indigenisation is almost always at work to some degree. In terms of Muslim Brotherhood thinking, the gradualist approach of Hassan al-Banna has been utilised more than the revolutionary ideas of Sayyid Qutb and his radical heirs. The influence of Middle Eastern *salafi* sheikhs is sometimes manipulated by their local Indonesian representatives. Even the relationship between al-Qaeda and JI is not one of command and control; and there are, arguably, tensions within JI between the imperatives of al-Qaeda's global project and more local, but still violent, priorities.

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

The issues canvassed in the paper are of obvious relevance to policy makers. At a time when al-Qaeda is increasingly seen as an ideology rather than an organisation, assessing the extent to which that ideology has spread, and how it has done so, will provides clues as to the future trajectory of the terrorist threat. But it is also important for policy makers to understand the differences within, and evolution of, Islamism with respect to the role of Islamist parties in nascent democracies.

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A number of policy implications flow from the conclusions of this paper:

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

In focusing on the transnational dimensions of contemporary terrorism, governments should not lose sight of local causes. Today there is a tendency to see contemporary terrorism as largely a function of the spread of a global ideology. But while the transmission of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas is part of the problem, it is by no means a defining characteristic. More important in terms of determining the future trajectory of this threat in Indonesia is what occurs in the country, from the dynamics of Muslim-Christian relations and the continuation of sectarian violence, to the relationship between Islamists and the state.

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

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

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3. Take a less timorous approach to engagement with Islamists

Initiatives such as inter-faith dialogues and conferences on Islam play an important symbolic role in ensuring that the ‘war on terror’ does not poison relations between the Muslim world and the West. But Western governments tend to be far too timorous in whom they invite. More would be achieved by pursuing a dialogue with a broader range of Islamist views. This could help break down the misconceptions and conspiracy theories about the West that one often finds among Islamists. Exposure to the ‘radical mainstream’ will also provide Western governments and specialists with a greater and more nuanced understanding of the various manifestations of Islamism and neo-fundamentalism.

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

Combating terrorism is not simply about fighting terrorists but also about combating the ideas that underpin it. Some outside observers have identified the radical teachings of a number of *pesantren* in Indonesia as part of the terrorism problem and have advocated the reform of Islamic education. But other forums for radical ideas exist outside these *pesantren*, including channels of electronic communication and student experiences in the Middle East, and these are often much more effective conveyers of ideas. Even in the best case, promoting the reform of Islamic education won’t stop the spread of these ideas. In the worst case, such policies will be seen as yet another example of Western interference and efforts to dilute Islam. As tempting as such involvement may seem, it is better for the West to stay out of Islamic education.

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5. Encourage transparency

The complex question of Saudi Arabian religious propagation in Indonesia (and elsewhere) needs to be addressed. But the answer does not lie simply in placing additional pressure on the Saudis to clamp down harder on material support for Islamic propagation. In Indonesia, legitimate and non-jihadist educational and welfare institutions have suffered as a result of pressure on Saudi Arabia, leading to considerable resentment against the ‘war on terror’. This could ultimately push hitherto peaceful groups toward more militant financiers. The solution is to encourage Saudi Arabia to accompany greater regulation of its charitable and propagation activities with greater transparency.

6. Be conscious of double standards and the democracy dilemma

The most damaging thing for Western governments in the context of the ‘war of ideas’ is the perception of double standards. In the Middle East, and elsewhere in the Muslim world, the West needs to accept that democracy will sometimes deliver Islamist victories. This is not a bad thing. In Indonesia, Islamists have played a positive role in Indonesia’s process of democratisation, reflecting the growing understanding among Islamist parties around the world that to be successful they need to adapt their political programs to incorporate the everyday concerns of voters. The democratic credentials of every individual Islamist group should not be assumed. But neither should Islamism’s purported incompatibility with democracy.

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Glossary

NB: all words are English transliterations of Arabic words (where necessary Indonesian transliterations have been provided in parentheses).

ahl al-thughoor (ahluts tsughur): historically, those who defended Islam's frontier zone in the early centuries of its expansion, specifically the area straddled by the Anti-Taurus and Taurus Mountains of what is today Turkey. Contemporary jihadists use it as a reference to those who fight to defend the Muslim community, notably Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Muhammed bin Abdullah al-Saif.

bid'a: a pejorative reference to innovations introduced into the practice of Islam.

da'i: literally a 'caller' to Islam or religious propagator.

dar al-Harb (darul harbi): literally the 'region of war'. Used in Islamic jurisprudence to refer to non-Muslim parts of the world which were viewed as inherently opposed to Islam.

dar al-Islam (darul Islam): literally 'the region of Islam', used in Islamic jurisprudence to refer to areas under Islamic control (including those that contain non-Muslims).

da'wa (dakwa): literally 'call' to Islam or religious propagation.

farḍ ayn: an individual obligation incumbent on all members of the Muslim community.

farḍ kifāya: a collective obligation, fulfilled provided at least some Muslims perform it.

fitna: internal discord within the Muslim community.

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fiqh: Islamic jurisprudence.

ghazwa al-fikri (ghazwul fikri): the ideological or intellectual assault on Islam by Western ideas (broadly defined to include capitalism, secularism and communism etc).

hakimiya: an Islamist concept formulated by the Pakistani Islamist thinker Abu al-A'la Maududi referring to the sovereignty of God in an Islamic state.

Islamism: Islam conceived as an ideology. Most commonly refers to political Islam, but can also mean the application of Islamic principles in the economy, arts, education etc.

jahiliya: used by the Pakistani Islamist thinker Abu al-A'la Maududi and elaborated by the Egyptian Islamist ideologue Sayyid Qutb to condemn their respective societies for abandoning the true path of Islam. The historical *jahiliya* was the period of 'ignorance' that had existed prior to the Prophet's preaching of Islam, though the word can also be translated as 'barbarism'.

jihād: literally 'striving', it can be defined broadly as any effort taken in the cause of Islam. It is often divided into the greater and lesser *jihad*, the former being the personal struggle for a perfect spiritual life and the latter involving everything from missionary activity to holy war. Islamists and neo-fundamentalists most often use it to describe some form of armed action.

jihadist-salafism: the extreme, violent wing of contemporary salafism. It has the same literalist approach to Islam as salafism but substitutes the latter's fervent religiosity with an advocacy of violent *jihad*.

madrassa/madaris (pl): Islamic college, usually for secondary-level education.

manhaj: methodology or approach to Islamic faith.

mujahid/mujahideen (pl): one who participates/participants in *jihad*.

neo-fundamentalism: a term coined by the French author Olivier Roy to describe a range of groups and movements which share a conservative, literalist approach to Islam but whose activism ranges from contemporary salafist groups concerned with reforming religious practices to jihadist-salafists like al-Qaeda, pre-occupied with *jihad*.

pesantren: literally, 'the place of *santri* (Muslim students)', the term is

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usually applied to Islamic boarding and day schools where students receive an intensive religious education. Larger *pesantren* often contain *madrassa* (colleges) for formal secondary education.

as-salaf as-salih: literally, the ‘pious predecessors’, the first three generations of the Prophet Muhammed’s followers seen as the paragons for the correct faith and practice of Islam.

salafism: a method or approach to Islam. Historically it has been an effort to revive what are viewed as Islam’s fundamentals, returning the religion to that practiced by *as-salaf as-salih* (though there is not always agreement between self-described salafists as to what these fundamentals are). While most revivalists and Islamist movements are salafist to some degree, contemporary salafism describes distinct groups that preach a literalist approach to Islam and are largely concerned with reforming the religious practises of individual Muslims.

Salafiya: a historical movement for Islamic reform marked by the ideas of three thinkers in particular, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–1897) Mohammed Abduh (1849–1905) and Rashid Rida (1865–1935). While they also sought to revive the true practice of Islam via reference to *as-salaf as-salih*, as a movement it is distinct from contemporary salafism; most of today’s salafists would condemn the Salafiya as religious innovators.

santri: term applied to Muslim students (especially those studying at a *pesantren*), but is also used in Indonesia to refer to devout (as opposed to lax or nominal) Muslims.

shari’a: God’s revealed law.

sheikh: term given to men of high Islamic learning.

shirk: polytheism.

takfir: the declaration in Islamic jurisprudence that a Muslim has become apostate and therefore potentially licit to be killed; effectively excommunication.

taqlid: literally ‘blind adherence’, it refers to the *strict* following of one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Often used pejoratively by salafists.

tarbiya: education.

tawhid: monotheism, a central tenet of Islam.

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Wahabism: the Islamic creed which originated with the eighteenth century revivalist movement of Muhammed Ibn Abd al-Wahab (1703–1787) and became a state ideology via Abd al-Wahab’s alliance with a central Arabian tribal chieftain, Muhammed Ibn Saud. Today it is the official creed of the Saudi state, though its adherents would rarely define themselves as Wahabists, preferring the term *salafi* or *muwahidoon* (a reference to the emphasis placed by the creed on *tawhid*). Wahabism is a *salafi* movement *par excellence*, and Saudi Arabia has contributed immeasurably to the spread of salafism internationally. But not all salafists are Wahabists, nor are all salafists oriented toward Saudi Arabian religious scholars.

umma: the community of Muslims.

ulema (ulama): religious scholars.

usrah/nizam al-usar: literally ‘family’/‘family system’ employed as the basic unit of organisation by the Muslim Brotherhood.

ustadz: respectful title for a teacher.

Introduction

The popular jihad movement with its long path of effort, great sacrifice and serious losses, purifies souls so that they tower above the lower material world. Important matters rise above petty disputes about money, short-term desires and inferior provisions. Malice disappears and souls are sharpened; and the caravan moves up from the foot of the mountain to the lofty summit, far away from the stench of clay and the struggles of the low ground. Along the path of jihad, the leadership is categorised. Abilities become manifest from the offerings and sacrifices, and men come forth with bravery and service.

Ilhaq bil-Qaafila by Abdullah Azzam.¹

It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.

The Clash of Civilisations by Samuel P. Huntington.²

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In 1987 a Palestinian Islamist, Abdullah Azzam, wrote a polemic entitled *Ilhaq bil-Qaafila* ('Join the Caravan'). In it Azzam, a central figure among foreign *mujahideen* fighting in Afghanistan in the 1980s, urged Muslims to join the *jihād* against the Soviet Union. Appealing to the idea that Muslims worldwide formed one supranational community or *umma*, and citing Islamic jurists and scholars, he argued that Muslim lands everywhere were like one land. Coming to the defence of Islam in Afghanistan was therefore a religious duty that all Muslims were required to fulfil. 'Join the Caravan' even helpfully listed telephone numbers in Peshawar that individuals could call to join the *jihād*.

Azzam's zeal for the cause and tireless efforts recruiting foreign jihadists would ultimately see him acclaimed, including by *Time* magazine, as the chief modern reviver of *jihād*. Of course, notions of *jihād* and of a supranational Muslim community were hardly new. Most Islamists had long considered that national borders were simply twentieth century Western impositions aimed at weakening the *umma*. In practice, however, few Islamists were able to escape those boundaries, becoming for the most part preoccupied with events in their own states and societies.³ What most Islamist movements of the 1970s and 80s called *jihād* was, therefore, usually either the fight against their own 'impious' governments or, in the case of Palestinian or Lebanese Islamists, against Israel.

By contrast Azzam's horizons were far broader. A one time partisan of the Palestinian struggle, he reputedly abandoned it because it was insufficiently Islamic, sullied by secular nationalism. While never forsaking the Palestinian cause in his writings, it was in Afghanistan that he found his model *jihād*. In Afghanistan, he noted, *jihād* was led by the 'sons of the Islamic movement' with clear Islamic aims. But even the *jihād* in Afghanistan was, for Azzam, merely one part of a broader struggle to defend Islam against its enemies. Forcing a Soviet withdrawal would not be the end of *jihād*, just the beginning. Azzam argued that *jihād* would remain an obligation until Muslim rule was restored in all former Muslim lands, from 'Andalusia' to the Philippines.

Azzam's Islamist caravan outlived the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan;

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indeed it survived Azzam himself who was assassinated in 1989. Long after the Soviet withdrawal, foreign jihadists could be found participating in Muslim struggles in Mindanao in the Philippines, in Bosnia and in Chechnya. A more sinister evolution would be manifest in the involvement of Islamist extremists in the World Trade Centre bombing in 1993 and in the terrorist attacks against US embassies in Africa in 1998. But the most spectacular echo of Azzam's ideas would come on 11 September 2001. Whether or not he would have approved, al-Qaeda's attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre were an extreme elaboration of the idea articulated by Azzam that the first priority of Muslims was the defence of the *umma* against Islam's external enemies.

A clash of ideologies

In 1993 Harvard Professor Samuel Huntington wrote his famous polemic in the US journal, *Foreign Affairs*, entitled 'The Clash of Civilizations'. Huntington argued that with the end of the Cold War the battle lines of future conflicts would be cultural; that is, they would occur between 'civilisations'. Despite the fact that Huntington had, in his original article, identified seven or eight major civilisations, his thesis became synonymous with the idea of conflict between the Western and Muslim worlds. The events of 11 September 2001 would, of course, contribute to this perception. Today, whether one agrees with Huntington's thesis or not, it has become a touchstone for public discussion and debate about the relationship between Islam and the West.

Hoping to reassure nervous Muslims while waging a global 'war on terror', most Western governments have publicly rejected Huntington's argument. But they have done so with a regularity that implies many non-Muslims and Muslims still suspect a fundamental conflict between Islam and the West is precisely what is occurring. Keen to underline the point that most Muslims are not the foe, Western governments have pointed the finger at Islamists; that is, those Muslims who view Islam as an ideology rather than just a religion. They allude not to Huntington's clash of civilisations but to an old fashioned clash of ideologies in which

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the communist reds of old have been replaced by Islamist greens. Thus for US President George Bush the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 were driven in part by the terrorists' abhorrence of democracy.⁴ Similarly the Australian government's 2004 White Paper on terrorism argued that it was the ideology of the terrorists that lay at the heart of the threat facing the world.⁵

One finds echoes of this view among Islamists who typically make a symmetrical comparison between Islamism and 'Western' ideologies such as capitalism and communism.⁶ The West's offensive against the Islamic world is seen as not just a physical threat but as *al-ghazwa al-fikri* — an ideological assault. The veterans of the Afghan *jihad* of the 1980s believed they had defeated one of the world's major ideological blocs, manifest in the Soviet Union's ignominious withdrawal from Afghanistan and the collapse of the Soviet state shortly thereafter. Incidentally, many Islamists also happily subscribe to Huntington's thesis (even if only a minority have gone on to become partisans of al-Qaeda's campaign of terrorism).

Recent acts of terrorism have given Islamism a global dimension. The seemingly worldwide operational linkages established by terrorist networks are seen as underpinned by a common ideology. Today Islamist movements everywhere are viewed with suspicion. Of course some Islamists readily contribute to the perception that they are part of a global movement. Al-Qaeda articulates its goals and positions with regard to a global Muslim community that it is trying to rouse into conflict with the West. The literalist approach to Islam known as salafism has become a vehicle for the creation of a new global Islamic identity stripped of any national or cultural references.⁷ And Islamists and Islamic networks have helped build via the internet what some authors have labelled a 'virtual *umma*'.

Finally, if there is an epicentre of the Islamist ideology it is typically seen to be the Middle East. In parallel to the technical and organisational linkages that groups such as al-Qaeda have established beyond the region, there is a concern today that Islamist ideas from the Middle East have infected and radicalised Muslim communities around the globe, taking the region's conflicts onto the international stage. Thus critics

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of the Bush Administration argue that it has not done enough to solve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and that this has, in turn, hampered its efforts to defeat terrorism around the world. At the same time the Administration has regularly identified Iraq as a key front in the global ‘war on terror’, an interpretation that al-Qaeda no doubt shares, even if it obviously portrays it in different terms.

Islamism, the Middle East and Indonesia

This paper is intended as a contribution to the broader debate about the role Islamists play in contemporary international politics. Its line of inquiry is framed by some of the perceptions — and misperceptions — mentioned above; specifically that Islamism is today a monolithic ideological movement spreading from its putative centre, the Middle East, to Muslim countries around the world. Or, as implied by the title of this paper, that Islamists around the world are fellow travellers in a global, ideological or fundamentalist caravan.

Obviously, there is a limit to what can be achieved in a paper of this length. There is already a growing literature on the technical and operational links between various Islamist groups, most notably those engaged in terrorism, to which we don’t intend to add.⁸ We have focused largely on the ideological dimension, undertaking what is, in effect, a case study examining the impact of Islamist ideas from the Middle East on Indonesia, a country often cited as an example *par excellence* of a formerly irenic Muslim community radicalised by external influences. We also hope this paper will contribute in its own right to a broader understanding of the evolution of Islamism — and other forms of Islamic activism — in both the Middle East and in Indonesia.

Our analysis occurs against the background of a number of major changes taking place in both the Muslim world and the West’s perception of the Muslim world. An obvious change has been the impact of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. At a time when al-Qaeda is increasingly seen as an ideology rather than an organisation, assessing the extent to which that ideology or worldview has spread will provide clues as to the future trajectory of the terrorist threat.⁹ Terrorism has

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also coloured the West's view of Islamism more generally. One senses that an appreciation for the diversity of Islamist ideas and activism has been lost and thus the attempt will be made in this paper to disentangle some of the different currents of contemporary Islamism and Islamic religiosity as well as the contentious question of Islamism's relationship with democracy.

Another major transformation in the shape of the Muslim world of which many in the international community often seem unaware is that most of the world's Muslims today no longer live in the Middle East. While figures vary, today some 350–380 million of the world's 1.2 to 1.5 billion Muslims are found in the region — in other words still a sizeable proportion of the total Muslim community, but a minority nevertheless. The rest of the world's Muslims are either of Middle Eastern descent but have migrated outside the region, or are part of the world's many non-Middle Eastern Muslim communities.

Indonesia is an excellent example of this shift in demographic weight. Today it has the largest Muslim population of any country. The 2000 census showed that there were 178 million Muslims in Indonesia, 88.2 per cent of the then total population of 201 million.¹⁰ This figure needs to be treated with some care as Indonesians are obliged to adhere to one of five formally recognised religions (in addition to Islam, these are Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism), leading to some probable 'inflation' of the number of Muslims. Nonetheless, census data throughout the last 50 years has consistently shown that more than three quarters of the population are self-ascribed Muslims. One interesting development in recent decades has been an acceleration in the process of Islamisation within Indonesian society. This has not greatly changed the proportion of Muslims to non-Muslims but it has significantly increased the number of pious or '*santri*' Muslims compared to unobservant or unorthodox Muslims. Far more Indonesians now regard Islam as a central part of their life. This can be measured in the popularity of 'Islamic dress', increased mosque and religious school attendance, greater numbers undertaking the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) and growing sales of Islamic literature.

Chapters One and Two will provide an overview of the central

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ideas and evolution of Islamism in the Middle East. We will proceed in Chapter Three to a discussion of some of the main vectors through which Islamist ideas have been transmitted to Indonesia. In Chapter Four we will try to assess the impact of these ideas and models of activism focusing in particular on Muslim Brotherhood inspired groups such as the so called Tarbiyah movement and the Welfare and Justice Party (PKS), salafist groups such as Laskar Jihad and al-Sofwah and terrorist groups, notably Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). Our research is not, however, driven by a purely academic interest. The analysis presented in this paper is intended to be relevant to how policy makers respond to the Islamist phenomenon in all its dimensions, from the spread of ideas that underpin terrorism to the role of Islamist parties in processes of democratisation. A concluding chapter will, therefore, consider some of the broader policy implications of this paper's findings.

Chapter 1

Revival, Radicalism and *Jihad*

Introduction

What is Islamism? Traditionally it has been defined as Islam conceived as an ideology. This is not to imply, however, that Islamism is simply the application of religion to politics. Islamists extend the traditional idea of Islam as an all encompassing religion to modern society.¹¹ In their view it should shape everything in that society, from the way it is governed, to its education and legal systems, to its culture and economy. In this respect Islamism is less the extension of religion to politics than an effort to reassert what Islamists contend has always been Islam's inherently political, social and even economic message.

Historically, the major consequence of such a view has been the Islamist's belief in the need for an Islamic state or system. For Islamists a truly Islamic society — and flowing from this, a just, prosperous and strong one — is not simply one comprised of pious Muslims, it requires an Islamic state or system. Islamists' opinions often differ over what this means in practice. For Ayatollah Khomeini, for example, an Islamic state implied clerical rule, while other Islamists have envisaged a much more circumscribed role for the clergy in governance. Indeed, Islamists are more likely to agree on what an Islamic state doesn't mean

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— secular rule and the separation of state and religion — than what it does mean.

A second key element of Islamism is its activism. For Sayyid Qutb, one of radical Islamism's seminal theorists, being a good Muslim not only meant praying five times a day, it implied political, social, and even paramilitary acts necessary to establish an Islamic state. Since the events of 11 September 2001, Islamism has commonly been associated with violent activism and terrorism. As we shall demonstrate in this chapter, Islamist movements in the Middle East have employed many different forms of activism. One central debate among Islamists is over the choice between a focus on preaching (*da'wa*), and various forms of para-military, revolutionary and, in extreme cases terroristic activism, all typically defined as *jihad*.¹² But this debate also encompasses options such as the utility of forming political parties and participation in parliamentary politics.

Is Islamism distinct from Islam? Most Muslims would make a distinction. That is, for many Muslims, it is possible to be a good Muslim without being an Islamist. For the purposes of this paper we will make it as well, though not because the Qur'an says nothing about politics; in fact, it says a great deal about law, politics, social relations and even economics. But what it says is by no means clear or undisputed, certainly in a contemporary context. This paper is not an effort to prove whether Islamist ideas and forms of activism are consistent with or reflect true Islam. Rather, we are seeking to reflect what Islamists say Islam says about politics and society and how Islamists use this as a basis for particular kinds of activism.

This is a satisfactory starting point for a definition of Islamism but it is far from definitive. Islamism is an evolving discourse about the relationship between Islam, politics and society. It needs to be understood not just in terms of ideas that have developed and changed over time, but the historical moments in which these ideas emerged and have been applied. It also needs to be emphasised that the survey of Islamism in the Middle East that we present in the next two chapters is by no means exhaustive. We have simply attempted to reflect some of Islamism's main currents, with a particular focus on those ideas and forms of activism

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that seem to have been most influential in Indonesia.

Revival and reform

Islamism was born out of a central idea, that of Islamic revival or reform. Even today one still finds at the core of Islamism the notion that the world of Islam is in decline and must somehow be restored. Thus, while most Islamists can trace their immediate inspiration to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, they can also be seen as heirs to a revivalist or reformist tradition that runs the course of Islamic history. Two revivalist movements in particular provide a context for the development of contemporary Islamism in the Middle East: the eighteenth century movement of Muhammed Ibn Abd al-Wahab (1703–1787) in central Arabia; and the nineteenth and twentieth century movement led by three thinkers — Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–1897) Mohammed Abduh (1849–1905) and Rashid Rida (1865–1935).

Ibn Abd al-Wahab's main concern was what he saw as the weakening of Islam by the pre-Islamic traditions and local practices of the Bedouin tribes of central Arabia. To remedy this he called for a return to the fundamentals of the religion and to the Islam practiced by the so called pious predecessors — *as-salaf as-salih* — the first three generations of the Prophet Muhammed's followers. Ibn Abd al-Wahab placed particular emphasis on the central Islamic tenet of monotheism (*tawhid*) and promoted a strict, literal reading of the Qur'an and the Sunna (normative conduct or practice based on the Prophet's life). His goal was to purify Islam of what he saw as innovations (*bid'a*), blind imitation (*taqlid*), and idolatry (*shirk*). In practice this meant an assault on mystical and popular Islam — notably Sufism and its tradition of saint worship — and Shi'ism. A follower of the Hanbali school — generally considered the most literal of the four schools of Islamic law — Ibn Abd al-Wahab helped revive the ideas of the thirteenth century Hanbali jurist, Ibn Taymiyah, though he was more dogmatic in his approach than the latter.¹³

Part of the dogmatism associated with what would come to be known as Wahabism resulted from the transformation of Ibn Abd al-Wahab's creed into a state ideology via his alliance with a local tribal chieftain,

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Muhammed Ibn Saud.¹⁴ Ibn Abd al-Wahab's preaching questioned the dominant social and political order; challenging both the loyalty of Bedouin tribesmen to their tribal leaders, and the religious orthodoxy vested in the Ottoman Sultan, at that time nominal suzerain of central Arabia.¹⁵ Ibn Saud put this to political effect and struck what would still be seen in modern day Saudi Arabia as a contract between himself and Ibn Abd al-Wahab.¹⁶ The latter would legitimise and help expand Ibn Saud's political authority over other tribes, while the former would help spread Ibn Abd al-Wahab's religious message and indeed form a state along its puritan lines. This first short lived Saudi 'state' would be destroyed in 1818 by the Ottoman Khedive of Egypt, Muhammed Ali. Ibn Saud and Ibn Abd al-Wahab's twentieth century heirs would, however, revive the original contract to more lasting effect in the forging of modern day Saudi Arabia.

The interplay between the revival of Islam and politics was even more evident in the distinct revivalist movement of Afghani, Abduh and Rida in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Confronted with the stark disparity in power between Europe and the Middle East, all three thinkers addressed a common question: how could a Muslim world in decline both defend against and absorb the advances being made in the West in law, industry and military technology while remaining true to its own unique society, culture and beliefs? For all three the answer lay in the revival and reform of Islam.

For Afghani the key was not to slavishly adopt the ideas of the West, as he thought some around him were doing, but for Muslims to understand and live in accordance with the true nature of their religion which would, in turn, strengthen them against the external challenges being faced.¹⁷ Abduh similarly tried to show that the change and modernity symbolised by the West's ideas and power were not only compatible with true Islam, they were its necessary implications.¹⁸ Rida, more of a chronicler and pamphleteer, took these ideas in a more fundamentalist and conservative direction. Like Ibn Abd al-Wahab, the immediate reference was to the past and the pious predecessors; indeed their movement would be called the *Salafiyya*. But unlike Ibn Abd al-Wahab, the *Salafiyya* sought to reconcile 'modern' ideas with Islam by

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rediscovering — and in some respects reinterpreting — the virtues that they argued lay in the religion.¹⁹

It was in the shadow of the *Salafiya* that the prototypical Islamist movement, the Muslim Brotherhood was born.²⁰ Formed in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, it was, like the *Salafiya*, profoundly concerned with the decline of Islam and more specifically, the corruption of Egyptian society. For al-Banna the challenge posed by Western civilisation was amplified by the dissolution of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 and the carving up of the Ottoman Empire by Western powers.²¹ In his view the threat was not just physical however, it was an intellectual and spiritual one as well, posed by the secular ideas of the West. As for the *Salafiya*, al-Banna's cure was a return to the fundamentals of Islam. But whereas Afghani, Abduh and Rida sought to revive Islam essentially through the force of their ideas and individual activism, al-Banna's contribution was the establishment of a movement.

For al-Banna the Muslim world's decline was symbolised by its acceptance of Western forms of government and western laws — in particular the separation of religious and political authority. As a consequence, for him a return to Islam implied the establishment of an Islamic state or system (*al-nizam al-Islami*). Central to this system would be *shari'a* — God's revealed law — and the Qur'an would be its constitution. Political parties would be banned, administrative posts given to those with a religious education and the government would maintain a strict control over private morals.²²

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

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command for the Brotherhood as a whole. The main role of each family unit was education (*tarbiya*) and propagation (*da'wa*), with weekly meetings held to teach Islamic principles and correct behaviour aimed at ensuring that behaviour across all spheres of an individual's daily activities was guided by Islamic principles.²³ Each unit also provided mutual support, welfare and solidarity.

The Brotherhood's activities were not, however, solely didactic. It was deeply involved in social welfare and economic activities and organised mosques, schools, and medical clinics. It ran its own factories, providing employment opportunities for the urban poor and established athletic clubs. Moreover, while arguably ambivalent about the seizure of political power, the Brotherhood was not ambivalent about political activity.²⁴ *Shari'a* required a state to enforce it and the power to reform society was inextricably tied to the power to rule.²⁵ The Brotherhood's political and, at times, militant activism would see it, among other things, push for reform of Egypt's constitution and rail against government corruption; send volunteers to the Arab uprising in Palestine in 1936–39 and the Arab–Israeli war in 1948; coordinate strikes and violent demonstrations and carry out acts of terror and political assassination. Indeed the violent confrontation between the Brotherhood and the Egyptian government in the late 1940s would lead to al-Banna's assassination in 1949. While al-Banna's immediate successor would return the movement to a more didactic focus, to this day there remains a tension within the organisation between those who emphasise its reformist and spiritual goals and those, typically younger generations, inclined toward more overtly political activism.

Throughout the Brotherhood's history a tension has existed between its local and international objectives. Al-Banna's concept of the Islamic nation transcended political boundaries and he had as a goal the restoration of the Caliphate. By the 1940s the Brotherhood had established branches throughout the Arab world, including in Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Kuwait, Sudan and Yemen, most of which still exist today. And many of the region's Islamist organisations — and indeed some beyond the region — emerged from Brotherhood beginnings or inspiration, including the Palestinian Hamas, an-Nahda in Tunisia, the

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National Islamic Front in Sudan and the Movement of Islamic Youth (ABIM) in Malaysia. Indeed the Muslim Brotherhood describes as much a specific sociopolitical movement as a more general intellectual tendency or current within Islamism.²⁶

Yet the Egyptian Brotherhood and its various offshoots could never quite escape national boundaries. While sharing the same general intellectual or ideological approach of the parent organisation, most became preoccupied with the issues and politics of their own states, adapting their agendas and methods to suit local needs.²⁷ Indeed, a press report in late 2004 suggested that the Egyptian headquarters of the movement was even considering finally disbanding the Brotherhood's international organisation, which has been targeted as a part of the war on terror.²⁸ There are exceptions, however, which we shall deal with in greater detail in the next chapter. Most notable among them are the Qatar based Muslim Brother and tele-Islamist, Sheikh Yousef al-Qaradawi and other Muslim Brothers who, usually because of state repression, left their home countries in the Middle East and became roving Islamists working for transnational Islamic (usually Saudi) organisations.

Radicalism and revolution

By the time of al-Banna's death, the Brotherhood had become the principle articulator and standard-bearer of Egyptian mass grievances.²⁹ In this role it competed and sometimes cooperated with the Egyptian nationalists led by Muhammed Naguib and Gamal Abd al-Nasser. When the latter seized power in 1952, al-Banna's successors in the Brotherhood welcomed the revolutionaries as 'sons of the Egyptian people'.³⁰ It was inevitable, however, that the Nationalists would eventually dismantle the Brotherhood as the only significant competition for the hearts and minds of ordinary Egyptians. Following an attempt on Nasser's life, the movement was officially dissolved by the government in 1954, its members arrested, hanged or exiled; though the movement was never completely eradicated (and over its history has gone through cycles of tolerance and government repression). This confrontation between the

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state and Islamism coincided with a radicalisation of both ideas and activism reflected in the writings of one of the Brotherhood's most influential and controversial sons, Sayyid Qutb.

Contemporary interest in Qutb, driven by perceptions of a direct line between his thought and that of al-Qaeda, makes much of the disgust he expressed for American society following a study visit he made to the United States in the late 1940s. While this visit was undoubtedly important in the development of his ideas, the crucible of Qutb's radical thought seems less the licentious streets of New York than the harsh prisons of Cairo. With the Brotherhood driven underground in the 1950s and 60s and many of its members imprisoned and tortured, any thought of a *modus vivendi* with the new Egyptian regime had disappeared. When Muslim Brothers began emerging from prison in the early 1960s many remained keen to continue the reformist approach of al-Banna. Qutb however, offered a more incendiary alternative for those who, like him, had suffered at the hands of Nasser's prison guards and interrogators.

It was in the stark and desperate prison environment that Qutb wrote what arguably became radical Islamism's most influential political manifesto, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* ('Signposts along the Way'). Whether Qutb intended it as an Islamist version of Lenin's 'What is to be Done' is debatable. Nevertheless, 'Signposts' would have a lasting impact on Islamist movements worldwide, a testimony to the force of its ideas and its electric, yet accessible, literary style. Despite its apparent timelessness, it is worth remembering that Qutb's thought was both a product of particular historical and personal circumstances and unfinished, cut short by his execution in 1966. The fact that an extreme current used Qutb's writings as a basis for violent strategies was as much about how they chose to interpret and develop his unfinished ideas as what he wrote.³¹ Qutb did, however, put some powerful weapons in their hands.

Central to Qutb's thesis was the notion of an Islamic state elaborated from the writings of the Pakistani Islamist thinker, Abu al-A'la Maududi. Parallel to al-Banna's formation of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the 1930s and 40s, Maududi had been evolving his own ideas and

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strategy for achieving an Islamic state. Responding to what he saw as the empty nationalism of Mohammed Ali Jinnah's Muslim League, he argued that what the subcontinent's Muslims needed was not a state of Muslims, but an Islamic state ruled according to, and by those steeped in, the true principles of Islam. For Maududi a truly Islamic state was one that recognised only the sovereignty of God (*hakimiya*), worshipped God alone, and implemented His law, the *shari'a*. Anything short of this was *jahiliya* — a term often taken to refer to the historical period of ignorance that had existed prior to the Prophet's preaching of Islam, though it can also be translated as barbarism.³²

The idea of *jahiliya* formed the cornerstone of Qutb's polemic. He developed and extended the term beyond Maududi's usage, defining all the societies of his era as being in a state of *jahiliya*. This applied to communist societies and the West most obviously. Yet the real drama in Qutb's elaboration of the concept was not his labelling of the West as *jahili* — an idea most Islamists of his time would have readily accepted — but his use of it to condemn his own nominally Muslim society and, in particular, its rulers. For Qutb, it was not enough for Muslims in a given society to be individually pious. Islam was a total system rather than just a religion and therefore any society was *jahili* if its complete way of life was not based solely on total submission to God. While not referring specifically to Egypt, the import of Qutb's ideas were clear. God's sovereignty had been usurped in Egypt by the Nasserite state and it had established itself as the object of the people's worship. Society had submitted to this alternative earthly authority and had derived from it, rather than from God, 'its laws and its values, its standards' its 'customs and traditions' and almost every practice of life.³³

Qutb saw Islam and *jahili* society as two systems in fundamental opposition to each other, each fighting for total victory. *Jahiliya* reflected the sovereignty of humans and Islam entailed the sovereignty of God.³⁴ No compromise or coexistence between the two was possible; indeed, he argued that *jahili* institutions and rulers actively worked against Islam. Qutb was not, however, merely substituting the dictatorship of God for the dictatorship of man. Islam for him was a liberating and just religion. The battle between Islam and *jahiliya* was, therefore, a

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battle between civilisation and barbarism. Qutb argued that *jahili* society was both an obstacle to society's true happiness through Islam and inherently oppressive; it was in his words 'un-Islamic and illegal'.³⁵ Only in societies where God alone was sovereign and Islam and its laws were applied and accepted in full could humankind find true freedom, dignity and social justice.

Both Maududi and Qutb proposed the radical transformation of their own societies. Maududi's ideas were, however, pursued largely through parliamentary and party political activism, through the *Jama'at-e-Islami* which he founded in prepartition India in 1941. By contrast Qutb provided — intentionally or otherwise — a discourse for revolutionary activism. In 'Signposts' he argued that *jahili* society had to be confronted and swept away. The first step was personal purification, ridding oneself of the corrupting influences of *jahili* ideas and contemplating the true meaning of Islam. Once this had occurred a movement was necessary to overthrow *jahili* society led by a vanguard of true and committed Muslims.³⁶ Qutb argued that preaching and persuasion to reform ideas and beliefs — the traditional approach of the Brotherhood — would not be enough. 'Physical power' and '*jihad*' were also needed.³⁷ If for al-Banna an Islamic system was achieved from below — that is from the Islamisation of society through reform — for Qutb it could only be achieved from above, by directly removing the *jahili* system that stood in Islam's way.

Qutb was executed before he could spell out the full implications of his ideas and, as a result, a number of different readings of his work emerged.³⁸ Within the Brotherhood his ideas proved controversial and an allegorical interpretation was promoted by the leadership, with Qutb's notion of *jahiliya* seen to imply only a spiritual rather than militant rupture with society.³⁹ In 1969 the Supreme Guide of the Brotherhood, Hasan al-Hudaybi, published *Du'ah, la Qudah* ('Preachers not Judges'), which, while not mentioning 'Signposts' specifically, was an effort to distance the Brotherhood from the more radical dimensions of Qutb's thinking and to reassert the movement's focus on preaching and education.⁴⁰

A radical reading was, however, adopted by a younger and more

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extreme Islamist current in Egypt (and elsewhere in the Middle East) who elaborated the most serious implication of Qutb's writings — that of *takfir*. This is the declaration in Islamic jurisprudence that a nominal Muslim has become apostate and therefore potentially licit to be killed. *Takfir* has traditionally been the preserve of established religious jurists and when applied was done cautiously and very selectively. Qutb's articulation of the concept of *jahiliya* helped, however, to create the basis for a wider and less discriminate usage by potentially branding everyone in society as impious. This was not just a break with the mainstream Brotherhood's view but also with the traditional aversion within Islam toward internal conflict or *fitna*. For most traditional scholars and jurists, internal rebellion was worse than living under even an unjust Muslim ruler. Qutb, however, provided a discourse that envisaged as entirely legitimate a *jihad* against one's own ruler, and potentially against one's own nominally Muslim society.

To the extent that a 'Qutbist' current of radical Islamism emerged following his death, it was distinguished by the priority it gave to the radical transformation of its own state and society, above and beyond any desire to confront the West.⁴¹ In Egypt two of the most dramatic elaborations of *takfir* were those of the radical Islamists Shukri Mustapha and Mohammed Abd el-Salaam Faraj. Deciding that Qutb had meant that every Muslim was impious, Mustapha applied *takfir* to society as a whole. For him, therefore, the only option for a true Muslim was to physically separate from *jahili* society. He took his followers off to live in caves in Upper Egypt or in communal apartments where they would, in theory, build up their strength until they were in a position to conquer *jahili* society and establish true Islam.⁴² As Gilles Kepel has noted, what this extreme and marginal sect in reality offered were answers to those disenfranchised elements from the lowest echelons of Egyptian society unsettled by social and economic change in post-Nasser Egypt.⁴³ Eventually Mustapha and some of his followers fell foul of the authorities over the kidnapping and killing of a former minister of religious endowments and were arrested and, in some cases, executed.

By contrast Faraj applied *takfir* specifically to Egypt's rulers. In a polemic entitled *al-Farida al-Ghaiba* ('The Neglected Duty'), he argued

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that religious scholars were obliged to declare *jihad* against any Muslim ruler who did not rule according to the principles of Islam.⁴⁴ In Faraj's eyes the Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, had demonstrated his impiety by making peace with Israel and through his growing repression of Islamists (after having reversed an earlier policy of encouraging them — see below). Because Faraj believed that the religious establishment had failed in its duty he took it upon himself to declare *jihad* against Sadat's regime. Indeed, he argued that *jihad* against the impious rulers took precedence over the 'liberation of Jerusalem'.⁴⁵ Shortly after his tract was published, Faraj and his organisation, Tanzim al-Jihad, assassinated Sadat in October of 1981. It is not clear what the conspirators were trying to achieve. Some undoubtedly saw it as a spark for a general uprising and there was subsequent, though short lived, unrest in a few Islamist strongholds in upper Egypt. But the spontaneous revolution did not come and the conspirators, including Faraj himself, were executed and large numbers of Islamists imprisoned.

Qutb's ideas were not the only factor motivating these radical Islamists toward revolt. As important, if not more so, were the social, political and economic conditions of the time which provided both mainstream Islamism and more extreme currents with an opportunity to gain broader currency. Most notably, the catastrophic defeat of Arab states by Israel in 1967 saw the apogee of nationalism as an ideology, and provoked a major intellectual soul searching throughout the Arab world. This left an ideological vacuum that Islamism could fill. Ironically, Islamism was initially helped in this regard by some Arab regimes, most notably in Egypt, where Islamists were encouraged on university campuses as a counter to the threat posed by left wing radicals.

Socio-economic factors also helped to underpin the emergence of more radical streams of Islamism. Throughout the 1950s and 60s many Arab governments had encouraged a process of urbanisation, had expanded educational opportunities and improved literacy levels. Generally, however, they could not match this with the provision of economic opportunities. A generation of young men who thought they had — though often lacked in practice — the skills to expect a better life grew disappointed and frustrated.⁴⁶ The contrast of their lives to

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the ‘corrupt’ and ‘westernised’ lives of the elites in their societies only amplified their anger. This coincided with the rise of young, literate Islamists able to articulate solutions — if somewhat simplistic ones — to ordinary people’s problems in an Islamic vocabulary. Establishment clerics, compromised by the need to expediently defend the state that paid their salaries, were largely powerless to counter the message of these new Islamist ideologues.

Despite the ferment in the Sunni world, it was in predominantly Shi’ite Iran that Islamist radicalism, led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, would have its first major success. Khomeini transformed the largely politically passive Shi’ite cosmology to produce a revolutionary outlook. In doing so he picked up the intellectual threads of other Iranian thinkers, notably Ali Shariati who had been influenced by leftist and third world intellectuals, from Sartre to Franz Fanon. But it was only when Khomeini, a respected member of the *ulema*, threw his weight behind these ideas that they gained currency.⁴⁷ Khomeini proposed not just the overthrow of the Shah but his replacement by the clergy embodied in his doctrine of *velayat-e-faqih* (clerical rule). Khomeini’s real success, however, was less the articulation of a coherent framework for an Islamic state than his ability to mobilise — and at times manipulate — a broad, popular coalition of the Shah’s opponents to seize power and retain it. As Ervand Abrahamian has argued, Khomeini’s popular appeal was based less on the articulation of a new religious theory of the state than a recognition of the everyday social, economic and political concerns of ordinary Iranians.⁴⁸

Though we have chosen not to discuss Khomeini’s ideas in detail here, because they are less relevant than Sunni Islamism in an Indonesian context, it would be wrong to underestimate their significance and that of the Iranian revolution. Together with Qutb and Maududi, Khomeini stands as one of the three seminal theorists of radical Islamism. The resonance of his ideas was reinforced by the overthrow of the Shah in 1979. But perhaps even more important was Iran’s active efforts, in the aftermath of the revolution, to export its mixture of theology and third world populism to the corners of the Islamic world. This included Indonesia where the Iranian Embassy was very active in propagating

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its revolutionary message. Indeed, despite the fact Indonesian Muslims are overwhelmingly Sunni, Iranian organisations continue to sponsor students to study at religious institutions in Iran and the writings of Khomeini and other revolutionary thinkers are also still found on sale in Jakarta.

Arab states feared that significant Shi'ite minorities in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Lebanon, and the Shi'ite majority in Iraq, would fall under the thrall of Iran's revolutionary ideology, or that the revolution might inspire radical Sunni Islamists. For Saudi Arabia, in particular, the revolution was a threat on a number of levels. Apart from concern about its own Shi'ite minority, Iran challenged Saudi Arabia's hegemony in the Muslim world, which derived from the Kingdom's financial largesse for Muslim causes and its custodianship of Islam's two holiest sites. This was not simply a question of honour for the al-Saud; their Islamic role was critical to the ruling family's domestic legitimacy, built as it was on the Wahabist creed. In the end, though, it would only be in Lebanon that Iran would be able to exert real influence.

Ideology would not be the only thing that Iran would export however. It would become a major state sponsor of terrorism, through its intelligence services, sub-contractors such as Hizballah and clients like Palestinian Islamic Jihad. In the West — and for the US in particular, still smarting from the seizure of its embassy in Tehran by revolutionary students — Khomeini's rise provoked fears of a radical Islamist wave sweeping the Middle East. Indeed it was in large part as a result of the revolution and Iran's vigorous support for revolutionaries and terrorists beyond its shores that a new word entered the popular lexicon in the West — *jihad*.

The many meanings of jihad

Perhaps no single term has come to be as associated with Islamism as *jihad*. Among scholars of Islam — Muslim and non-Muslim — it provokes debate as to its true meaning. It is often divided into the greater and lesser *jihad*, the former being the personal struggle for a perfect spiritual life and the latter involving essentially everything

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from missionary activity to holy war. In the context of our discussion of Islamism, however, armed *jihād* has typically separated mainstream from radical or more militant groups. But even among the latter, *jihād* often reflects distinct purposes. As we saw above, for much of the last century in Egypt and other countries of the Middle East, *jihād* typically meant armed struggle — whether in the form of insurgency or terrorism — against impious rulers (or in particular cases, violence directed at Israel). The 1980s and 90s would, however, see the term applied to a distinct struggle focused not on internal conflicts within the Muslim community, but the defence of the *umma* against two external enemies, the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and Israel.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 would ultimately become central to the evolution of Islamism, both radical and state-sponsored. For Saudi Arabia, in particular, it provided an opportunity to fight communism, a key ideological opponent of the Saudi state, but also to address the Iranian challenge. Saudi Arabia saw its material support of the *jihād* as a way to buttress its Islamic credentials. It hoped that by encouraging radical Islamists in the region to go to Afghanistan it could divert their energies from revolution at home, an objective the Saudis shared with other regimes in the region, notably Egypt. The Saudis were not of course alone in the support for the Afghan *jihād*. Their efforts had been encouraged and facilitated by the United States, keen to bleed the Soviets in Afghanistan. Pakistan too played a critical role for its own political and strategic reasons.

In its effort to channel men and money toward the Afghan *jihād*, Saudi authorities often relied on Muslim Brothers from around the Arab world, many of whom had found refuge or employment in Saudi Arabia in the 1960s and 70s after fleeing repression in their own countries. Among these was Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian–Jordanian Muslim Brother, who would go on to become perhaps the central figure within foreign jihadist circles in Afghanistan. Azzam played a critical role in the training and deployment of foreign jihadists, notably through Maktab al-Khidamat (Office of Services) which he ran with Saudi backing in Peshawar. But more importantly Azzam was a tireless and effective polemicist for a *jihād* that, at least initially, seemed peripheral to Islamists

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in the Middle East, preoccupied as most were with either the struggle against their own apostate regimes or the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

Azzam had a formal Islamic education, having received a doctorate from al-Azhar University in Cairo. The weight of this training can be felt in the legalistic tone of his most famous polemics, *Ilhaq bil Qaafila* ('Join the Caravan') and *Defa'a aan Araadi al-Muslimeen* ('Defence of Muslim Lands')⁴⁹. Azzam argued that Islamic jurists had documented that the lands of the Muslims were 'like a single land' and therefore all Muslims had an obligation to rally to the defence of any part of that land, including in this case Afghanistan. He defined the *jihad* against the Soviets as *fard ayn* — an individual obligation on all Muslims. (Interestingly the Saudi clerical establishment which provided financial, spiritual and juridical backing for the *jihad* only defined it as *fard kifaya* — a collective obligation, fulfilled by the Islamic community provided at least some Muslims were performing it).⁵⁰

For Azzam the *jihad* in Afghanistan was, however, more significant than simply the fight to repel the Soviets. Azzam argued that the obligation of *jihad* did not end with victory over the Soviets in Afghanistan but extended until all former Muslim lands had been liberated from 'Andalusia' to the Philippines. Moreover, *jihad* was not just a means toward an end but an end in itself, an idea that would be echoed in al-Qaeda's spectacular though seemingly nihilistic acts of violence. In a polemic entitled *al-Qaeda al-Sulbah* ('The Solid Base'), which is sometimes seen as an early manifesto for al-Qaeda, Azzam argued that every principle or ideology needed a vanguard to carry it forward to victory.⁵¹ Such a movement required, however, to mature through trial by fire.⁵² For Azzam the Afghan *jihad* provided just such an opportunity for training and preparation which he likened to the Prophet's 13 year period of contemplation in Mecca before he set out to propagate Islam.

In many respects Azzam was less an ideologue than a chronicler of a particular mindset or experience. Notions of *jihad* and of the Muslim *umma* were hardly new, but Azzam and the Islamist internationals lived these ideas. Whatever their ultimate, and probably minor role, in the victory over the Soviets, the foreign jihadists could lay claim to have participated in a real *jihad*. They left their former professions and

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took up the fight against Islam's enemies in a harsh and distant land. Mixing with other Muslims from North Africa, the Gulf and Southeast Asia reinforced the idea of a common fight for a common community. The time they spent in Afghanistan provided practical opportunities for military training, indoctrination and for the establishment of international networks.

This is not to say that all those who came to Afghanistan were entirely inspired by notions of *jihad* in the cause of the *umma*. For some jihadists, Afghanistan provided a useful opportunity to hone their skills for what remained in their mind as the *jihad* of first priority, the fight against their own impious rulers. Ayman al-Zawahiri — a leader of Faraj's reconstituted Tanzim al-Jihad or, as it became known, Egyptian Islamic Jihad and later a key member of al-Qaeda — saw Afghanistan above all as a secure base for jihadist training and activism. This, he said, was lacking in Egypt where Islamists like himself were constantly being hunted by the security forces. For al-Zawahiri Afghanistan provided an 'incubator' for the jihadist movement, where it could grow and 'acquire practical experience in combat, politics and organisational matters'.⁵³

One of the by-products of the Afghan conflict was the militarisation of the struggle between radical Islamists and governments in the Middle East. In Egypt and Algeria, in particular, so-called 'Arab-Afghans' returned equipped with both martial skills and confidence in what could be achieved through *jihad*. In Algeria, the violence that would leave some 100 000 dead erupted after the army's cancellation in 1992 of legislative elections that the Islamist Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) looked set to win. A torrent of violence was unleashed by a variety of groups. Some, such as the armed wing of the FIS, the Armee Islamique du Salut (AIS), pursued an effort to overthrow the regime. Others, most notably the Groupe Islamique Arme (GIA), were more interested in physically compelling 'good' and driving out 'evil' among Algerian Muslims.⁵⁴ The latter would be responsible for much of the terror directed against civilians that would see, among other things, the killing of women who refused to wear the *hijab*.

In Egypt, radical Islamists had in the aftermath of Sadat's assassination regrouped into two currents: Egyptian Islamic Jihad that tended to

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focus its violence directly at the regime; and the more broadly based al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah that undertook both violent *jihād* and a campaign of popular mobilisation. The latter would, at one stage, establish a short lived Islamic liberated zone in a poor neighbourhood of Cairo (a tactic common among Islamist groups whereby they exploit the inability of central governments to provide basic services among the urban poor). From the late 1980s the conflict between radical Islamists and the state would progressively become more violent and by the 1990s a campaign of terror and assassination was in full swing directed, against government officials, secular intellectuals, Egyptian Christians and tourists.

A key figure among al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah was its spiritual head, the so called blind Sheikh Omar Abd al-Rahman. Like Azzam, he too had been a prominent recruiter for the Afghan *jihād* (though, like al-Zawahiri, he had already been a prominent actor in the confrontation between radical Islamists and the Egyptian government before going to Afghanistan). Abd al-Rahman was a religious scholar, having once been a professor at the Upper Egypt faculty of Cairo's al-Azhar University. He used that training to provide religious opinions and fiery sermons, often circulated by cassette tape, justifying the acts of violence undertaken by the militants. For example, he legitimised attacks on tourists by arguing that they promoted debauchery and alcoholism among Egyptian Muslims.⁵⁵ He would eventually be arrested in the United States for his role in the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing.

Despite considerable bloodshed, terrorist groups in Egypt and Algeria failed to dislodge the ruling regimes. Both governments employed repression to crush the militants with thousands killed, arrested or forced into exile. Moreover, terrorism had proven entirely counter productive, alienating the broader population which was often among the victims of the violence, particularly in Algeria. In Egypt the targeting of foreign tourists had clearly been intended to deprive the government of a major source of national income. But it also served to deprive ordinary Egyptians, many of whom relied directly or indirectly on tourism for their own income. This failure, among others, would ultimately prompt Islamists to reassess their strategies, a reassessment that shall be discussed in our next chapter.

REVIVAL, RADICALISM AND *JIHAD*

Afghanistan was not the only *jihad* against an ‘external enemy’. In Lebanon in the 1980s, and in the Palestinian territories in the late 1980s and the 1990s, essentially nationalist struggles were given an Islamist hue by the entry of Hizballah (in Lebanon) and Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (in the Palestinian territories) into these respective conflicts. The Palestinian struggle, in particular, captured the attention of much of the Islamic world (including Indonesia). Hamas evolved out of a decision by a group of Palestinian Muslim Brothers to drop their passive role in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and join the first uprising or *Intifada* against Israel that began in 1987. While sharing the Brotherhood’s broader goals for the Islamisation of Palestinian society, this essentially took a back seat to the struggle for the establishment of a Palestinian state over the whole territory that comprised mandate Palestine (in other words, the eradication of the Israeli state). Hamas opposed the Oslo Agreement reached between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation in 1993 which ultimately envisaged a two state solution and, with the advent of the second Intifada in 2000, its role in Palestinian politics and society continued to strengthen.

Hamas gained particular notoriety for employing suicide bombers against Israeli targets, often against civilians. Suicide bombings are not uniquely Islamic, nor did the tactic originate among Palestinian Islamists. The Tamil Tigers, whose recruits are predominantly Hindu and whose ideology includes elements of Marxism and Leninism, often employed the tactic; indeed from 1980–2001 they used it more than any other single organisation in the world.⁵⁶ Prior to Hamas’ adoption of the practice, the Lebanese Hizballah drew on Shi’ite traditions of self sacrifice to justify such attacks as an act of martyrdom, using them to devastating effect against US and other foreign forces in Lebanon in the 1980s. And while Sunni scholars subsequently issued religious opinions sanctioning the practice — if selectively⁵⁷ — it has also been employed by secular groups in the Middle East. Nevertheless, the linkage of suicide bombing with the Palestinian struggle — whether in religious or nationalist terms — had undoubtedly provided the tactic with added resonance which, as we shall see in Chapter Four, is today felt as far as Indonesia.

Chapter 2

The politics of failure

Introduction

In the period from 1979 to 1992 Islamism could list some tangible achievements. Islamists had come to power in Iran (1979), Sudan (1989) and Afghanistan (1992, when Kabul fell to the Afghan *mujahideen*). The FIS seemed on the verge of winning Algeria's parliamentary elections (1992), while the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt had won seats in Egypt's parliament and had taken control of large segments of civil society, notably professional associations and syndicates. Yet what appeared, at the beginning of the 1990s, to be an unstoppable Islamist wave had, by the end of the decade, largely crested, prompting some commentators to pronounce — albeit unfashionably at the time — the failure of political Islam.⁵⁸ In both Egypt and Algeria, radical Islamism's advance had been deflected by the drastic actions of ruling regimes, while more mainstream movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood also faced repression. Islamism's 'victorious' foreign legion, which had helped to force the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan, was largely abandoned by its sponsors and Afghan veterans often faced repression when they returned to their home countries by governments nervous about their ideas and new found military skills.

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Even those countries in which Islamists had come to power offered at best limited models of an Islamic state, far from the utopias promised by Islamism's polemics.⁵⁹ In Iran the regime had increasingly turned inward, forced to deal with its own crumbling legitimacy and the social, political and economic challenges of running a modern state. In Sudan it had been a military coup rather than a broad based revolution that had given the Islamist Hassan al-Turabi a share of power and that same military would dispense with him unceremoniously in 1999. In Afghanistan, the *mujahideen* who seized Kabul proved incapable of overcoming their divisions and an Islamist mutation, the Taliban, was later welcomed to power by Afghans as a relief from the post-Soviet chaos. But those same Afghans were as relieved, if not more so, when the Taliban were removed from power by a US led international coalition in 2002.

Failure prompted a reassessment and reorientation by many Islamist groups in the Middle East. As Olivier Roy has argued, Islamism in this period reached a crossroads. Islamists could choose between two distinct, if broad, trajectories.⁶⁰ Some would opt for political normalisation or accommodation with the states in which they lived; in effect deciding to play by the rules of the political game. Unsurprisingly, these have typically been Islamists who retained the strongest links with their own societies. As Marc Sageman has noted, their 'embeddedness' tended to make them sensitive to local criticism and more preoccupied with the worldly concerns of their domestic constituencies.⁶¹

Others, however, would drift toward what Roy has called 'neo-fundamentalism' that encompasses a broad range of groups sharing a conservative, literalist approach to Islam, but whose activism ranges from the reform of religious practices (salafism) to, in extreme cases, ultra-violent terrorism (jihadist-salafism).⁶² What neo-fundamentalists also have in common is that they bypass the nation state and focus on individual Muslims and on a supranational, if largely virtual, *umma*. Unsurprisingly, it has largely been the up-rooted and the dislocated who have drifted toward neo-fundamentalism which, in the case of salafism, provides a religious 'code of conduct' and a supra-national generic Muslim identity that functions in any time or place, or, in the

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case of jihadist-salafism, provides perpetual *jihad* in the cause of the global *umma*.⁶³

An accommodation with the state

From the mid-1990s onward, Islamists in Egypt and Algeria began confronting the strategic failure of their respective campaigns of violence and terrorism. In Egypt, leading figures of al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah began to call publicly for a halt to armed attacks and in 1999 the movement proclaimed a cease fire that has held to this day. Most dramatically, in 2002 the movement's imprisoned leaders published four volumes of self criticism and ideological revision. This saw an apology for and renunciation of past violence, and the abandonment of the group's opposition to party politics and democracy. Indeed in subsequent interviews key al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah leaders called on Muslim youth to refrain from participation in operations by al-Qaeda.⁶⁴ The reassessment was, in part, attributed to extensive religious study by leaders of the movement who, it was argued, came to understand the inconsistency of their actions with Islam.⁶⁵ But there seems little doubt that the major factor behind it was government repression and the strategic failure of their campaign of terrorism. Most of the movement's members had either been killed in confrontations with the security forces, were in prison or forced into exile. Even more importantly, as noted in the previous chapter, the gradual escalation of violence through the 1990s had alienated many ordinary Egyptians.

A similar reassessment was evident in Algeria. In 1995 those elements of the FIS that had not drifted into extremist groups signalled a change of direction by committing to the 'Rome Peace Platform' which renounced violence as a way of achieving power and embraced pluralism.⁶⁶ While the Rome process was ultimately inconclusive, it reflected the FIS's revisitation of both its strategy and ideology, including a cornerstone of radical Islamist thought: the notion that democracy is un-Islamic. Despite its participation in national elections, the FIS had originally taken the Qutbist view of an Islamic state in which sovereignty belonged to God alone.⁶⁷ This obviously foreclosed

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the possibility of a democratic system in which sovereignty was vested in the people. Indeed, in all likelihood, had the FIS come to power in 1992 Algeria's nascent democracy would have been one of the early casualties. Since the mid-1990s, the FIS has begun speaking of democracy as entirely compatible with its revised notion of an Islamic state. Such a state is seen as one whose reference is to Islam but whose sovereignty is vested in the people.⁶⁸ Underlining its preoccupation with its own state and society, this revision also includes acceptance of the Algerian state as opposed to the classic Islamist view of modern states as artificial constructs that serve only to divide the *umma*.⁶⁹

In assessing these developments there is naturally a danger of mistaking a tactical manoeuvre for a genuine ideological shift. The reassessment undertaken by al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah and the FIS undoubtedly represents an effort to get back into the political game. Moreover the overt disavowal of al-Qaeda's actions is hardly surprising given the consequences of the 'war on terror' for Islamist groups around the world. As acknowledged by one of the key figures in al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah's turnabout, Montasser al-Zayyat, the attacks of 11 September 2001 have seen Islamists everywhere subject to greater pressure and repression. He neatly mirrors the West's perception of the globalisation of terrorism, by seeing today the 'globalisation of security' in which the West is working with Arab regimes to 'round up' Islamists.⁷⁰

Nonetheless, even if the shift is entirely tactical, it is not insignificant. As one Algerian Islamist has noted, by rejecting democracy as apostasy, all the FIS did was provide a pretext for the Algerian military to abort elections and the Western world to look the other way; that democracy is no longer a heresy simply reflects political realism.⁷¹ Both the FIS and al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah recognise that there is still a constituency in their respective countries for their Islamist project. But at least for the moment, they seem to understand that strategies of violence provide limited scope for mobilising that constituency. Thus some within these movements advocate a return to a focus on *da'wa*. Their overt renunciation of al-Qaeda's campaign of terror can also be seen in a similar vein. As al-Zayyat notes, his rejection of bin Laden's approach does not mean that he disagrees with his complaints against

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the United States and the West, simply that he sees his approach as counter productive.⁷² But the fact that he sees it as counter productive is in itself significant. As we will see in a moment, this concern for more worldly political ends contrasts with al-Qaeda's more utopian (or nihilistic) notion of *jihad* as an end in itself.

It was not just the violent current among Islamist groups that began to revisit their ideas and activism in the 1990s. Throughout the 1980s and 90s the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt had continued to pursue a peaceful mission of religious preaching combined with civic activism, in particular, establishing a presence in areas where the central government was weak. Most notably it had sent a younger generation of activists to infiltrate Egypt's professional syndicates and associations which, by the early 1990s, were mostly under the Brotherhood's control. The movement also focused on social activism, often highlighting the gaps and inefficiencies in the services provided by the central bureaucracy. For example, in 1992, the Brotherhood's well organised response to the Cairo earthquake stood in stark contrast to the role played by cumbersome government agencies.⁷³ Yet the Brotherhood's fortunes remained subject to the whims of the Egyptian regime. When the latter changed its approach from tolerance of mainstream Islamists in the 1980s to 'zero tolerance' for all Islamist movements in the 1990s, the Brotherhood's advances were rolled back.⁷⁴ In a major crackdown in 1994, some 80 of the movement's leading members were arrested and new rules were introduced to erode its control over professional syndicates.

Within the Brotherhood a younger generation began to agitate for change. They had grown impatient with the Brotherhood's gradualist and more religiously oriented activism. They advocated a more overtly political though still non-violent approach, including the establishment of a political party, a direction long opposed by the older generation leadership. The younger generation were also frustrated by the undemocratic internal structure of the Brotherhood which had enabled the historic leadership to block their efforts at change.⁷⁵ As a result, a number of Brothers broke from the movement and attempted to register a political party under the title Hizb al-Wasat (the Centre Party). The Egyptian government refused registration of the party a number of

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times, portraying it simply as a stalking horse for the Brotherhood. Yet despite this failure and its currently marginal role in Egyptian politics, Hizb al-Wasat represents a significant evolution of Islamist politics and bears some consideration.

Hizb al-Wasat's leaders were heavily influenced by the ideas of a group of Egyptian Islamic intellectuals including Yousef al-Qaradawi, Kamal Abul Magd, Tariq al-Bishri and Muhammed Salim al-Awa, dubbed by some the 'Wasatiyya' (the 'centrists').⁷⁶ While holding a diverse range of views, what unites these thinkers is their effort to place contemporary problems faced by Muslims and, in particular, notions such as democracy, civil society, human rights and the nation state, in an Islamic context. They represent an evolution of the mainstream Islamist ideas of the Brotherhood together with a rejection of the more radical approaches of the militants. This is, however, qualified at times as reflected in Yousef al-Qaradawi's support of the insurgency in Iraq and of Palestinian suicide bombings against Israeli citizens. Among other things, the Wasatiyya have promoted the idea of an Islamic democracy (*Qaradawi*), and the notion that Islam as a civilisation provides a foundation for an inclusive and pluralist national project (*Abul Magd*).

The latter became a key component of Hizb al-Wasat's platform and marked it as an important break with the Muslim identity politics of the Brotherhood.⁷⁷ Hizb al-Wasat distinguished between Islam as a religion, which by definition excludes non-Muslims, and Islam as a civilisation, which includes all its members, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. This is not to imply that the party rejected Islam as a religion; a religious Islam remained a key referent within its platform. Rather the party argued in a positive way that Islamic civilisation provided for and protected the rights of all those in society including those of other faiths.⁷⁸ This commitment to a broader notion of Islamic civilisation was reflected in the inclusion of three Egyptian Christians among the new party's membership. Consistent with this theme of Islamic civilisation, the movement called for democratic elections, attempted to reconcile *shari'a* with parliamentary rule and advocated the rights of minorities.⁷⁹

As important as its ideas was Hizb al-Wasat's preference for a more

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overtly political activism. The movement's leaders made clear theirs was an explicitly political project distinct from the broader preaching mission of the Brotherhood. In part, this preference emerged as a result of their experience in the professional syndicates that the Brotherhood's leadership had sent them to infiltrate. In these organisations they ran for and won office and operated essentially as they would in a political party, even though this was not their original intention.⁸⁰ They also found themselves supported by people who, in the first instance, weren't necessarily sympathetic to the Islamic cause, thereby providing an independent and broader constituency from that of the Brotherhood.⁸¹ In other words these activists, sent to Islamise these organisations, were instead politicised, setting them on a path that would ultimately lead to Hizb al-Wasat.

Whereas for Hassan al-Banna politics was a necessary sphere of activity insofar as it served the Muslim Brotherhood's broader goals of Islamising society, for the leaders of Hizb al-Wasat politics is the core activity for which they are prepared to subordinate or adapt Islamist ideology. In this respect their advocacy of Islam as a civilisation may well be genuine but it is also convenient in terms of attracting a broader base of support. This is not to say that Hizb al-Wasat has given up on Islamism and become entirely pragmatic. For example, the party's platform on issues such as the role of women is not very far removed from the views of the Brotherhood.⁸² But where the revolutionary project of groups like al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah and even the gradualist project of the Brotherhood sought to completely transform if not transcend the Egyptian nation state, substituting an Islamic variant, Hizb al-Wasat seeks a role for itself within the existing state akin to other political actors.

Al-Wasat is not the only Islamist movement seeking political integration. Perhaps the most salutary example — and one not lost on other Islamist movements around the world — is in Turkey where the Justice and Development Party is today in power after its own reassessment of its Islamist underpinnings, having watched its more Islamist predecessor, the Refah Party, forced out of politics. Islamist parties have also entered parliaments in Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain,

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content to pursue their objectives within the boundaries imposed by what Daniel Brumberg has called 'liberalising autocracies'; in part because they know that to trespass these limits is usually counterproductive.⁸³ In Algeria, Islamist parties such as Harakat al-Nahda and the Movement for National Reform have been allowed to stand for elections and have absorbed much of the still banned FIS' electoral constituency. The implications of this are undoubtedly not lost on either these parties or the FIS; that is, if you play by the political rules, or bend them only gradually, you are more likely to be successful.

None of this is to suggest that Islamist groups operating in a national context have irrevocably abandoned violence. Future generations of Islamist militants could well return to violence, particularly if the avenues for political expression remain closed or limited.⁸⁴ Moreover, there remain contemporary examples of Islamists operating in a national context that continue to employ terrorism. In Saudi Arabia a violent current of the diverse Islamist opposition has established itself as a local franchise of al-Qaeda; though significantly it strikes not at the regime but at the West, echoing al-Qaeda's global strategy.⁸⁵ The Lebanese Hizballah and the Palestinian Islamist groups Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) also continue to see violence and terrorism as a successful part of their respective strategies, though even in these cases violence has at times been modulated by political calculations. Hamas, for example, has in the past been willing to halt attacks against Israel when it felt that these were not serving its political interests within its Palestinian constituency. Moreover, both Hamas and PIJ are participants in a struggle that is not uniquely Islamic and was pioneered by secular Palestinian nationalists. Much of the violence in Iraq can also be seen in a similar, largely nationalist context.

Revisiting the global

If, as the foregoing illustrates, many Islamist groups have reconciled themselves to essentially national, or even nationalist, pursuits, others have continued along an internationalist path, in particular exploiting the technical opportunities provided by globalisation to reach a

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supranational Muslim audience. Two prominent examples are the Qatar based tele-Islamist Yousef al-Qaradawi and another offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Currently al-Qaradawi is, arguably, the Muslim world's most influential Islamist figure, a function of the broad appeal of his ideas and the methods he uses to spread them. We have already noted the role that al-Qaradawi has played as a leading light of the so called *Wasatiyya* stream of Islamist thinkers. Al-Qaradawi's subjects range from international politics to more everyday questions (including whether singing and cinema are illicit in Islam — he says they are licit). The fact that his sermons are topical, contemporary and delivered in an accessible language has undoubtedly helped to enhance his influence in the Muslim world. Categorising his ideas is difficult, however. Some Muslims (and some in the West) have labelled him a dangerous radical, while he is regularly denounced by salafists for being too liberal.⁸⁶ He condemned al-Qaeda's terrorism but defends the rights of Hamas to carry out terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians and for insurgents in Iraq to attack the US led coalition. He actively promotes Muslim-Christian dialogue, but does not extent this to Jews.

Al-Qaradawi's broad appeal is, however, as much about medium as it is message. As the host of a popular Islamic program on the Qatar based Arabic satellite channel *al-Jazeera* but also via the internet, books, audio and video cassettes — many of them translated — he has been able to reach and establish a major following, from the Middle East and Africa, to Southeast Asia and the Balkans. In some respects his views seem to reflect a convenient populism. Nonetheless the significance of his ideas lies in the precedence they give to an individual's religious identity. Thus, for example, in promoting democracy he reconciles it with Islam — arguing that it is enshrined in the Qur'an, in the form of *shura* (consultation) — rather than with the political culture or traditions of particular countries in which Muslims live.

While a more marginal phenomenon than al-Qaradawi, Hizb ut-Tahrir also addresses a global Muslim audience. Established in 1953 by Sheikh Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani (1909–1977) as an off-shoot of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, it is an explicitly revolutionary

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political party with Islam as its ideology.⁸⁷ From the start, however, the movement saw the Israeli–Palestinian conflict as merely symptomatic of the broader conflict between the Islamic and non-Islamic worlds. It has as its goal the restoration of the Islamic caliphate and explicitly endorses the ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis. While there have been allegations of involvement by Hizb ut-Tahrir members in terrorism (in Central Asia, for example), officially the movement claims to be non-violent.

While originally established in Jerusalem, the party has established a number of branches outside the Middle East where it has been banned by most governments. The organisation — or possibly one faction of it — is prominent in London (where it may be linked to the Muhajiroun movement⁸⁸), while branches also operate in central Asia and, as will be discussed in Chapter Four, in Indonesia. Like al-Qaradawi, Hizb ut-Tahrir uses the opportunity provided by globalisation to promote a Muslim identity stripped of any particular cultural or national context. In Britain, for example, the party rejects any forms of integration into British society contrasting, superficially, ‘British’ values against ‘Islamic’ ones.⁸⁹ Unlike al-Qaradawi, however, it links this identity with a much more specific, political objective — restoration of the Caliphate.

But if there is an Islamic tendency which is best suited to exploiting the opportunities offered by globalisation it is salafism.⁹⁰ Salafism describes less a coherent movement or ideology than an approach to Islam. Salafists refer to it as a *manhaj* — a methodology for implementing the beliefs and principles of Islam. As one *salafi* writer states, salafism is ‘neither of one nation nor of a particular group of people’ but is a method of understanding Islam and acting according to its teachings.⁹¹ As noted in the previous chapter, salafism has historically been an effort to revive Islam’s fundamentals, returning to the religion practiced by the pious predecessors (*as-salaf as-salih*). Most revivalist and Islamist movements have reflected a salafist approach to some degree. But contemporary salafists distinguish themselves from the historical *Salafiyya* of Afghani, Abduh and Rida and from Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood.

Salafism is distinct from Islamism in a number of respects. Islamists and salafists will often hold similar views on the challenges facing the

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Muslim world but differ on what to do about them.⁹² Historically for Islamists the solution has been to establish Islamic states via political or revolutionary action. By contrast, for most salafists the solution is personal salvation through faith (*iman*) and the correct practice of Islam, in particular by avoiding anything considered to be an innovation (*bid'a*), idolatrous (*shirk*), or blind imitation (*taqlid*). Salafists believe that *shari'a* is the only law under which a true Muslim should live, but do not see the existence of an Islamic state as necessary for this to occur. Indeed salafists tend to eschew political activism, or any form of organisation, believing that this leads to the prioritisation of material concerns over the spiritual (and thus potentially an innovation or idolatrous).⁹³ Typically, therefore, the key activity for most salafists is preaching (*da'wa*). This indifference to political activism also means that salafists are less prone to revolt against Muslim rulers and, unlike some Islamists, reject *jihad* against even unjust ones. They do, however, believe in the necessity of *jihad* to defend the *umma*, but tend to accord it less priority than *da'wa* and typically impose stricter and more legalistic conditions on when it can be undertaken.⁹⁴

Despite the fact that most salafists condemn Islamist activism, some Islamists have drifted toward salafism. In part this has also been a consequence of the failure of Islamism.⁹⁵ But another major factor in this drift has been the role Saudi Arabia has played since the 1960s and 70s in co-opting Islamists and promoting its own conservative Wahabist creed.⁹⁶ Wahabism is a *salafi* movement *par excellence* (though its adherents typically refer to themselves as *salafi* rather than Wahabi).⁹⁷ It should, however, be viewed as a distinct form of salafism given that it is not just an approach to religion but also, in effect, a state ideology. In many cases salafists are oriented toward Saudi Arabian religious scholars including the late Sheikhs Abd al-Aziz Bin Baz, Mohammed bin Saleh al-Uthaimen and Nasir ad-Din al-Albani and current figures Sheikh Salih Ibn Fawzan al-Fawzan and Sheikh Salim al-Hilali. Apart from the extensive material support provided to *salafi* groups worldwide, Saudi Arabian religious institutions have become a key vector in the establishment of *salafi* networks. Nonetheless, not all leading *salafi* scholars are Saudi or Wahabi, a prominent example

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being the Yemeni Sheikh Muqbil Bin Hadi al-Wadi. And not all salafis are oriented toward Wahabai religious scholars. Indeed salafism should not be seen as monolithic; the international *salafi* community is riddled with disputation and salafists spend considerable time debating each other over matters of orthodoxy.

Notwithstanding the prominent role Saudi Arabia has played in its promotion, salafism is an excellent illustration of the extent to which some forms of Islamic religiosity are becoming less specifically Middle Eastern. Salafism copes better than many forms of Islamic religiosity with what Roy and others have called the ‘de-territorialisation’ of Islam.⁹⁸ That is, one of the consequences of globalisation is that Islam is today less ascribed to a particular region or territory, in large part because many of the world’s Muslims live outside traditionally Muslim countries.⁹⁹ Indeed Roy argues that de-territorialisation can also be experienced by Muslims who have not migrated, in the sense that the ‘Westernisation’ of their own societies leave some feeling that they too are now in the minority.¹⁰⁰

As Peter Mandaville has noted, new media technology, in particular the internet, has also been a powerful factor in this process, allowing the development and articulation of new forms of identity regardless of time and place.¹⁰¹ What matters most is the ability to communicate, whether electronically or personally, rather than where one is located. This can have a transformative impact on Muslim communities because it allows access to a vast array of views on Islamic life and doctrine. Muslims, particularly those who feel alienated or oppressed, can find idioms and ideologies that speak to their condition. As Mandaville has argued, globalisation has greatly added to the ‘range of voices’ to which a Muslim may have access and thus served to diminish the traditional Islamic scholar’s monopoly over religious knowledge.¹⁰² The net result is the creation of what is, in effect, a virtual *umma* that transcends national borders but also different cultures and ethnic groups.

Salafism adapts to de-territorialisation precisely because it is an effort to reduce Islam to an abstract faith and moral code, purifying it of national or cultural identities, traditions and histories — whether Western or those of traditional Muslim countries.¹⁰³ The ‘portability’

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of the highly idealised Islamic identity propagated has enabled it to gain an audience among Muslims who feel alienated or marginalised living in the West.¹⁰⁴ But even in predominantly Muslim countries it provides a vehicle for individuals to distinguish themselves from the ‘corrupted’ society around them. This is not just a case of rejecting Western influences, though salafists are often more anti-Western than Islamists.¹⁰⁵ Often the first target of salafism is the indigenous culture of Muslim countries in which they live that is perceived to have distorted ‘true’ Islam.¹⁰⁶

Despite salafism’s emphasis on religiosity in the first instance, the line between *salafi* activism and politics is sometimes blurred. Even if salafists typically avoid specifically political activism their preaching can still have political implications. Despite the formal condemnation by Saudi scholars of al-Qaeda’s brand of terrorism as un-Islamic, and their effort to blame Saudi involvement in terrorism on outside influences — usually those of the Muslim Brotherhood — a few former Saudi militants have pointed the finger inward. They have openly criticised what they characterise as the xenophobic and ‘hate filled’ teaching that emanates from the Saudi religious establishment.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, some *salafi* groups, while ostensibly still preoccupied with religiosity, will cross the line into violence; for example, launching vigilante attacks on video stores considered to be promoting immorality. There is, however, a distinct and extreme minority of self described salafists who go beyond even this into organised terrorism. Labelled jihadist-salafism it substitutes a focus on violent *jihad* for the traditional focus on *da’wa*. It is to this current that al-Qaeda and its partisans belong.

Jihadist-salafism and al-Qaeda

At least in part, al-Qaeda reflects the drift from Islamism into salafism referred to earlier, albeit salafism of a distinct and militant variety. It too can be seen to have emerged from a process of reassessment prompted by failure. The most prominent example of this is bin Laden’s deputy, and al-Qaeda’s purported ideologue, Ayman al-Zawahiri.¹⁰⁸ Up until the 1990s, al-Zawahiri’s Egyptian Islamic Jihad fought side

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with the more broadly based al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah (to some degree the two organisations were indistinguishable). Yet unlike al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah, al-Zawahiri responded to the failure of militant Islamism in Egypt by taking his organisation into al-Qaeda. Al-Zawahiri rationalised his own shift from a struggle against the Egyptian government to *jihād* against the West by saying he had come to recognise the US would never allow 'any Muslim force to reach power in the Arab countries'.¹⁰⁹ Former al-Zawahiri associate and Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah figure, Montasser al-Zayyat, is less charitable. He argues that al-Zawahiri's shift was dramatic; until 1996–97 he had remained committed to the fight against the Egyptian government. Al-Zayyat argues that the shift reflected little more than an unwillingness to abandon violence despite the failure of terrorism in Egypt.¹¹⁰

Yet if al-Qaeda owes something of its beginnings to radical Islamism in the Middle East, it is also a break with it, reflecting its deeper origins in the Afghan *jihād* against the Soviets and its largely *salafī* outlook. Following the ignominious Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, some foreign veterans of the Afghan *jihād* began looking for new Islamic causes around the world for which to fight. While some did return home to participate in *jihād* against the state, others remained keen to pursue the course set in Afghanistan. Emboldened by the victory over the Soviets, imbued with Azzam's ideas about *jihād* in the cause of the *umma*, and utilising bonds forged with other foreign veterans, they fought in 'Muslim' conflicts around the world: Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir and the Philippines among others. This coincided with the fact that some Afghan veterans effectively became stateless after the war, unable to return home or soon forced into exile by ruling regimes suspicious of their radical outlook and military skills. The 1991 Gulf War played a particular role in this regard, contributing to the emergence of a group of displaced veterans — most prominent among them, Osama bin Laden — alienated from their former Saudi patron by the latter's decision to invite 'infidel' troops into the Kingdom to defend it against Iraq.

Even after Kabul fell to the Afghan *mujahideen* in 1992, Afghanistan continued to serve as a crucible for jihadist-salafist ideas and a vector for

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the establishment of international networks. But the spread of jihadist-salafism was by no means limited to those foreigners in Afghanistan. Some Afghan veterans found exile in the West, particularly in Europe, where they preached a jihadist-salafist message. Typical of this group were Omar Uthman Abu Omar (Abu Qutada) who established himself in a London mosque after having lived for a time in Peshawar; or Mohammed Haydar Zammar, an Afghan veteran who preached at the Hamburg Mosque.¹¹¹ Indeed there is a strong theme of dislocation and uprootedness in the backgrounds of most of al-Qaeda's members, even those who were not veterans of the Afghan war.¹¹² For example, Muhammed Atta and other key perpetrators of the attacks on 11 September 2001 were radicalised not in their home country — in Atta's case Egypt — but as students living in Germany.¹¹³

Al-Qaeda evolved over the period between the Soviet departure from Afghanistan, in 1989, and 1998 — though it seems to have taken real shape after bin Laden returned to Afghanistan in 1996 from exile in Sudan. It was at this point that the Taliban in Afghanistan made bin Laden responsible for all the foreign fighters still in the country and that he formalised his long relationship with al-Zawahiri in the 1998 declaration of a 'World Islamic Front' to wage *jihād* against 'Jews and Crusaders'.¹¹⁴ The meaning of 'al-Qaeda' has been variously translated as the 'base' or 'vanguard' of jihadist activity, or simply as a 'database' of jihadist activists. Most often al-Qaeda has been seen as a loose transnational network led by a small core which has both carried out terrorist attacks on its own, or sponsored attacks by others; a sort of venture capitalist for terrorists. As one Saudi Islamist has described it, 'al-Qaeda see themselves as a college where people enrol, graduate and then go their separate ways. But they are encouraged to establish their own satellite networks which ultimately link in with al-Qaeda.'¹¹⁵

A key distinction between al-Qaeda and the historic patterns of radical Islamist activism in the Middle East is the former's decision to fight the 'far enemy' (the US and its Western allies) as opposed to the 'near enemy' (the impious rulers of Muslim states). Few if any radical Islamists would disagree with Osama bin Laden's complaints against the West. Nonetheless the prioritisation by al-Qaeda and its partisans

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of ‘peripheral’ *jihad* seems to reflect more than a tactical choice. In the al-Qaeda world view, it is fighting at the borders of the Islamic *umma* against the perceived assaults of the United States and its Western allies. Indeed prominent salafi-jihadists are referred to as *ahl al-thughoor* — a historic allusion to those who defended Islam’s frontier in the early centuries of Islam’s expansion.¹¹⁶ It is thus the *salafi* mindset, and that of the Afghan *jihad*, operating on a global scale reinforced by the uprooted and dislocated status of most of al-Qaeda’s partisans.

Since the launch of the ‘war on terror’ and the destruction of its physical base in Afghanistan, it is arguable whether al-Qaeda still possesses meaning as an organisation. Jason Burke and others have increasingly described al-Qaeda as an ideology rather than a movement.¹¹⁷ Indeed a number of organisations or indeed small groups seem to have carried out attacks with little or no organisational connection to al-Qaeda. The Tawhid wa Jihad group in Iraq led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi fits this mould, though recently it appears to have formally subordinated itself to al-Qaeda (to what effect remains unclear). Yet if Burke’s description seems apt, it perhaps grants more coherence to al-Qaeda’s worldview than it possesses. Among jihadist-salafists there are no real ideologues in the mould of a Sayyid Qutb, though plenty of demagogues. In their writings one typically finds little more than elaborate anti-American and anti-Western conspiracies, mingled with a fervent anti-Semitism, all justifying perpetual *jihad*.¹¹⁸ Perhaps reflecting a mutation of its salafist underpinnings and the Afghan experience, *jihad* becomes an end in itself and an act of faith. But jihadist-salafism lacks salafism’s more rigorous approach to faith and its heavy reliance on traditional religious scholars (*ulema*). Indeed it has created its own *ulema* and religious doctrine. Despite the fact that bin Laden and other leading al-Qaeda figures lack any formal religious training, they are frequently addressed as shiekhs or imams. Efforts are also repeatedly made to justify attacks via highly selective readings of the works of Islamic jurists, notably Ibn Taymiyah.¹¹⁹

There is also clearly a political and opportunistic dimension to al-Qaeda’s rhetoric. It weaves conflicts involving Muslims around the world into its vision of a clash of civilisations in an effort to tap into

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and promote angst felt by Muslims toward the United States and the West.¹²⁰ This is illustrated by the way bin Laden's statements have evolved over the years. In the original 1998 statement, bin Laden's main focus was the Middle East, in particular the 'occupation' by US troops of Islam's holiest land, Saudi Arabia; the 'devastation' inflicted upon Iraq both during and, as a result of sanctions, after the 1991 Gulf War; and US support for Israel. But reflecting al-Qaeda's transnational horizons, these soon expanded to more global concerns. By 2002, in his 'letter to America', bin Laden had elevated the Palestinian cause in his complaints against the US. But he had also added to the list Russian atrocities in Chechnya, Indian oppression in Kashmir, and US support for the Philippine government against its Muslim minority. He even cited the Bush Government's refusal to sign the Kyoto Treaty as evidence of how US companies were destroying the world's environment. Australia has also received a mention in earlier diatribes for its alleged role in helping East Timor 'secede' from Indonesia.

Yet despite al-Qaeda's belated elevation of the Palestinian struggle as a *cause celebre*, with the possible exception of the Taba Hilton bombing in October 2004, it does not appear to have fired a singly shot in anger nor sent material nor men to fight for the Palestinians. Nonetheless al-Zawahiri is in no doubt as to the Palestinian conflict's propaganda value. In his purported last will he argues that the 'Muslim nation will not participate with it (in *jihād*) unless the slogans of the *mujahideen* are understood by the masses'. He continues that 'the one slogan that has been well understood by the nation and to which it has been responding for the past 50 years is the call for the *jihād* against Israel'.¹²¹

Similarly, the US invasion of Iraq has undoubtedly helped al-Qaeda articulate its message, while providing a new active front for its violent campaign. It requires little imagination for al-Qaeda to portray it as yet another assault on Islam — despite the overtly secular nature of Saddam's regime — and for its message to resonate among Muslims worldwide. If al-Qaeda's original strategy behind the 11 September attacks was to draw the United States into an Afghan quagmire — a strategy that failed dismally — then Iraq provides al-Qaeda and its partisans with a second chance. Like the Afghan *jihād* against the Soviet Union, the conflict in

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Iraq has rallied foreign fighters, though largely from neighbouring Arab countries, and seen new radical Islamist groups emerge in Iraq echoing al-Qaeda's worldview. As the Saudi Islamist Saad al-Faqih has argued, for al-Qaeda the US invasion of Iraq was a 'gift from the heavens'.¹²²

Yet there are also limits to the analysis that Iraq has opened a new front for al-Qaeda in its war against the West or helped to swell its ranks. While it has become commonplace to claim that the war in Iraq has helped al-Qaeda and its partisans attract new recruits, little evidence is typically presented to demonstrate either an increase in the numbers of those joining international terrorist groups or indeed of the emergence of new groups because of the Iraq war, outside of Iraq itself. Moreover, within Iraq the foreign element, or that specifically allied with al-Qaeda or pursuing its vision, is only one relatively small — if destructive — part of a broader insurgency that includes ex-regime figures, Iraqis inspired by nationalism or anger at occupation, and a criminal element. Nor is it clear that all among this foreign element are inspired by al-Qaeda. For example, many fewer Arabs came to al-Qaeda's defence in Afghanistan than have gone to Iraq.

The ever present tension between local and global imperatives is also evident in Iraq today. There are signs among local insurgents and the general population that any enthusiasm for the more nihilistic acts of violence perpetrated by foreign fighters — which often kill more Iraqis than Americans — is starting to run out. As one press report noted, in Fallujah locals chafe at the *salafi* precepts being enforced by some foreign insurgents (notably with respect to female dress).¹²³ And local insurgents recognise that being tarred with the same brush as the foreign fighters undermines their more worldly political goals, particularly among ordinary Iraqis.¹²⁴ What this serves to underline is that while al-Qaeda and its partisans can weave conflicts involving Muslims around the world into its rhetoric, they can't necessarily assume control over these conflicts, nor do their more apocalyptic interests always coincide for the more tangible objectives of the locals.

Chapter 3

From the Middle East to Indonesia

Introduction

The great Dutch Islamic scholar, Snouck Hurgronje, wrote of the Indonesian community in Mecca in the 1880s: 'Here lies the heart of the religious life of the East-Indian archipelago, and the numberless arteries pump thence fresh blood in ever accelerating tempo to the entire body of the Moslem populace in Indonesia'.¹²⁵ He also observed that Indonesians 'render in a purely formal manner due homage to the institutions ordained of Allah, which are everywhere as sincerely received in theory as they are ill observed in practice'.¹²⁶ These two quotes capture an enduring and widely held view among Western observers of the relationship between Indonesian Muslims and their Middle Eastern counterparts. On the one hand, Indonesians seek knowledge and inspiration from the Middle East, but on the other hand, apply this knowledge in a distinctively 'local' way. Some scholars marvelled at what they saw as the adaptive genius of Indonesians, who were skilled at borrowing and blending the old with the new to create a rich religious synthesis. In general they approved of this 'tropical' variant of Islam over the 'desert dried' form of the Near East. Other scholars, especially Islamicists, looked askance at what they saw as the

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dilution of 'pure' Middle Eastern Islam.¹²⁷

In contemporary times, and especially after 11 September 2001, Western views of both Middle Eastern and Indonesian Islam and the interaction between them have hardened. More than any other region of the Islamic world, the Middle East is now seen as the crucible of nihilistic jihadism. Indonesian Islam is still regarded as predominantly tolerant and pluralistic, but the emergence in recent years of local paramilitary jihadist and terrorist groups has led to concern over perceived radicalisation and the eroding of the country's essentially 'moderate' Islamic character. One reason commonly advanced by Western observers for this 'extremist' minority trend in Indonesia is the growing influence of Middle Eastern Islam. Globalisation and the increasing penetration of mass communications have contributed to this process, as also has generous Middle Eastern sponsorship of radical outreach programs. Thus, the more Indonesian Islam is seen as having Middle Eastern qualities, the greater spectre of threat it poses.

The reality is far more complex than these stereotypes suggest. As demonstrated in Chapters One and Two, there is a wide range of Islamist thinking and behaviour in the Middle East, from the innovative and the pragmatic, to virulent jihadist-salafism. To characterise all of Middle Eastern Islamism as dangerously radical is to miss a large part of the mosaic. Islamism has never been uniquely Middle Eastern, and today it is even less so, underlined by neo-fundamentalism's growing detachment from the region. Indonesian Islam, while mainly irenic, has also had a long history of violent minority radicalism which owed little to external influences, whether from the Middle East or elsewhere. Indeed, these largely endogenous movements have been a major recruiting ground for modern day terrorists.

Similarly, the relationship between Middle Eastern and Indonesian Muslims is far more variegated than is commonly imagined by many contemporary Western commentators. As the birthplace of Islam, the Middle East has, not surprisingly, been a powerful force in shaping the faith in Southeast Asia. Most of the major streams of thinking and practice in the Middle East have made their way to Southeast Asia. Rarely have these processes entailed direct transfer and unmediated

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application by Muslims in countries like Indonesia. More commonly, though not always, there has been an ongoing process of selection and modification of various practices, combining them with pre-existing Islamic and non-Islamic features. The result is a local form which resembles its Middle Eastern antecedents but which also has distinguishing features.

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

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

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

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Human movement

Historically the main vector for the transmission of Middle Eastern thought to Southeast Asia has been human movement. Arab traders and scholars have been travelling to the region for at least eight centuries, disseminating Islamic knowledge and proselytising among non-Muslims. From the mid-nineteenth century many thousands of Yemeni Arabs from the Hadramawt valley settled in Indonesia, becoming well established as teachers, *ulema* and merchants.¹²⁸ The implications of this migration are still felt today in the role played by Indonesians of Arab descent in the Muslim community. For their part, Indonesian Muslims have, for several centuries, gone to the Middle East as pilgrims, officials, businessmen, students and scholars. As Azyumardi Azra's excellent discussion of the Middle Eastern networks of Indonesian *ulema* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries shows, there is a rich tradition of ideas being exchanged and mediated.¹²⁹

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

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

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that Yousef al-Qaradawi was popularised in Indonesia by students who watched his broadcasts and read his books while studying in the Middle East.¹³⁰

At present, there are more than 20 000 Indonesians living in the Middle East. Many of these are workers, though a significant proportion are students. According to 2004 figures supplied by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs the key destination is Egypt (3528 students — with most if not all at al-Azhar), though Indonesians also study at Islamic institutions in other countries of the region including Saudi Arabia (87) Sudan (120), Yemen (143), Tunisia (12) and Iran (65). The number of students in Egypt is a fourfold increase since the 1980s when the number of Indonesian students there was put at around 700.¹³¹ According to the Egyptian Embassy in Jakarta, the Egyptian government provides around 120 scholarships a year for Indonesian students. International Islamic organisations and charities provide an additional number of scholarships for study at al-Azhar.

Saudi Arabia is, given the location of Islam's two holiest sites there, another important destination for Indonesian students. Indonesians students study at the Islamic University in Madinah, Umm al-Qora University in Mecca and Al-Imam Mohammed bin Saud University in Riyadh (a small number also study at the King Abdul Aziz University and some are also enrolled in petroleum studies at King Fahd University in Dahrhan). Obtaining a reliable figure for student numbers in the Kingdom is difficult, however. One reliable source said that the Saudi government currently provides around 170 full scholarships, down from around 200 three years ago (which conflicts with the Ministry of Religious Affairs figure above of 87 students in the country).¹³²

Moreover, alongside Saudi government sponsorship, Islamic organisations such as the Muslim World League and other smaller charities provide additional scholarships. According to a recent report by the International Crisis Group, the Indonesian arm of a Kuwaiti Islamic NGO, Jamiat Ihya at-Turath al-Islamiyah (or as it is known in Indonesia, Yayasan Majelis at-Turots al-Islami), provides opportunities for selected students to undertake fully funded study at the Islamic University in Madinah.¹³³ An unknown number of Indonesians also

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study with individual religious scholars in Saudi Arabia. This is a particularly important form of religious education among Indonesian salafists and can later become a source of patronage for the students, often enabling them to establish their own *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Indonesia.¹³⁴

A key conduit of jihadist ideas was the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s. We have already recounted the role that Afghan veterans played in militant violence and terrorism in Algeria and Egypt, and in the formation of al-Qaeda. More than 300 Indonesians (and possibly as many as 600) also went through foreign *mujahideen* training camps from the early 1980s until the mid-1990s. Why they went is a complex subject. Some responded to the active recruitment efforts of Islamic organisations, notably the Saudi-based Muslim World League. But like many Arab Islamists who travelled to Afghanistan, more practical motives also seem to have been at play; in particular, the opportunity Afghanistan provided for gaining military training which could then be used in their home countries. It is noteworthy in this respect that Indonesians were still undertaking training in Afghanistan well after the Soviets had withdrawn and Kabul had fallen to the Afghan *mujahideen*.

By far the largest group of Indonesians was sent to Afghanistan by the future Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) founder Abdullah Sungkar, using his networks within the Darul Islam movement. Most of JI's senior leadership and many of its middle level operatives were Afghan veterans. Other Indonesian organisations, such as the Islamic Youth Movement (GPI), also assisted members and sympathisers to travel to Afghanistan. The linkages that were formed between Indonesian and other foreign jihadists at this time, culminating in the operational connections between the Indonesian terrorist group JI and al-Qaeda in particular, are fairly well documented.¹³⁵ It is important to note in this regard the JI did not exist as an organisation when Indonesians started travelling to Afghanistan.

Indonesian *mujahideen* had a varied exposure to their Arab counterparts. On arrival in Pakistan, many went through Abdullah Azzam's Maktab al-Khidamat, before going on to the training camp of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, the Afghan commander who had the closest ties

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to Saudi Arabia and Osama bin Laden. Probably 200–300 Indonesians trained at the Sayyaf camp and they appeared to have been kept together as a group with other Southeast Asians, with little interaction between them and those undergoing training from the Middle East.¹³⁶ Nevertheless many of their trainers were from the Middle East and many Indonesians also seem to have met Osama bin Laden and other future al-Qaeda figures, such as Khalid Sheikh Muhammed, in the Sayyaf camp.¹³⁷ A small number of Indonesian *mujahideen* trained at the camps of other Afghan leaders such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Jamil ur-Rahman.

Apart from military training the Indonesian *mujahideen* were also provided with religious and ideological training. As with many of the Saudi funded camps there was a heavy focus on *salafi* teachings, though of a jihadist bent.¹³⁸ Other ideological influences were also present; Muslim Brothers like Abdullah Azzam were prominent in Saudi organisations supporting the *jihād* and among foreign *mujahideen* more generally. Azzam's writings and ideas were a significant part of the curricula in the camps, though the romanticised personal example he set was probably even more influential.¹³⁹ Even today Azzam is something of a Che Guevara figure among Indonesian jihadists. Contacts also appear to have been made with the Egyptian militants, both al-Zawahiri's Islamic Jihad and al-Gama'a al-Isamiyyah.

While the Indonesians who went to Afghanistan returned with military training and links with other foreign jihadists, the extent to which they absorbed particular ideas is difficult to assess. One complication is that, as Jason Burke has noted, while the isolated and harsh nature of the camps undoubtedly played a role in forming a particular mindset, most who travelled to Afghanistan were already highly committed (at least ideologically), having endured significant hardship to make the journey.¹⁴⁰

It is also worth recalling that Osama bin Laden's plans to launch al-Qaeda's *jihād* against the United States and its western allies probably didn't crystallise until after his return to Afghanistan in 1996. By this time many JI members had already left the camps there (in 1995, JI began shifted its training to the Philippines, though it still maintained

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a presence in Afghanistan¹⁴¹). The time spent in the common Afghan milieu, and in particular the tangible personal connections that persisted beyond Afghanistan, undoubtedly made it easier for JI to fall in behind al-Qaeda's call for a global *jihad*. But at the same time, it also suggests that JI's decision was arrived at independently.

Education and propagation

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

Organisations and individuals from a number of Middle Eastern countries have been active in Indonesia in the education and *da'wa* fields, including from Egypt, Kuwait and other Gulf states. According to one estimate there are currently some 50 teachers from al-Azhar University teaching at Islamic institutions in Indonesia.¹⁴² According to a confidential source at the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, Iranian institutions are particularly aggressive — despite the fact the Indonesian Muslims are overwhelming Sunnis — offering several dozen generous scholarships a year for study in Iran. But it is the role played by Saudi Arabia in both *da'wa* and education that has attracted greatest attention and will be our main focus.

Since 11 September 2001, Saudi Arabia's support for international Islamic causes around the world has come under intense scrutiny. In large part this reflects the role some Saudi-based Islamic charities have played — inadvertently or otherwise — in the financing of terrorism. There has also been concern about Saudi Arabia's propagation of its Wahabist brand of salafism. It has been argued that the promotion of

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this puritanical form of Islam has radicalised once tolerant and moderate Muslim communities around the world, including in Indonesia. For example, in the latest report of the Independent Task Force on Terrorist Financing, sponsored by the US think tank, the Council on Foreign Relations, it was claimed that in its ‘support for madrassas (sic), mosques, cultural centres, hospitals, and other institutions, and the training and export of radical clerics to populate these outposts, Saudi Arabia has spent what could amount to hundreds of millions of dollars around the world financing extremism’.¹⁴³

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

A variety of Saudi official and non-government agencies either primarily or partially focused on education and religious propagation are active in Indonesia. These include: religious attachés at the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Jakarta; the non-government Muslim World League (MWL) and two of its subsidiary agencies, the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO) and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY); and private donors and other non-government charities (such as the infamous Saudi charity al-Haramain whose Indonesian branch was listed as a terrorist supporting organisation by the United States and the UN and ostensibly shut down.).

Saudi sponsored educational and *da'wa* activities in Indonesia expanded dramatically in the 1980s, probably as a part of Saudi Arabia's broader ideological conflict at that time with Iranian Islamism.¹⁴⁴ It would be wrong, however, to view Saudi activism in Indonesia as reflective of a coherent strategy or aim. Saudi religious propagation and

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educational activities often seemed to us to manifest different motives and sometimes competing interests. Saudi sponsorship has undoubtedly been provided to those groups whose religious inclinations are closest to Wahabism, notably Indonesian *salafi* groups. But it has by no means been limited to them. Nor indeed does Saudi largesse always seem tied to a particular religious or ideological ends; in many cases mosques and orphanages have been built simply as a function of charity (a central tenet of Islam) with no strings attached.¹⁴⁵

Where the goal has been the propagation of Wahabist oriented forms of Islamic practice, ostensibly the concern has been with religiosity rather than politics. That is, the purpose has been to purify or correct the form of Islam practised by Indonesian Muslims. Indeed there are examples where members of the Saudi religious establishment have counselled an Indonesian client specifically against engaging in political forms of activism (see Chapter Four). Nevertheless the line between strictly apolitical propagation and one that is either politically motivated, or has political consequences, is often blurred. In some cases Saudi funding has been provided to groups involved in more explicitly political and sometimes violent forms of activism, one example being Wahdah Islamiyah (see below).

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

Perhaps the key institution of Saudi sponsored Islamic education in

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Indonesia is *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab* (the Indonesian Institute for Islamic and Arabic Sciences or LIPIA), a branch of Al-Imam Muhammad bin Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Established in 1980, it provides courses in both Arabic and Islamic studies for Indonesian students, the most successful of whom can gain scholarships for postgraduate study at Al-Imam University. All tuition at LIPIA is conducted in Arabic, between 80 and 90 per cent of the teaching faculty come from the Middle East and the Institute has always been headed by a Saudi. Admission standards are high; according to former students the Institute typically takes at least 200 students per year from around 1–2000 that apply.¹⁴⁶ Once accepted however, tuition is free and students are provided with a generous stipend by Indonesian standards.¹⁴⁷ LIPIA produces around 200 graduates a year.

The teaching at LIPIA reflects a combination of its *salafi* curriculum and the particular orientation of faculty members, though the balance between the two has varied over the years. Ulil Abshar Abdalla, founder of Indonesia's Liberal Islam Network, and a former LIPIA student from 1988 to 1993, said that when he studied at the institution the curriculum was that of the parent Saudi institution.¹⁴⁸ He noted that the study of Ibn Taymiyah was 'a must' at LIPIA.¹⁴⁹ In general he characterised the teaching at LIPIA as hostile to the local Indonesian culture and Muslim practices; he recalled that when he had confronted his teachers over this issue they had responded by saying that they did not want to teach narrow minded nationalism.¹⁵⁰ Other former students also noted a Wahabist-salafist orientation, though characterised it as more 'open' than what one would find in Saudi Arabia.

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

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LIPIA as basically Brotherhood dominated these days.¹⁵¹

The distinct influences mediated by LIPIA over its history are reflected in the trajectories of its graduates. On the one hand no single institution seems to have done more than LIPIA to propagate contemporary forms of salafism in Indonesia.¹⁵² Graduates of LIPIA have become leading figures in the Indonesian *salafi* movement and are particularly prominent as publishers, preachers, teachers and *ulema*. In particular, LIPIA graduates have gone on to establish *salafi pesantren* often with Saudi funding.¹⁵³ These have grown from a handful in the 1980s to hundreds today, providing a mechanism for spreading *salafi* ideas through outreach activities and for the training of local *salafi* teachers and propagators.¹⁵⁴

On the other hand LIPIA has also served as a seedbed of Brotherhood ideas. Many graduates emerged steeped in Brotherhood thinking, including some who would go on to be leaders of the Brotherhood oriented Prosperity and Justice Party (PKS). The obvious question is whether the difference between *salafi* and Muslim Brotherhood approaches is meaningful in practice. There is much in common with respect to religious faith and doctrine. In the past the Saudi religious establishment — and the Saudi regime — saw no difficulty employing Muslim Brothers in teaching positions, with the tacit understanding that the political dimensions of the Brotherhood's *da'wa* would not be propagated in Saudi Arabia. Many Muslim Brothers have drifted toward salafism as they became more disconnected from the societies from which they originally came.¹⁵⁵

Nonetheless it is the Brotherhood's more overtly political activism and its generally accommodating attitude to both political pluralism and religious diversity that still distinguishes it from contemporary salafism. As already noted, the latter tends to eschew politics and to be intolerant toward what it perceives as impure or innovative religious practices. In Indonesia, this distinction has been manifest in the efforts of Indonesian *salafi* 'purists' to discourage their followers from attending LIPIA from the mid- to late 1990s onward, because they believed the institution to have been excessively compromised by Brotherhood ideas.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless it is also possible that the combination of a

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salafi curriculum and Muslim Brotherhood teachers may at times have produced graduates that combine a puritanical religious outlook with more overtly political forms of activism.¹⁵⁷

In terms of *da'wa*, both government and non-government activity is largely focused on the support of local Indonesian organisations. Support is provided to groups across the spectrum, from those propagating a purely Wahabist oriented salafism to groups that take their inspiration from a range of influences including from the Muslim Brotherhood. Embassy religious attachés provide these organisations with materials on Wahabism to distribute and by some accounts pay their *da'i* (preachers) a monthly stipend. One Indonesian interlocutor claimed that embassy religious attachés fund some 400 *da'i* on a monthly basis, although we were not able to confirm this number.¹⁵⁸

Three organisations, in particular, have received significant Saudi support, both government and non-government: Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII; Indonesian Islamic Predication Council), Jamiat Islam wal-Irsyad (The Islamic Association for Enlightenment, usually known as simply al-Irsyad); and the Persatuan Islam (Persis; Islamic Union). DDII was established in 1967 by leaders of the banned Masyumi Islamic Party. Its focus has been propagation rather than practical political activity. DDII's chairman, Mohammad Natsir, was widely respected in Middle Eastern Wahhabi and salafist circles and he became the most important conduit for Saudi funding flowing into Indonesia during the 1970s and 80s. Al-Irsyad, founded in 1913, is primarily devoted to Islamic education and propagation, and Persis was established in 1924 as a modernist Muslim organisation. Both al-Irsyad and Persis have Islamic schools that have featured prominently in the education of Indonesian Islamists.

Together with LIPIA, DDII was critical to the growth of salafism in the 1970s and early 1980s. DDII, as the main disburser of Saudi money in Indonesia during the 1970s and 1980s, provided scholarships for young Indonesian Muslims to study at Middle Eastern institutions, including several of the leading centres of *salafi* education such as al-Imam University in Riyadh. Through its chairman, Natsir, DDII also facilitated the establishment of LIPIA. But again Saudi support did not

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necessarily orient an organisation toward Wahabism or salafism. DDII also played a key role in popularising Brotherhood thought, translating a number of seminal Brotherhood texts in the late 1970s and 1980s, the most popular of which was Sayyid Qutb's 'Signposts' (*Petunjuk Jalan*). Many of these students sent to al-Azhar by DDII took the opportunity to study at first hand Brotherhood thinking and organisational methods. Moreover, DDII funded intensive training courses for Muslim tertiary students which drew heavily upon Brotherhood principles. Indeed the breadth of DDII's approach has probably helped it to obtain funding from sources other than those in Saudi Arabia.¹⁵⁹

In general terms Indonesian *salafi* groups have benefited greatest from Saudi and Gulf States' funding. Many of the leading *salafi* groups received generous funding from and, in several prominent cases, were founded at the instigation of Middle Eastern donors, both government and non-government. As noted in the recent ICG report on salafism in Indonesia, two *salafi* organisations that receive significant support from the IIRO are Yayasan al-Sofwah and Wahdah Islamiyah (WI).¹⁶⁰ The former has largely been involved in *salafi* propagation. The latter has, however, produced a number of Indonesian militants including Agus Dwikarna and even among Indonesian salafists the movement is seen as leaning toward jihadist-salafism.¹⁶¹

Other organisations that have received, or continue to receive, Saudi support (at least non-government) include: the al-Huda Islamic Foundation, which was established in 1998 and runs its own kindergartens and schools as well as a teachers' college and an AM radio station (Radio al-Iman Swaratama); the al-Ta'ifah Mansoura Foundation founded in 1994 by *salafi* activists from campus mosques in East Java; the al-Imam Foundation (which appears to be struggling because of a decline in Saudi funding); the al-Sunnah Foundation, in Cirebon, West Java, which runs the largest *salafi pesantren* in Cirebon with programs from kindergarten to junior high school; and Nda' al-Fatra Foundation, in Surabaya, East Java, which publishes and distributes *salafi* texts and also maintains a radio station (as-Salam FM).¹⁶²

The US crackdown on the flow of money from Middle Eastern institutions to countries such as Indonesia since 11 September 2001

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has resulted in a sharp drop in Saudi funding for both Indonesian *salafi* groups and other organisations such as DDII. For example, construction of DDII's long awaited school and college complex at the organisation's Jakarta headquarters has been halted by the sharp drop in Middle Eastern funding with the building about 75 per cent complete. Dewan Dakwah officials complain that the US instigated pressure on such funding is more likely to drive students into radical institutions than undermine terrorism. The *salafi* website 'Al-Islam' has also had its Saudi funding curtailed, resulting in a sharp decline in its operations. The director of the IIRO office in Jakarta claimed to us in May 2004 that he had not received any new funding for a year. He also noted that many wealthy Saudis with a genuine interest in providing humanitarian assistance had been scared off from donating to the IIRO.

This has affected *salafi* groups more than others, given their reliance on Saudi funding. Some of these groups have succeeded in gaining funds directly from individual donors; others have sought to increase their own fund raising capacity by establishing enterprises and cultivating local donors.¹⁶³ Nonetheless, we were presented with circumstantial evidence that non-government Saudi donors had found ways to bypass the official crackdown on the funding and had continued in 2004 to provide money to some of the *salafi* groups mentioned above, including WI.¹⁶⁴ The Eastern Province (in Saudi Arabia) Branch of the IIRO seems to have been particularly active in Indonesia in this regard.¹⁶⁵ Indeed the unintended impact within Indonesia of international pressure on Saudi Arabia has been to reduce funding to legitimate projects without preventing more zealously motivated patrons from getting their money through. Not only does this create resentment towards the West among lawful recipients of this assistance but could potentially lead such groups and organisation into the arms of more ideologically oriented sources of finance.

Mosque construction is another form of activity that reflects both purely charitable motivations and the aims of propagation. No figure is available for the number of mosques built with government and non-government money from Saudi Arabia but it is likely to go into the thousands. Both government and non-government funding has been

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provided for this purpose. According to the IIRO's own figures, in 2003 it constructed 309 mosques.¹⁶⁶ The extent to which this is a vehicle for propagation seems to vary, however. A number of Indonesian and other interlocutors told us that in certain cases the Saudi financiers of a particular mosque would insist on appointing the *imam* (prayer leader). In other cases, however, as already noted, mosques appear to have been built without any strings attached.

Publishing and the internet

The flow of printed material from the Middle East has long historical roots. It has taken many forms, from textbooks and commentaries on various Islamic sciences, to journals, pamphlets and newspapers representing different doctrinal and political views. This material was read in its original Arabic by the relatively small number of Muslims with the competence to do so, or translated into vernacular languages such as Malay and Javanese, thus bringing it to a far large audience. Since the 1980s, however, the popular demand for books on Islam has increased markedly, with sections on Islam in bookstores becoming increasingly prominent.¹⁶⁷ Translations of Yousef al-Qardawi's writings and sermons are among the most popular Islamic texts, in no small part because they provide guidance on the 'correct' Islamic approach to a range of everyday tasks and concerns confronting Indonesian Muslims.

Accompanying this has been a dramatic expansion in Islamic publishing with a growing quantity of material translated from Arabic into Indonesian. In the case of *salafi* and Brotherhood works, much of the translation has been done by LIPIA graduates. Some of the publishing appears driven by *da'wa* objectives; as already noted DDII played a major role in the translation of Sayyid Qutb and Hassan al-Banna's works into Indonesian. The number of *salafi* oriented publishing houses has risen sharply in recent years and they have a growing presence in the mainstream Islamic market. Though no reliable sales figures are available, the wide distribution of *salafi* literature, including through large bookshop chains such as Gunung Agung and Gramedia, is proof

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of high public demand for works of this kind.

A considerable body of material also deals with the plight of Muslims in the world or offers political commentaries from an Islamic perspective, among them a sub-class of publishing some have dubbed 'pamphlet Islam'.¹⁶⁸ Typically these are translations from Arabic material and often the topics are anti-Western and anti-Semitic. In some cases it seems the more lurid and conspiratorial material is published because it sells well. As James Fox has recounted, in one case an Indonesian publisher amended the original title of an Arabic book from 'Globalisation or Americanisation' to 'America: Dictator of the World'.¹⁶⁹ Similarly a number of Indonesian interlocutors commented that the volume of material being translated and published was high simply because it was profitable.

As with other parts of the Muslim world, in recent decades digital technology and globalisation have greatly accelerated the flow of information from the Middle East to Indonesia. The main vector has been the internet, which has allowed Indonesians quick and relatively cheap access to a diverse array of material from across the Islamic world. Internet usage in Indonesia is low by international standards, but Islamist groups in particular have proven adept at exploiting this technology and using it to disseminate information. If a small number of activists have access to the Internet, material can be quickly downloaded and distributed through mosque networks, students groups, Qur'anic study classes and the like.¹⁷⁰ Indonesian websites also provide links to major Middle Eastern conflicts and others involving Muslims around the world. One site, for example, provides up to date information on the Palestinian Intifada (www.info.palestina.com), while other sites offer often graphic accounts of Muslim struggles in regions such as Chechnya and Kashmir (www.qoqaz.net and www.maktab-islam.com).

The importance of the internet as a tool for the transmission and dissemination of ideas is particularly strong among Indonesian *salafi* groups. Notwithstanding their typical social conservatism, *salafi* groups in the Middle East and elsewhere have tended to embrace the internet precisely because it offers an opportunity to create a generic or de-culturated Islamic identity. These sites abound: see for example

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www.salafi.net or www.salafipublications.com. The internet offers them a facility to link directly to other *salafi* scholars overseas and use the ideas they download to challenge local traditions of Indonesian Islam, bypassing local sources of religious authority.¹⁷¹ Indeed the net makes manifest a virtual *umma* that these groups can inhabit; or as Peter Mandaville has argued, provides them with a means of re-imagining the *umma* as something beyond their immediate Muslim community (as Mandaville notes, this does not simply apply to *salafi* discourses, but to a broader critical re-evaluation of some of Islam's central ideas facilitated by the internet).¹⁷² That said, the virtual *umma* is not necessarily a harmonious one. Most *salafi* groups in Indonesia often use their own websites to launch vitriolic attacks on other salafists.

Chapter 4

‘Every seed you plant in Indonesia grows’

Introduction

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

With respect to the impact of Middle Eastern ideas, many observers are naturally most interested in those currents related to contemporary forms of terrorism. This is certainly part of our focus, but we have sought to go beyond this narrow though important issue to give some sense of the broader impact of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist thinking

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(in part to help disentangle those ideas which do contribute to the terrorism problem from those that do not). Thus we will examine the three broad intellectual currents identified in this paper: the Islamist ideas of Muslim Brotherhood (including its more radical iterations), and two key manifestations of neo-fundamentalism — salafism and jihadist-salafism. The key question framing our inquiry is the extent to which these currents have been absorbed wholesale or whether there has been a process of Indonesianisation, in which external ideas have been sifted and applied in a Southeast Asian context.

The Muslim Brotherhood

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

Several factors account for this rising popularity. For many younger Muslims, this was a period of growing frustration and disillusionment with both the Soeharto regime's treatment of Islamic organisations and the behaviour of Muslim leaders themselves. The regime systematically emasculated Islam as an independent political force and allowed relatively few devout Muslims privileged positions in the bureaucracy or business world. At the same time, many Muslim leaders were drawn into the New Order's vast patronage networks, conforming to the regime's largely 'secular' rhetoric in return for material rewards and peripheral involvement in state decision making. As one activist recalled of that era: 'We looked around us and found very few Muslim leaders whom we could respect, who were men of integrity. When we heard them speak or saw what they did, we were constantly disappointed. So, we sought a new model of Islamic struggle.'¹⁷³

It was in this context of disaffection that many young Muslims began

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

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

The ideals and models of activism of Hassan al-Banna became the cornerstone of Tarbiyah thinking. Al-Banna’s views on politics, the state, personal behaviour and organisational methods were widely read within the movement and formed a primary reference in shaping the doctrine and activities of Tarbiyah members. As the founder of the Brotherhood, al-Banna carried special legitimacy and the Tarbiyah movement found his writings more applicable in an Indonesian context than those of other more radical Islamist thinkers. Like al-Banna, Tarbiyah members regarded Islam and the state as inseparable, as a matter of principle. But they did not regard the founding of a formal Islamic state in Indonesia

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in the near future as either necessary or possible. Echoing al-Banna's approach, Islamisation of the state was seen as a gradual process that must begin with greater pietism within society. Until Islamic law and principles were well understood by Muslims, a viable Islamic state would be difficult to establish. Nonetheless, an Islamic state was seen as the endpoint of the struggle.¹⁷⁴

The writings of post-al-Banna Brotherhood ideologues and intellectuals such as Sayyid Qutb and Yousef al-Qaradawi have been used selectively by the Tarbiyah movement. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Qutb's ideas on *jahiliya* had a powerful effect on Tarbiyah thinking. In some respects, however, the emphasis was placed on the less dramatic dimensions of Qutb's notion of *jahiliya*. Tarbiyah members commonly quoted Qutb in asserting that 'Muslims are now in *jahiliya*, like in the early period of Islam. Everything around us is *jahiliya*'. But the main danger to Muslims came from outside the Muslim community. The West was seen as conducting an ideological assault — *al-ghazwa al-fikri (ghazwul fikri)* — against the Islamic community which must be resisted if Muslims were to create a strong and pious community. Muslims, they argued, must realise that their faith provides a complete, perfect and timeless set of beliefs and principles which they must embrace wholeheartedly. One need not look outside Islam for enlightenment.¹⁷⁵

All of this is consistent with Qutb's thinking, but would seem to downplay the real drama in his elaboration of the *jahiliya* — specifically its application to Muslims within his own society. This is underlined by the fact that *takfir* — effectively, excommunication, articulated by some of Qutb's more radical heirs in the Middle East in attacks against their impious rulers or society — was seldom referred to in Tarbiyah texts, as it was seen as inappropriate to Indonesian conditions and harmful to the movement's relations with other Islamic groups. Other key Qutbist concepts in relation to the Islamic state were also not picked up by the Tarbiyah movement. There are, for example, few references in Tarbiyah texts to *hakimiya* — that is, the idea that sovereignty belongs to God alone — a key concept that Qutb had elaborated from Maududi.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the Tarbiyah movement

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

As the Tarbiyah movement consolidated itself during the 1990s, pressure grew from within the movement to become more politically active. This crystallised in early 1998, when the New Order began to teeter following the Asian financial crisis. Tarbiyah activists formed the student organisation KAMMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia, or Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union) in April 1998 which quickly assumed a prominent role in protests that brought down the regime. Following Soeharto’s downfall, many of these same Tarbiyah leaders founded a new party, the Justice Party (PK), which gained 1.4 per cent of the vote at the 1999 general election and seven seats in the national parliament. Much of its support came from campus Islamic groups and young graduates who had been involved in Tarbiyah activities. As it failed to meet the 2 per cent threshold needed to contest the 2004 election, PK changed its name to the Prosperity and Justice Party (PKS), though it was effectively the same party. It was the only party that contested the 1999 election to make major gains in the 2004 parliamentary elections, lifting its vote to 7.3 per cent and securing 45 seats in the new 550 member parliament. A large majority of the party’s new voters at this election seemed attracted more by its message of clean government and social justice rather than any Islamic appeals.¹⁷⁶

The evolution of Brotherhood inspired movements from the Gerakan Tarbiyah to a mainstream political party offers a revealing case study of the impact of Middle Eastern Islamism in Indonesia and the process of adaptation to changing local conditions. Tarbiyah was a closed movement whose members were carefully selected and inducted into a program designed to ensure pious behaviour. The emphasis

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was upon personal rectitude and group solidarity rather than mass involvement. The decision of some Tarbiyah leaders in 1998 to form PK was a reaction to the post-Soeharto lifting of politically repressive measures and a belief that it was now time to move into a new stage of development, one that focused on formal politics and popular appeal as a means of furthering their objectives. The exclusivity of Tarbiyah thus gave way to a more inclusive and outward looking approach. At the time of the 1999 election, PK had about 60 000 members; when PKS's formation was announced in mid-2003, the party had more than 300 000 members. The party consciously recruited members from a non-Tarbiyah background to broaden its appeal and, at the 2004 election, fielded more than 30 non-Muslim legislative candidates.

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

While Tarbiyah members regarded the Islamisation of society, the economy, and state as a cornerstone of their struggle, PKS downplayed these issues in the 1999 and 2004 elections, emphasising instead the 'secular' themes of fighting corruption, socio-economic equality and the

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need for continued political reform. Party leaders made clear that their stance on these issues was informed by their Islamic norms, but they usually conveyed their electoral messages in religiously neutral language. This was not to say that PKS leaders had abandoned their earlier commitment to Islamist causes; rather they argued that it was premature and ultimately counter productive to take such issues to the broader electorate. Most voters, they said, had a poor understanding of Brotherhood principles and PKS did not want to risk being labelled sectarian or radical if it promoted such an agenda. Thus, PKS’s constitution and manifesto made no mention of establishing an Islamic state.

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

If the substance sufficiently represents the name [i.e., ‘Islamic state’], the name does not need to reflect the substance... What is the use of a country as large as Indonesia, whose Muslim population is the largest in the world, declaring itself to be [an Islamic state]. Previously, the people ran this nation in a secular way [but] now we want to run it Islamically. That is the essence of it. Hence, Partai Keadilan never bears aloft the Islamic state or syariat Islam.¹⁷⁷

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

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other parties.

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

Some PKS actions, however, have drawn criticism. The party has, at times, cultivated a public image of itself which is starkly at odds with its internal discourses. While its spokespeople have stressed the party's commitment to pluralism and tolerance, PKS training documents and websites indicate a far more militant stream of thinking among many of its branches. PKS has also been attacked for its choice of legislative candidates in the 2004 election. The most controversial of these was Tamsil Linrung who was nominated by PKS despite a prima facie case linking him to several violent Islamic organisations, including Jemaah Islamiyah, and his unenviable reputation for financial mismanagement.¹⁷⁸ Another contentious PKS parliamentarian is the former senior intelligence official, Soeripto, who was under investigation for corruption and has gained a high profile by peddling outlandish conspiracy theories about Western involvement in terrorist acts.

Another of PKS's pernicious dimensions is the fact that trenchantly anti-Christian and anti-Semitic rhetoric is commonplace among many of its members, as are various theories regarding global plots to subjugate Muslims. This is not unique to PKS; it is certainly found in more extreme groups but can also be found in most Islamic parties. While the anti-Christian rhetoric reflects Indonesia's recent history of sporadic sectarian conflict, anti-Semitism is largely a Middle Eastern import (Indonesia's Jewish community numbers only in the dozens). To some extent, Indonesian Muslims have been drawn to conspiracy theories regarding 'global Jewish domination' because this provides a powerful sense of the hostile 'other' on to whom responsibility can be shifted for the plight of the Islamic community (both in Indonesia and

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elsewhere). Martin Van Bruinessen has also suggested some Indonesian Muslims, particularly during the Soeharto era, found it safer to attack Jews than the much resented and largely non-Muslim minority Chinese community. In that sense, Indonesian anti-Semitism was a proxy for anti-Sinicism.¹⁷⁹

Nonetheless, PKS represents one of the few genuine alternatives in Indonesian politics to the elite controlled and vastly corrupt mainstream parties. As such, its emergence is a positive development for Indonesian democracy, offering a new paradigm of political behaviour and greater electoral choice. In this respect, the role that PKS has played is a tangible demonstration of how Islamists can sometimes assist a process of democratisation by generating an alternative to the oligarchic structures that often underpin autocratic — or formerly autocratic — regimes.¹⁸⁰ PKS’s distinctiveness in this regard is a direct consequence of its Brotherhood derived ideology and norms. Although the party has adapted its thinking to fit Indonesian political conditions, its core frame of reference remains that of the Brotherhood. Viewed from this perspective it can be argued that this particular form of Middle Eastern influence has had a positive impact on Indonesian political life.

In terms of Brotherhood influences in Indonesia it is worth mentioning two other examples, Sheikh Yousef al-Qaradawi and Hizb ut-Tahrir. Al-Qardhawi has been one of the most influential of contemporary Middle Eastern thinkers within Indonesian Islam. He has made several visits to Indonesia over the past two decades and at least 15 of his works have been translated and published since the mid-1980s. His writings on Islamic jurisprudence have become especially popular and are widely cited, not just in Muslim Brotherhood-inspired groups such as Gerakan Tarbiyah and the PKS, but more broadly among younger, urban Muslims who lack a strong formal religious education. Many in these sections of society find Qardhawi’s pronouncements on *shari’a* more accessible and practical than those found in classical jurisprudential texts. For example, he provides guidance on everyday matters such as what approach Muslims should take to working in a conventional bank or a large corporation owned by non-Muslims.¹⁸¹ His readers are attracted to the directness and relevance of his works and the way they

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can quickly find answers to the problems confronting them in daily life. His views have, however, had little impact among mainstream and more traditional organisations such as Nahdlatul Ulama.

Another interesting case study in this context is the Brotherhood derived Hizb ut-Tahrir. In many parts of Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia, it has a reputation for strident radicalism (see Chapter Two). By contrast, in Indonesia, where it has had a presence since 1982, Hizb ut-Tahrir has a record of peaceful predication and intellectual activity which avoids the inflammatory rhetoric of some of its overseas counterparts. Unlike many other Indonesian Islamist organisations it has no paramilitary wing or thuggish ‘security units’. Moreover, it has sought to tailor its message to Indonesian conditions and, of late, has given as much emphasis to the implementation of shar’ia as it has to the caliphate.¹⁸² Hizb ut-Tahrir has a growing membership in Indonesia — no precise figures are available but it is probably several tens of thousands — but it remains small in comparison to mainstream organisations and parties.

Salafist groups

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

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Forum was established in 1998 by a group of about 60 prominent *salafi* teachers and preachers led by a veteran of the Afghan war, Ja’far Umar Thalib.

In early 2000, the Forum founded Laskar Jihad, primarily to defend Muslims it believed were being attacked and slaughtered by Christians in Maluku. At its height in 2001, Laskar Jihad claimed to have about 10 000 members, up to 5000 of whom were involved in fighting and providing health and welfare services in Maluku, Central Sulawesi, and even Papua. The Forum voluntarily dissolved itself and Laskar Jihad in early October 2002, following criticism of LJ activities by several key Saudi sheikhs, growing internal disputes between Ja’far and other leaders, declining support from the Indonesian military and a drop in funding.¹⁸³

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

Salafi groups in Indonesia bear all the hallmarks of contemporary salafism in the Middle East and indeed of the movement globally. In particular, they seek to de-link the practice of Islam from Indonesian culture. Thus local salafists are far less likely than their Brotherhood inspired counterparts to accommodate local cultural preferences when attempting to reform religious practice. They regard ‘indigenous’ manifestations of Islamic religiosity with some caution, believing them to contain deviations and ‘innovations’ from pure orthodox religious practice. They typically adopt forms of *salafi* clothing distinct from traditional Indonesian Islamic garb symbolically echoing the dress norms of salafists in the Middle East and elsewhere.

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As already noted with respect to *salafi* groups in the Middle East, salafism in Indonesia is far from monolithic. The *salafi* community is notoriously fractious and its history since the early 1990s is replete with bitter personal and doctrinal disputes, leading to frequent splits within groups and the formation of new entities. *Salafi* publications and websites are notable for the often vitriolic attacks on other *salafi* groups and denunciation of those seen to have deviated from the pure *salafi* teachings. Frequently such disputes revolve around competing claims to be enacting the most pure form of salafism and protecting the movement from harmful ‘innovation’.¹⁸⁴

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

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

Yet this process is not beyond manipulation by Indonesian *ustadz*. Frequently, a local *salafi* will furnish Middle Eastern sheikhs with

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partisan or self serving information and lobby them to issue a statement favourable to their particular interest or doctrinal position. The sheikhs’ lack of knowledge of Indonesia makes them susceptible to such campaigns. So, while Indonesian salafists will ultimately respect the ruling made by a prominent Middle Eastern Sheikh, they will also seek to steer the decision making process.

A well documented case of this is the Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah. Throughout its existence, the Forum repeatedly sought guidance from a number of Middle Eastern *ulama* regarding key decisions. The establishment of Laskar Jihad was only undertaken after such prominent sheikhs as Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi, Rabi bin Hadi al-Madkholi and Wahid al-Jabiri gave their approval and, similarly, the disbandment of the Forum and Laskar was prompted by disapproving comments from Saudi and Yemeni *ulama*.¹⁸⁵ This latter case provided a rare instance of an Indonesian *ustadz* questioning a *fatwa* from senior *salafi* sheikhs. Ja’far Umar Thalib rejected the criticism of his behaviour and the direction of Laskar Jihad, not on the basis of the sheikhs’ competence, but rather by challenging the veracity of the information presented to them by his Indonesian *salafi* rivals. Ja’far’s reluctance to accept the *fatwa* led to him being ostracised by most *salafi* groups.

The relationship between salafism, politics and violence (including terrorism) is as complex in Indonesia as it is in the Middle East. The only real certainty is that one cannot place all *salafi* groups in the same category. Most Indonesian *salafi* groups focus exclusively on religiosity and peaceful missionary and educational activity. Like salafism in the Middle East they actively avoid political activism. While many purists take the orthodox *salafi* view against democracy, some Indonesian *salafi* groups have permitted their members to vote in Indonesian elections.¹⁸⁶ Nonetheless a number of *salafi* groups have resorted to violence to, as they see it, defend the Muslim community in Indonesia. Thus religiously minded salafists have participated in sectarian violence — in Maluku, as noted above — or in acts of vigilante violence against moral threats to the Islamic community.

As with the Middle East, those self described *salafi* groups who focus on organised acts of terrorism need to be viewed as a separate

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category (under the broad rubric of jihadist-salafism). While the line between sectarian violence and terrorism is by no means clear cut, it is a distinction that salafists themselves make; that is, some salafists see their participation in sectarian violence as legitimate but would draw the line at what they consider an act of terrorism. Indeed despite the fact that some Indonesian terrorist groups — such as JI — call themselves salafist, there are sharp differences between them and mainstream salafists.

In Indonesia, most strict salafists appear to regard the terrorist movement Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) with suspicion and contempt. They object to its clandestine nature and its practice of members swearing oaths to the JI *amir*. For purist salafists, allegiance should only be given to the *amirul Muslimeen* (*amir al-Muslimeen*) or ‘commander of the faithful’ (i.e., leader of the global Islamic community), not to the head of a small covert group. They also reject JI’s interpretation of *jihad*, which sanctions terrorist attacks and the use of ‘martyr’ suicide bombers. Most *salafi* leaders regard terrorists as *muharibeen* (those who cause harm on earth) and believe that the perpetrators of such acts should be punished by death. They further believe that death by suicide in a terrorism attack is a sin that precludes martyrdom. Finally, salafist groups condemn JI’s determination to bring down the ‘Muslim governments’ of Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries, believing that Muslims are forbidden to rebel against their rulers, even if they are tyrannical and impious.¹⁸⁷

Such objections are dismissed by the leaders of JI, who see *jihad* as essential to realising *salafi* ideals in the modern world. Indeed JI figures such as Mukhlas have written derisively about those who call themselves *salafi* but are not prepared to undertake *jihad*.¹⁸⁸ JI argue that such is the military and economic might of Islam’s enemies, only through unremitting war and terrorism can Muslims hope to re-establish the kind of state which existed at the time of the *salafi*. The difference between mainstream salafists and jihadist-salafists is most often manifest in their attitude toward religious scholars. Mainstream salafists tend to ascribe primacy to the teachings of prominent establishment sheikhs in Saudi Arabia such as the late Sheikhs Abd al-Aziz Bin Baz

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and Mohammed bin Saleh al-Uthaimeen. By contrast JI gives primacy to what it calls *ahluts tsughur* (*ahl al-thughoor* — see Chapter Two; in effect, ‘warrior ulama’) — notably Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Qatada (not all of whom, of course are religious scholars). Imam Samudra, for example, wrote that jihadists should only ‘hold to the *fatwa* of the *ulama* (*ulema*) *mujahid*. That is, those who have fought directly in the *jihād* battlefield’. For him, Islamic knowledge alone is insufficient; to have real authority in matters of *jihād*, an *ulama* needs to have battlefield experience, to have borne arms as part of God’s struggle.¹⁸⁹

Jihadist groups

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

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

Jemaah Islamiyah was founded on 1 January 1993 by Abdullah Sungkar.¹⁹⁰ Like al-Qaeda, JI is a genuine transnational movement: a large majority of its leaders and members are Indonesian, but Muslims from Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand and possibly several other Southeast Asian states are also closely involved. The formal aim of JI is to create a caliphate in the region, within which *shari’a* law would

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be comprehensively implemented. This would then become the basis for the restoration of a global caliphate.¹⁹¹ In reality, most JI members are more concerned with establishing an Islamic state within Indonesia and striking against Islam's perceived foes. Doctrinally, JI regards itself as strictly *salafi*, but as discussed above, this has been contested by non-jihadist-salafists.

JI commenced serious planning for terrorist acts from the late 1990s, the main targets of which were to be Christian places of worship and clergy. These began with several church bombings in the Sumatran city of Medan in May 2000, followed three months later by the car bombing of the Philippines ambassador's residence in Jakarta, which killed one bystander. The first large scale operation was a near simultaneous set of attacks on 38 churches across Indonesia on Christmas Eve 2000, resulting in the deaths of 19 people. By far the most lethal terrorist action by JI was the bombing of two crowded nightclubs in Bali on 12 October 2002, which killed 202 people and left more than 300 others seriously injured. The Bali bombing represented a new development in JI terrorism. Not only was it the first suicide attack undertaken by the organisation, it was also the first time Westerners had been specifically targeted. Statements by the perpetrators revealed that they had wanted to strike at the United States, regarding it as the leader of global anti-Islamic forces. The Bali attack was followed by the car bombing of the J. W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta on 5 August 2003, leading to the loss of another 12 lives. The bombing of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta on 9 September 2004, which killed nine Indonesians, is also likely to be the work of JI or its affiliates. In all, the death toll from these and other, smaller, JI attacks probably exceeds 250.

In addition to its own operations, JI has spawned or cooperated closely with other militant groups in the region which are involved in jihadist activities. The Makassar bombing in South Sulawesi on 5 December 2002, that caused three fatalities, was carried out by members of Wahdah Islamiyah and Laskar Jundullah, both of which have ideological, training and personal links to JI. Along with the Mujahidin Kompak, a paramilitary group associated with Dewan Dakwah's aid organisation, Kompak, Wahdah Islamiyah and Laskar Jundullah also

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took part in sectarian violence in Central Sulawesi in late 2003. Across the region, JI has worked closely with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), including running joint operations and training camps, and the Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM), though the exact nature of this latter relationship remains open to dispute.¹⁹²

That JI is seen as predominantly a product of international jihadist forces is scarcely surprising given the background of many of its leaders, its ideological orientation, and its well established links with foreign terrorist networks, most notably that of al-Qaeda. The Afghanistan experience had a powerful effect on the outlook of the Indonesian *mujahideen* and their capacity to undertake terrorist acts. The arduous conditions in the training camps and on the battlefield created close bonds among the Indonesian fighters and also with other *mujahideen* from across the Muslim world. These friendships and networks would later prove critical to JI's ability to mount large, well coordinated terrorist attacks. The *mujahideen* learned the skills necessary for terrorism, such as bomb making, use of firearms and covert operation techniques. They were heavily indoctrinated with jihadist thinking that provided powerful religious sanction for the use of terrorist violence and the experience of Afghanistan created a strong pan-Islamist outlook. JI relocated its offshore training to MILF camps in Mindanao in the southern Philippines in 1995, though the so called ‘*alumni Moro*’ did not have the same prestige and tight networking found among the Afghanistan veterans.

Ideologically, the Middle Eastern influence on JI is unmistakable. Significantly, however, the influences are diverse, cutting across various currents of radical Islamism in the Middle East. In JI texts, Middle Eastern figures, both contemporary and historical, have pride of place. Despite the fact that JI describes itself as a *salafi* movement, Qutbist notions of *jahiliya* and radical global *jihad* feature prominently, particularly in the teachings of Abdullah Sungkar. He and Ba'asyir also applied the Brotherhood's *usrah* strategy within the movement, believing that Islamising society was a precondition for an Islamic state. The Gama'a Islamiyah connection was also important. Both Sungkar and Ba'asyir were admirers of the spiritual head of Egyptian al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah,

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Sheikh Omar Abd al-Rahman. JI's General Declaration of Struggle (commonly known by the acronym 'PUPJI') was, according to several of the organisation's leaders, inspired by the Gama'a's *Mithaq al-Amal al-Islami* ('Charter of Islamic Action' published by the JI linked press al-Alaq as *Pedomam Amal Islami*).¹⁹³ (Not all of JI's texts, it should be noted, are of Islamic origin. The current JI *amir*, Abu Dujana, appears to have edited a manual for 'urban mujahid' which draws heavily upon Carlos Marighella's classic insurgency text 'The Mini-Manual of the Urban Guerilla'. The text has been Islamised, for example, replacing the original 'urban guerilla' with 'urban mujahid'.¹⁹⁴)

The two most seminal 'external' authorities for JI are, however, Abdullah Azzam and Ibn Taymiyah. JI texts often paid homage to Azzam and his role in conceptualising and facilitating global jihad. Al-Alaq in Solo translated and published many of his works, including a 12 volume collection of writings and speeches entitled *Tarbiyah Jihadiyah*, and *Di Bawah Naungan Surat at-Taubah*, all of which became major references on JI reading lists.¹⁹⁵ Ibn Taymiyah's treatises on *jihad* and the need to remove Muslim rulers who did not uphold Islamic law were also regarded as essential texts for JI recruits. Two other influential texts are Abu Qutada's *al-Jihad wa'l-Ijtihad* and Muhammad Sayyid al-Qathani's *al-Wala' wa'l-Bara*.

The Middle Eastern influence is also evident in JI's use of suicide bombers in the Bali, Marriott and Australian Embassy attacks. Manuals on suicide bombing, particularly those from Palestinian sources, were studied in JI training courses and several of these texts were translated and published in Indonesia by JI activists. The techniques used by JI draw closely on those employed by groups such as Hamas.¹⁹⁶ Nonetheless, while the methods and inspiration for suicide bombings owe much to the Palestinian example, it is wrong to assert, as several writers on JI have done, that there is no historical precedent for such attacks in Southeast Asia. Stephen Dale has shown that Muslims in Aceh, North Sumatra, and the southern Philippines regularly resorted to suicidal jihadism against 'infidel' colonial forces during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁹⁷

Interestingly, available evidence suggests that JI rarely ever cite *takfir*

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(excommunication) as a basis for terrorist action. As already noted, in Egypt *takfir* was used by radical Islamists to justify attacks on their own Muslim governments. The fact that JI does not apply it is not surprising given that JI’s acts of terrorism have generally been directed at non-Muslims, either Indonesian Christians or Westerners. JI members, like mainstream salafists, are inclined to the view that lax or liberal minded Muslims should be regarded as misguided rather than having left the faith. This suggests that JI shares al-Qaeda’s prioritisation of the struggle for the global Islamic *umma*, rather than the more traditional focus of Islamists, overthrowing the impious rulers of Muslim states.

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

There currently exists an extermination effort against the Islamic peoples that has America’s blessing, not just by virtue of its effective cooperation, but by America’s activity. The best witness to this is what is happening with the full knowledge of the world in the Palestinian cities of Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah and elsewhere. Every day, all can follow the atrocious slaughter going on there with American support that is aimed at children, women and the elderly. Are Muslims not permitted to respond in the same way and kill those among the Americans who are like the Muslims they are killing? Certainly! By Allah, it is truly a right for Muslims... It is allowed for Muslims to kill protected ones among unbelievers as an act of reciprocity. If the unbelievers have targeted Muslim women, children and elderly, it is permissible for Muslims to respond in kind and kill those similar to those whom the unbelievers killed.¹⁹⁸

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

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the release of the following statement on the web:

Let it be acknowledged that every single drop of Muslim blood, be it from any nationality and from any place will be remembered and accounted for.' [Reference to 'thousands of Muslims' killed in Afghanistan, Sudan, Palestine, Bosnia, Kashmir and Iraq.] The heinous crime and international conspiracy of the Christians also extends to the Philippines and Indonesia. This has resulted in Muslim cleansing in Moro [southern Philippines], Ambon, Poso and surrounding areas. It is clearly evident the crusade is continuing and will not stop... Every blow will be repaid. Blood will be redeemed by blood. A life for a life... To all you Christian unbelievers, if you define this act [i.e., the Bali bombings] on your civilians as heinous and cruel, you yourself have committed crimes which are more heinous. The cries of the babies and Muslim women has never succeeded in stopping your brutality. Well, here we are the Muslim men! We will harness the pain of the death of our brothers and sisters. You will bear the consequences of your actions wherever you are... We are responsible for the incident in Legian, Kuta, Bali.¹⁹⁹

Several terrorism specialists have suggested JI is an integral or subordinate part of al-Qaeda, whereas Sidney Jones of the International Crisis Group has described the relationship as one of 'mutual benefit and parallel struggle' in which JI is largely autonomous.²⁰⁰ The available evidence favours the latter view. JI leaders have certainly had extensive contact with bin Laden and other key al-Qaeda figures during the late 1980s and early 1990s in Afghanistan and several JI figures had ongoing operational ties. The most obvious was Hambali, who not only headed up JI operations but also consulted closely with the al-Qaeda leadership. Others who appear to have good links with bin Laden's group included Zulkarnaen, the commander of JI's military wing, and Fathur Rahman al-Ghozi, a bomb expert with extensive experience in Afghanistan and the Philippines. Al-Qaeda also provided substantial sums of money to

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JI for terrorist attacks, including US\$35,000 for the Bali bombing, as well as operatives such as the Kuwaiti, Omar al-Faruq, who assisted JI in Indonesia from the late 1990s till his arrest in mid-2002.

There can also be little doubt about al-Qaeda’s ideological influence on JI thinking. Al-Qaeda’s 1998 *fatwa* calling for a *jihād* against the West had a galvanising effect on the most militant section of JI’s leadership. This group, which included Hambali, Mukhlas, Zulkarnaen, Dr Azhari Husin, Imam Samudra and Dul Matin, believed that the *fatwa* should be acted upon and that the time had come for an emphatic jihadist response to Islam’s enemies. This view was, however, opposed by other sections of JI, which argued that the al-Qaeda *fatwa* did not reflect conditions in Indonesia and that the organisation’s broader goal of creating an Islamic state through predication and education would be jeopardised by large scale terrorist attacks. This faction contains many leaders of the Mantiqi II group (Java and Sumatra), including Ustadz Muhaimin Yahya (alias Ustadz Ziad), Ustadz Abdullah Anshori (alias Abu Fatih), Ahmad Roihan alias Saad and Ustadz Abdul Manan. The issue of the religious and tactical merit of pursuing extreme *jihād* remains a primary source of tension within JI, though observers are divided as to the seriousness of this dispute. Sidney Jones from the ICG believes that JI is fragmenting, with sections of the organisation conducting their own operations with little or no reference to the central leadership.²⁰¹ Zachary Abuza, possibly drawing on intelligence reporting, asserts that there is no serious falling out within the JI leadership and that the organisation’s outlook is broad enough to accommodate both mass casualty terrorism and propagation. It is difficult to assess independently the merits of these opposing views, but ICG has made the stronger case in public to support its interpretation.

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

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The Darul Islam (DI) rebellion against the central government began in 1948 and continued until the early 1960s. DI was overtly Islamist. It rejected the religiously neutral state ideology of the Republic, known as Pancasila (literally, 'Five Principles'), and in 1949, established the Indonesian Islamic State (Negara Islam Indonesia; NII) based on *shari'a*. It described its struggle as a *jihad fi sabilillah* ('holy war in the way of God') which would continue 'until all Islam's enemies were driven out'.²⁰² At its height in the mid-1950s, DI had at least 20 000 fighters, which it called *mujahid* (holy warriors), and it waged military and terror campaigns across six provinces. These included armed attacks on non-combatants in public places such as markets, cinemas and government offices, the use of assassination units (one of which almost succeeded in killing President Sukarno in 1957), assaults on Islamic schools and mosques in areas that refused to join DI, and the deployment of killing squads in conflict zones with monthly quotas for victims.

Estimates of the death toll during the 15 year DI rebellion range from about 15 000 to 40 000; well over one million people were displaced and 500 000 properties destroyed. Eventually, the rebellion was crushed by the Indonesian army in 1962.²⁰³ Darul Islam reactivated itself in the early 1970s as an underground organisation. From the mid-1970s, it experienced growing internal rifts and organisational fragmentation. It now has at least several thousand members and many more sympathisers, only a small number of whom would appear to be involved in violent or terrorist activity.²⁰⁴ The movement is more commonly known these days by the acronym NII.

Darul Islam had (and has) a similarly absolutist and dichotomised view of the world to JI. It believed that any Muslim who chose not to live in an area where Islamic law was in force (i.e., *darul Islam*; *dar al-Islam*) was apostate and therefore forfeited their rights to life and property. Such people were part of the 'region of war' (*darul harbi*; *dar al-harb*) and it was obligatory for all true Muslims to fight against them until they were vanquished. Importantly, DI's jihadism was based not on contemporary Middle Eastern sources, such as the more militant Brotherhood tracts that were beginning to appear at this time, but on interpretations of centuries old classical jurisprudence (*fiqh*) texts.

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

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

Despite the differences in religious doctrine and outlook between Darul Islam and Jemaah Islamiyah, there are powerful historical and contemporary links between the two. Many JI members regard Kartosuwirjo as an inspirational figure who martyred himself for the cause of founding an Islamic state. They also regard JI as continuing the DI struggle, albeit in a different form. Both Sungkar and Ba'asyir held senior positions in DI during the 1980s and early 1990s, and Sungkar commonly dated the start of the Indonesian state as 7 August 1949 (i.e. the proclamation of NII) rather than 17 August 1945, the date on which Sukarno declared Indonesia's independence.²⁰⁵ DI communities remain a major source of JI recruiting; many of the Indonesians who went to Afghanistan from 1985 did so as DI members, only later joining JI. Also, DI cadre trained as separate units in JI's Camp Hudaiyah in Mindanao in the latter part of the 1990s and JI instructors continue to be involved in training DI groups in Java. Last of all, there is considerable intermarriage between DI and JI families, which serves to strengthen the ties between the two networks.²⁰⁶

Thus, it is misleading to see Jemaah Islamiyah as purely, or even

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

Palestine, Iraq and Indonesia

JI's effort to align itself with al-Qaeda's struggle raises the broader issue of Indonesian identification with prominent Middle Eastern causes, notably that of Palestine and the conflict in Iraq. Pro-Palestinian sentiment has a long history and can be traced back to the 1940s when Indonesian Islamic organisations opposed the partition of Palestine and the creation of an Israeli state. Most have continued this stance until the present. Under pressure from the Muslim community, successive Indonesian governments have refused diplomatic and trade relations with Israel. By contrast, the PLO has had diplomatic representation in Jakarta since 1989. The ongoing sensitivity of this issue was apparent in late 1999, when newly elected President Abdurrahman Wahid created a furore by proposing the opening of trade ties with Israel — he was forced to back down shortly afterwards. More recently, the US led bombing of Afghanistan in 2001 and the Iraq War have also aroused strong sentiment among Indonesia's Muslims. There were small and occasionally violent protests against the Afghanistan campaign and the invasion of Iraq drew large but peaceful crowds on to the streets of major cities to rally against the military action.

Despite the widespread expression of support for Palestine, there is evidence to suggest that many Indonesian Muslims regard this and other international 'Islamic issues' as being of secondary importance to domestic concerns. For example, surveys conducted by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) at the State Islamic University

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Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, showed that the Palestinian issue ranked highly with Muslim respondents but was seen as less important than problems facing Indonesia’s Islamic community.²⁰⁷ Also, Islamic groups have found it difficult to maintain the momentum of mass protests over US policies in Afghanistan and Iraq, as both the leaders and members of mainstream organisations have swung their attention back to local issues. Calls for boycotts on US products and aid related funding have gained little support, even though international surveys record that anti-American sentiment in Indonesia is at the highest point for a generation. In general, most Muslim leaders have taken a pragmatic view, believing that boycotts and violent protests would harm local Muslims more than they would the United States.²⁰⁸

While the Islamic mainstream may not be preoccupied with bloodshed and injustice elsewhere in the Muslim world, radical activists have a higher awareness of Muslim suffering and may be galvanised by events such as the Iraq war. JI activists have used images of ‘slaughtered’ Muslims from conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia to recruit new members, though the impact of these images may be less powerful than those from local Muslim–Christian bloodshed in Ambon or Poso. Nonetheless, even in this case it is difficult to point to evidence that the war in Iraq is directly fuelling new recruits into JI, with most of its recruits drawn from groups and communities that have had a radical outlook stretching back at least several decades.²⁰⁹

Conclusion and Policy Implications

Introduction

At the outset of this paper we outlined a broad objective; that is, to explore whether Islamism was indeed today a monolithic ideological movement spreading from its historical centre, the Middle East, to Muslim countries around the world. As we explained at the outset, this paper should be viewed as both a case study on the flow and influence of Islamist ideas from the Middle East, but also as an effort in its own right to shed some light on Islamism in Indonesia. In this final chapter we will attempt to bring together the various strands of this paper and discuss general policy implications derived from our conclusions.

Between Islamism and neo-fundamentalism

Chapters One and Two offered an overview of Islamism in the Middle East which served to highlight the extent to which Islamism has always been grounded in the social, political and economic changes that have taken place in the region. Over the course of Islamism's evolution in the Middle East, three themes were evident: that of Islamic revival in the first half of the twentieth century; a radicalisation of thought in the

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second half; and the beginnings of a process of Islamist reassessment at the end of the century. Two broad trajectories emerged from this process of reassessment: one which has seen Islamists seek an accommodation with the states in which they live; and a second involving a drift toward neo-fundamentalism, manifest in contemporary forms of salafism, but also in extreme cases, in jihadist-salafism.

The history of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, in particular, provides a window into the evolution of the Islamism. From its beginnings in the shadow of the historical *Salafiya*, it translated a desire for Islamic revival into a broad based movement. But early on, as it would throughout its history, it fell victim to its own success as its effectiveness as a representative of the masses brought it into conflict with the state. This produced a radical turn, in the ideas of Sayyid Qutb, which would go on to inspire a militant activism and confrontation with the state through the 1970s, 80s and 90s. This activism was as much a function of how Qutb's radical heirs chose to interpret his ideas as it was of the socio-political and economic conditions of the time. Confrontation between the state and Islamist groups would be a recurring theme and cause of radicalisation and often violence.

The radical project would not, however, eclipse that of more mainstream Islamism. The two would coexist. The Muslim Brotherhood would return to a focus on propagation (*da'wa*), though it would also become more overtly political, running independent candidates in elections, and trying to occupy those spaces that the Egyptian regime couldn't quite reach, such as unions, and professional syndicates and institutions of social welfare. Meanwhile, the radicals would focus on *jihad*, which for much of the history of radical Islamism meant a violent and terroristic struggle against their own impious rulers and, in particular cases, against Israel.

The radical current of Islamism would have few victories however, save the Afghan *jihad* against the Soviets (which was won by the Afghan Islamists not foreign fighters), revolution in Iran and a coup in Sudan. The failure of the revolutionary project of violent Islamism in Egypt and Algeria — marked, in particular, by a descent into brutal terrorism — would help prompt a reassessment. For some radical

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movements this would be evident in an effort to reconcile their ideas and activism with the state and abandon violence — at least for the moment. But even mainstream Islamist movements would go through a process of reassessment reflecting the victory of a political over religious logic. Some movements would seek to adapt Islamist dogma in the cause of political respectability and popular support. The sustainability of this shift toward moderation among both radical and mainstream Islamists will remain, however, greatly dependent on the prospects for democratisation in the Middle East. A return to violence remains a possibility.

Political integration was not the only trajectory on offer, however. The reassessment of the 1990s among Islamists in the region would, in part, manifest itself in a neo-fundamentalist trajectory that has, in effect, increasingly taken Islamism out of the Middle East. Neo-fundamentalism has long historical roots, notably the efforts by Saudi Arabia since the 1960s and 70s to promote Wahabism internationally. But globalisation, in particular the ‘de-territorialisation’ of Islam discussed in Chapter Two, has provided contemporary salafism with an opportunity to create a new universalist identity particularly attractive to those Muslims who find themselves living as minorities in the West or indeed feel they are now minorities in their own majority Muslim countries.

This neo-fundamentalist trajectory is not for the most part violent.²¹⁰ Nonetheless, it does have an extreme and terroristic manifestation that combines the jihadist ideas and activism of the displaced veterans of the Afghan *jihad* against the Soviets with a *salafi* worldview. It is this extreme end of neo-fundamentalism that has produced al-Qaeda, its imitators and partisans. This broad group represents a break with the traditional patterns of even violent Islamist activism in the Middle East. They do not fight the impious regimes of the region or Israel (with a few possible exceptions). Their struggle is against the United States and its Western allies. References to Iraq and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict are employed for their resonance among Muslims worldwide, but are also subsumed into a vision of conflict between civilisations. Stripped of his Saudi citizenship, bin Laden has stopped being a Saudi or an Arab;

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in his mind he is simply a Muslim and a citizen of the *umma*.

Today Islamists are placed by many in the same, 'one size fits all' category. But as the foregoing illustrates, Islamism is not monolithic. Al-Qaeda is as distant from the ideas and activism of the Egyptian Hizb al-Wasat as the Baader Meinhof group of the 1970s was from the German Social Democrats. These differences are not only degrees of moderation of radicalism, or the choice between violent and non-violent tactics. Quite fundamentally they relate to the projects that various Islamists pursue from the promotion of specific forms of religiosity, to a struggle against authoritarianism, to terrorism against the West. They also relate to the degree of 'embeddedness' that such movements feel with the societies from which they emerged. There is no overall Islamist mission of which these various movements are a part (even if sometimes their lip service to the *umma* and the cause of global Islam might suggest it). Some work within national boundaries, others beyond them, but more often than not toward very different ends.

Between the global and the local

As Chapters Three and Four underline, the various currents of Islamism and neo-fundamentalism have had an impact in Indonesia. Most often these ideas have been imported by Indonesian Islamists looking for new modes of thinking about the relationship between Islam, politics and society or indeed new models for activism. Various mechanisms have served as vectors for these ideas, from Indonesian students who travelled to the Middle East to the jihadists who went to Afghanistan in the 1980s and 90s to the proliferating sources of Islamist information available through the Internet and satellite television. These vectors have served, however, to mediate the transmission of a range of ideas, from the more mainstream thinking of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the jihadist-salafism of al-Qaeda.

In specific instances, notably via Saudi propagation, these ideas have also been exported to Indonesia. Saudi support — financial and otherwise — has been critical to the emergence of a *salafi* current within the Indonesian Muslim community. Most salafists seem essentially

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concerned with questions of morality and religiosity — albeit of an intolerant form — limiting their activities to preaching and education. Nonetheless some *salafi* groups do cross into acts of vigilantism and sectarian violence. For the most part these groups should, however, be seen as distinct from those self described *salafi* groups involved in terrorism. The clamp down on Saudi funding for global Islamic causes has placed a number of these organisations in difficult circumstances and may see some of them disappear.

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

There have been other more insidious influences flowing from the Middle East, particularly with respect to the emergence of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). Significant parts of its doctrine and operational techniques are drawn from Middle Eastern sources, making it a far more lethal jihadist organisation than preceding movements such as Darul Islam in the 1950s and early 1960s. There is no denying that al-Qaeda has had a significant impact on JI's supranational worldview, and how it chooses its targets, reflecting linkages forged in the Afghan *jihād* against the Soviet Union. It is not, however, a command and control relationship and there remains a tension within JI over national versus global objectives. Many within the movement are more than happy to inhabit al-Qaeda's virtual *umma* and its vision of perpetual conflict with the West. But perhaps knowing that this is also a caravan to political marginalisation, some in the movement may be keener to

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return to a more nationally focused, if still often violent, project that enables it to build a broader support base among Indonesian Muslims. If these conflicting imperatives do exist within JI it would hardly be surprising. In Iraq today similar tensions exist between local insurgents and foreign fighters, and the fact that much of the Egyptian radical movement of the 1990s chose not to follow Ayman al-Zawahiri into al-Qaeda are further illustrations that in many cases it will not always be possible for Islamists to reconcile global and local imperatives.

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

The virtues of a broader perspective

In much of the literature on the impact of Middle Eastern Islam on Indonesia, there is a preoccupation with radical and particularly terrorist influences. The case studies presented in this paper show the need for a broader perspective. It is undeniable that the Middle East has had a powerful effect on numerically small and ideologically extremist minorities within the Indonesian Muslim community. JI is a good example of this, though it also illustrates the point that even very small groups can have a disproportionately large impact on a nation's affairs and the perceptions of its Islamic community. A similar argument might be made regarding *salafi* groups. While salafists have greatly expanded their presence in Indonesia in recent decades, they remain a peripheral

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phenomenon whose ideas have little or no appeal to most mainstream Muslims.

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

It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider liberal Islamic perspectives in Indonesia, but it is worth noting that this discourse also draws heavily upon Middle Eastern thinking. Some of the more innovative Indonesian Muslim intellectuals have been directly influenced by scholars such as the postmodernist Moroccan philosopher Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri, the Egyptian ‘leftist’ academic Hasan Hanafi, and the gender writings of Moroccan feminist, Fatima Mernissi. The works of these and other liberal authors have been translated into Indonesian and published and have found a large readership. Their ideas have also become the basis for ‘transformative’ Islam projects run by liberal NGOs. These have used, *inter alia*, Middle Eastern thinking to promote reinterpretation of Islamic precepts on matters as diverse as religious tolerance, human rights, democracy, gender equality and environmental sustainability. The efflorescence in Muslim intellectualism in Indonesia since the 1970s is inextricably linked to new ideas and practices emanating from the Middle East.

Any reckoning of Middle Eastern influence on Indonesian Islam

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

Policy implications

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

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

One of the goals of this paper has been to highlight the way globalisation and the technologies associated with it — notably greatly enhanced means of travel and communication — have facilitated the spread of both Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas. At the same time, however, the paper has also sought to highlight the tension that exists between the global and the local in the transmission of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas. That is, in most cases where ideas have been transmitted to Indonesia a process of localisation or indigenisation has taken place. And even in the case of JI, where the local aims of the organisation run parallel to al-Qaeda’s global

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campaign, the tension between the global and the local is ever present, illustrated by signs of debate within the organisation over its future directions.

This tension is relevant to the way that governments around the world fight terrorism. In forming al-Qaeda, bin Laden sought to subordinate a range of Muslim conflicts to his theme of Manichean conflict between the Muslim and Western worlds — and as JI and Abu Musab Zarqawi's terrorist organisation in Iraq demonstrate, he has been successful to a degree. Nevertheless, in focusing on the transnational dimensions of contemporary terrorism, governments should not lose sight of local causes. This focus on the global is exacerbated by the tendency of some governments around the globe to redefine their own long running internal political struggles against insurgent or separatist groups as a part of the global war on terror and therefore worthy of US political or material support, or at least the turning of a blind American eye to the use of harsh repressive measures (Kashmir, Chechnya and potentially southern Thailand being a few examples).

Efforts to deepen bilateral relations with Indonesia and regional counter terrorism cooperation, for example by the Australian government, are a positive recognition of the importance of considering the local. Nonetheless, there is still a tendency — for example in the Australian government's White Paper on terrorism²¹¹ — to see the terrorism threat as largely a function of the spread of a global ideology. As our paper has underlined, while the transmission of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist ideas is part of the problem, it is by no means a defining characteristic. Even in the case of JI, it is not a seed that al-Qaeda planted (though it did encourage it to grow in a particular way). JI's roots lie in a long history of indigenous Islamic radicalism in Indonesia that has little if anything to do with the Middle East or al-Qaeda's brand of violent

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neo-fundamentalism. The same applies to the impact of Middle Eastern issues in Indonesia. Continued violence in the Middle East — in Iraq or on the Israeli–Palestinian front — may well galvanise JI and others of its ilk as well as increase antipathy toward the West among Indonesian Muslims (and thus make the Indonesian government’s anti terrorism efforts more difficult). But more important, certainly in terms of recruitment to such organisations, is what occurs in Indonesia, from the dynamics of Muslim–Christian relations and the continuation of sectarian violence, to the relationship between Islamists and the state.

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

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

It is, of course, sometimes necessary to use such descriptors as a shorthand (as we have in this paper). But one should always be cognisant of the complexity that lies behind such appellations. Western governments and commentators should avoid labelling Muslims or Islamists simply as radicals or moderates. Not only are these

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terms often misleadingly reductionist, they also carry connotations of ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ Muslims, ‘friendly’ versus ‘hostile’ Muslims. This has an alienating effect on Muslims, who see it as evidence of a self interested Western stereotyping of the Islamic community. Similarly, where more specific terms such as ‘Islamism’ or ‘salafism’ are used, there is often too little appreciation of the diversity within these categories. A common assumption is that salafists always pose a threat (whether present or latent). We have sought to show that this is sometimes, but not always, the case.

3. Take a less timorous approach to engagement with Islamists

In the aftermath of 11 September 2001, concerns that the fight against terrorism might fuel broader tensions between the Islamic and Western worlds prompted official and semi-official efforts to promote greater understanding through a range of initiatives, notably inter-faith dialogues to academic conferences on Islam. While such initiatives hold an important symbolic value, there are grounds for questioning whether they achieve much. Those who attend meetings aimed at promoting interfaith dialogue tend to believe in it already. Similarly, the distinction between Islam and Islamism means that conferences that aim to demonstrate that Islam is a religion of peace will tell us very little about why some Islamists resort to violence. And, in many cases, these conferences tend to be elite focused, and there is little effort to follow up with on the ground initiatives to reduce sectarianism and interfaith tension in vulnerable local communities.

A large part of the problem is that Western governments tend to be far too timorous in whom they invite to such

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meetings. In most cases Muslim invitees end up being the usual suspects: namely, moderate and mainstream Muslim religious leaders. More would be achieved by pursuing a genuine dialogue with a broader range of Islamist and neo-fundamentalist views. This is not to say that the bin Ladens of the world should now be invited to conferences promoting understanding between Islam and the West. There is nothing to be achieved by pursuing dialogues with those for whom violence is an end in itself. But there are a significant number of both Islamists and salafists who eschew violence and may be receptive to new perspectives and the breaking down of stereotypes. In an Indonesian context this would include PKS together with a number of salafist groups. For example, as yet no member of the PKS has been invited to Australia as an official guest of the Commonwealth government and some Australian officials have been content to label the PKS 'fundamentalist' rather than look more closely at the range of views present within the party and the opportunities for dialogue. Their message may be difficult for the West to hear — and in some cases may be unacceptable — but there seems much to be gained and little to be lost by pursuing these inevitably more challenging dialogues.

Including this element in dialogues may not change their views (in which case nothing has been lost). But in some cases such dialogues can help break down some of the misconceptions and conspiracy theories about the West that one often finds among this group. From a Western perspective, exposure to what could be termed the radical mainstream will help governments and specialists to reach a greater and more nuanced understanding of the various manifestations of Islamism and neo-fundamentalism. In an Indonesian context it would, for example, help to distinguish between those salafist groups whose activities and ideas are of concern because they promote violence

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and those whose concerns are limited to religiosity. This will in turn help ensure that the efforts to prevent money going to groups involved in terrorism are appropriately targeted and do not unnecessarily promote antagonism toward the West by groups who feel unfairly targeted by Western sanctions and pressure.

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

As many Western governments have acknowledged, combating terrorism is not simply about fighting terrorists but also about preventing the ideas which underpin their brand of terrorism from spreading. Indeed, the destruction of al-Qaeda’s physical base in Afghanistan and the disruption of its international networks increasingly mean that the main threat faced by the international community is that other Islamist or neo-fundamentalist movements will, independently of any organisational link, adopt al-Qaeda’s worldview and its methods. To a great degree this seems to have happened, for example, among the foreign elements fighting in Iraq. This means that bin Laden and other prominent jihadist preachers no longer need organisational links to partisans around the world, but can rely on pronouncements in the media or on the internet to spark like-minded groups into action.

It is against this background that some outside observers have identified the radical teachings of a number of *pesantren* in Indonesia as part of the terrorism problem (in the same way that concerns have been expressed about radical teachings in *madaris*²¹² in South Asia and the Middle East, or indeed European concern about radical mosques in their own countries). To counter these teachings some have proposed pushing for the reform of

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Islamic education. Several points can be made about this. In Indonesia, the number of radical jihadist *pesantren* is very small, less than one per cent of the more than 30 000 *pesantren* in the country. Secondly, Indonesian Muslims are highly wary of the motives of Australia and other Western countries in offering assistance to *pesantren*. Many see this as attempted Christian intervention in and manipulation of Islamic education.

Furthermore, it would be unwise to over emphasise educational institutions when considering the driving forces for terrorism. There is abundant research to show that the means for conveying radical ideas in a globalised world are multitudinous. Modern publishing, the internet and satellite television are far more effective and influential conveyers of ideas than a few *pesantren*. In a best case scenario, promoting the reform of Islamic education won't stop the spread of these ideas. In the worst case scenario it will be counter productive because it will be seen as yet another example of Western interference and efforts to dilute Islam.

5. Encourage transparency

The 'war of ideas' also raises the complex question of Saudi Arabian religious propagation. Leaving aside the role some Saudi based non-government charities have played in the funding of transnational terrorism, there is a related though still separate question of whether the international community should also be worried about religious propagation by Saudi Arabian organisations — and others from the Middle East — of *salafi* forms of Islam. As we have attempted to show, Saudi propagation is neither uniform nor always likely to produce the impact that its sponsors intend (illustrated by the spread of more politically minded Muslim Brotherhood thinking via an

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ostensibly *salafi* institutions such as LIPIA). Moreover, while Saudi Arabia has made a singular contribution to the growth and spread of salafism in Indonesia it is not necessarily the case that Indonesian salafists are drawn toward terrorism and violence. Nonetheless some salafist groups in Indonesia sponsored and funded by organisations from Saudi Arabia have participated in acts of terrorism and violence.

Responding to international pressure, Saudi Arabia has taken a range of steps to regulate the operations of its international charities, and to some degree agencies for religious propagation (in some cases it has dissolved particular charities or their international branches, for example those of el-Haramein).²¹³ In the case of Indonesia these new stringencies seem to have had the effect of, in some cases at least, reducing the flow of funds to local Islamic organisations. At the same time, as we noted in Chapter Three, some Saudi organisations seem able to bypass their own government's growing regulation of such funding and propagation activities. In particular, the activities of the Eastern Province (in Saudi Arabia) Branch of the International Islamic Relief Organisation in Indonesia would bear some additional scrutiny.

The answer does not, however, lie simply in placing additional pressure on the Saudis to clamp down even harder on material support for Islamic propagation. At least in Indonesia the Saudi effort to deflect international criticism by cutting funding to Islamic organisations seems to have been indiscriminate. Legitimate and non-jihadist educational and welfare institutions have suffered as a result of these cuts, leading to considerable resentment against the 'war on terror'. Meanwhile, those financiers from Saudi and elsewhere in the Middle East driven more by ideological or militant motives are still getting their money through. This situation creates additional

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resentment among Indonesian Islamic groups toward the West, which is blamed for their loss of external material support and makes it harder to build local support for counter-terrorism measures. It may also push Indonesian *salafi* organisations toward more militant sources of finance that are able to evade Saudi government regulation and stringencies.

The solution is to encourage Saudi Arabia to accompany regulation of its charitable and propagation activities with greater transparency. The latter won't necessarily prevent the more nefarious forms of funding from getting through (though it might make it easier to identify). But it will help ensure that the pressure on Saudi Arabia to regulate the activities of its organisations is not counter productive. The message to the Saudi government should be that legitimate activities of propagation organisations would be strengthened by them being more transparent in terms of who and what they are funding. One step to encourage this process in Indonesia would be to promote a similar degree of transparency among Christian missionary activity (which would also help defuse perennial suspicion among some Islamist groups that a campaign of conversion is being undertaken by Christian groups in Indonesia).

6. Be conscious of double standards and the democracy dilemma

The most damaging thing for Western governments in the context of the 'war of ideas' is the perception among Muslims of Western double standards. A common complaint is that while the West preaches democracy, Western governments and the US in particular, ignore dictatorships, illiberal regimes and human rights abuses in the Muslim world when this is convenient to their

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interests. Indeed, since the war on terror began, the US seems even more oblivious to the human rights abuses that occur in countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia (and has in Guantanamo Bay replicated some of the arbitrary and extra-judicial methods for which it once criticised regimes in the region). In Southeast Asia the muted official, public response — including of Australia and the US — to the deaths of 82 Muslims in Thailand at the hands of the security forces in October 2004 would have only reinforced the view among Muslims in the region that, for Western governments, Muslim blood is cheaper than that of Christians or non-Muslims.

There is little doubt that current US efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East have been undermined by the decades long history of US support for non-democratic regimes in the region. This is neither the current US Administration's fault, nor is it a perception that it can change overnight. But in encouraging or supporting processes of democratisation in the Middle East or elsewhere in the Muslim world, Western governments need to avoid the perception that they are in favour of democracy and elections provided they deliver an acceptable outcome. In the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world the fact the Islamists may win elections should not be viewed as an obstacle to them taking place.

In the case of the PKS in Indonesia, Islamists have played a positive role in Indonesia's process of democratisation. In Indonesia, Islamist parties and organisations have adhered strictly to the 'rules of the democratic game', pursuing their agendas through elections, legislatures and peaceful direct action, which is in every case preferable to the politics of the gun (and even if the views held by some within PKS are abhorrent). The lesson from the PKS involvement in parliamentary politics (and that of

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Hizb al-Wasat in Egypt and the Justice and Development Party in Turkey) is that to be successful, Islamist parties need to adapt their political programs to incorporate the everyday concerns of voters. Their slogan of 'Islam is the solution' is no longer enough. The point here is not that every Islamist's democratic credentials should be taken at face value. It is simply that Islamism's purported incompatibility with democracy should not be assumed, nor should the moderating impact of the successful participation by Islamist parties in democratic processes be underestimated.

Endnotes

- ¹ Abdullah Azzam, *Join the Caravan*, 2nd (English Edition) ed. London, Azzam Publications, 2001.
- ² Samuel Huntington, The clash of civilisations. *Foreign Affairs* 72 (3) 1993.
- ³ Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new umma*. London, C. Hurst and Company, 2004.
- ⁴ See for example President Bush's address to the Joint Session of Congress in September 2001 available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>
- ⁵ Australian Government, *Transnational terrorism: the threat to Australia*. Canberra, 2004. p. 104.
- ⁶ Olivier Roy, *The failure of political Islam*, trans. Carol Volk. London, I.B. Tauris, 1994. p. 39.
- ⁷ Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new umma*. Chapter 6.
- ⁸ See for example: Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside al-Qaeda: global network of terror*. New York, Columbia University Press, 2002. Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: casting a shadow of terror*. London, I.B. Tauris, 2003. Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: the secret history of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden, from the Soviet invasion to September 10, 2001*. New York, Penguin Press, 2004. Marc Sageman, *Understanding terror networks*. Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.
- ⁹ See for example Burke, *Al-Qaeda: casting a shadow of terror*.
- ¹⁰ Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin and Aris Ananta, *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape*. Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003. pp. 103–7.
- ¹¹ Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new umma*. p. 58.

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- ¹² There is of course considerable debate, even among scholars of Islam, about the meaning of the term *jihad* from the striving for a perfect spiritual life to armed conflict — a debate we do not intend to enter. Our application of the term simply reflects the way it is variously used by Islamists.
- ¹³ Albert Hourani, *Arabic thought in the liberal age 1789-1939*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983. p. 37.
- ¹⁴ Soumaya Ghanoushi. *On the Wahabi movement*. Islam21 Website 2001: <http://www.islam21.net/pages/keyissues/key1-32.htm>.
- ¹⁵ Hourani, *Arabic thought in the liberal age 1789-1939*. p. 37.
- ¹⁶ See for example Sheikh Abd al-Aziz Bin Abdullah Bin Baz, *Imam Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahab: his life and mission*, trans. Hanan S.I.H. Riyadh, Darussalam, 1997. p.31.
- ¹⁷ Hourani, *Arabic thought in the liberal age 1789-1939*. p. 113.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 139.
- ¹⁹ For more on the ideas of Afghani, Abduh and Rida see the classic text on the subject. *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ Roy, *The failure of political Islam*. p. 35
- ²¹ Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, *Intellectual origins of Islamic resurgence in the modern Arab world*. State University of New York Press, 1996. p. 71.
- ²² Hourani, *Arabic thought in the liberal age 1789-1939*. p. 360.
- ²³ Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*. London, Oxford University Press, 1993. p. 199.
- ²⁴ See for example the argument mounted in *Ibid.* pp. 307–313.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.* p 308.
- ²⁶ The authors are grateful to Peter Mandaville for raising this point. See also Roy, *The failure of political Islam*. in particular pp. 110–112.
- ²⁷ Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new umma*. Chapter 2.
- ²⁸ Abd al-Hafiz Sa'd, International Muslim Brotherhood Organisation gathering for emergency meeting in presence of Egyptian guide; reports say group seeks to disband organisation (translation by BBC International reports). *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 11 November 2004.
- ²⁹ Lapidus, *A history of Islamic societies*. p. 522
- ³⁰ Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: the trail of political Islam*, trans. Anthony F. Roberts. London, I.B. Tauris, 2003. p. 29.
- ³¹ Gilles Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, trans. Jon Rothschild. London, Al Saqi Books, 1985. pp. 56–57.

ENDNOTES

- ³² For an excellent discussion of the translation of the term *jahiliyya* see William E. Shepard, Sayyid Qutb's doctrine of Jahiliyya. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35 (No. 4) 2003.
- ³³ Said Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-tariq*, 5th ed. Dar al-Sharouk, 1992. p. 101.
- ³⁴ Shepard, Sayyid Qutb's doctrine of Jahiliyya. p. 525.
- ³⁵ Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-tariq*. p. 103.
- ³⁶ Ibid. p. 11.
- ³⁷ Ibid. p. 64.
- ³⁸ Kepel, *Jihad: the trail of political Islam*. pp. 31–32.
- ³⁹ Ibid. p. 32.
- ⁴⁰ Kepel, *The Prophet and the Pharaoh*. p. 61. As Kepel notes, the Brotherhood would not, however, formally repudiate Qutb's ideas until 1982.
- ⁴¹ This is not to say that Qutbists in the Middle East of the 1970s and 80s were not anti-Western; simply that their effort to defend their societies from what they saw as the encroachment of western ideas and values was largely conceived in terms of overthrowing the impious rulers that were allowing this corruption of Muslim societies to occur.
- ⁴² Kepel, *Jihad: the trail of political Islam*. p. 84.
- ⁴³ Ibid. p. 85.
- ⁴⁴ See English translation of *al-Farida al-Gha'ibah* in Johannes J.G. Jansen, *The Neglected Duty*. London, McMillan, 1986.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 192.
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- ⁵⁷ Underlining just how pragmatic the religious sanction for suicide bombing can be, the prominent Islamist preacher Yousef al-Qardawi has issued religious opinions endorsing Palestinian suicide bombings but condemning the suicide attacks on 11 September 2001.
- ⁵⁸ The two most prominent exponents of this view were the French scholars Olivier Roy and Gilles Kepel. See Roy, *The failure of political Islam*. and Kepel, *Jihad: the trail of political Islam*.
- ⁵⁹ See Roy, *The failure of political Islam*.
- ⁶⁰ Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new umma*. p. 1.
- ⁶¹ Sageman, *Understanding terror networks*. p. 146.
- ⁶² Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new umma*. See in particular Chapter 6
- ⁶³ Sageman, *Understanding terror networks*. p. 150 and Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new umma*. pp. 270–271
- ⁶⁴ International Crisis Group, *Islamism in North Africa II: Egypt's opportunity*. ICG Middle East and North Africa Briefing, 2004. p. 8.
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- ⁹³ Ibid. p. 247.
- ⁹⁴ See for example Sheikh Nasir ud-Din al-Albani. *Debate with a Jihadi*. Salafipublications.com: <http://www.albani.co.uk/>.
- ⁹⁵ This is the central thesis of Roy, *The failure of political Islam*. See in particular Chapter 5.
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- ⁹⁸ Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new umma*. p. 18. See also Peter Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics*. Routledge Research in Transnationalism. London, Routledge, 2004.
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- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 19.
- ¹⁰¹ Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics*.
- ¹⁰² Ibid. p. 19.
- ¹⁰³ Olivier Roy, Radical Islam appeals to the rootless. *The Financial Times*, 12 October 2004.
- ¹⁰⁴ International Crisis Group, *Islamism in North Africa I: the legacies of history*. Middle East and North Africa Briefing. Cairo/Brussels, 20 April 2004. p. 12.
- ¹⁰⁵ Despite its condemnation of al-Qaeda's brand of terrorism even the Saudi religious establishment tends to take a hostile attitude to the West. See for example Sheikh Abd al-Aziz Bin Abdullah Bin Baz, *The ideological attack*, trans. Abu 'Aaliyah Surkheel Ibn Anwar Sharif. Hounslow, Message of Islam, 1999.
- ¹⁰⁶ Roy, Radical Islam appeals to the rootless.
- ¹⁰⁷ See in particular Mansour al-Nogaidan, Telling the truth, facing the whip. *New York Times*, 28 November 2003. See also Elizabeth Rubin, The jihadi who kept asking why. *The New York Times*, 7 March 2004. and Faiza Saleh Ambah, Saudi Arabia's reformers say they are under fire from clerics, extremists. *AP*, 8 March 2003.
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- ¹¹⁰ al-Zayyat, *The road to al-Qaeda*. pp. 64–65.
- ¹¹¹ Miriam Abou Zahab and Olivier Roy, *Islamist Networks: The Afghan-Pakistan connection*, trans. John King. London, Hurst & Company, 2004. pp. 49–50.
- ¹¹² For an excellent discussion of this see Sageman, *Understanding terror networks*. In particular Chapter 5.
- ¹¹³ Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new umma*. pp. 302–303.
- ¹¹⁴ For an interesting account of this see an interview with the London based Saudi dissident Saad al-Faqih in Mahan Abedin. *The essence of al-Qaeda: an interview with Saad al-Faqih*. The Jamestown Foundation 2004: <http://www.ladlass.com/intel/archives/003908.html>. See also al-Zayyat, *The road to al-Qaeda*.
- ¹¹⁵ Abedin. *The essence of al-Qaeda: an interview with Saad al-Faqih*.
- ¹¹⁶ The jihadist-salafi web magazine *Sawt al-Jihad* regularly carries quotes of what it refers to as *ahl al-thughoor* including Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Muhammed bin Abdullah al-Saif. One meaning of *thughoor* is the gaps between teeth. But in this context it refers to the historic western border zone in early Islamic times straddled by the Anti-Taurus and Taurus Mountains of what is today Turkey, specifically the gaps between these mountain ranges. Thus, people who guard and fight in such regions can be regarded as *ahl al-thughoor* (literally, ‘people of the gap’). The Thughur system became a series of fortified bases established near the gaps or passes between the Taurus and anti-Taurus onto the Anatolian plateau.
- ¹¹⁷ Burke, *Al-Qaeda: casting a shadow of terror*.
- ¹¹⁸ A cursory glance at the writings of associated salafi-jihadist polemicists find conspiracies and elaborate apologia for violence against the West. Yousuf al-Ayiri, killed in 2003 in a shootout with Saudi security forces, argues in *Hakikat al-Harb al-Salibiya al-Jadida* (‘The Truth about the New Crusade’) that the terrorism of 11 September 2001 was entirely justified by the West’s assault on Islam. Similarly, the London based Palestinian Salafi-jihadist, Abu Qutada, argues that the *jihad* as declared by bin Laden is the only way to counter Western dominance of the world. His fellow Palestinian, Muhammad al-Maqdisi, argues in *Mashrou’al-Sharq al-Awsat al-Kabir* (‘The Greater Middle East Initiative’) that democracy is a sin that some Muslims have embraced out of ignorance and enthusiasm for Western culture and values. See Abu Qutada, ‘Al Awlama wa Saraiya Al Jihad’, Manbar Al Tawheed Wal Jihad, <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=1235>. Abu Muhammad Maqdisi,

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Mashrou'Al-Sharq Al Awsat Al Kabir, Minbar Al Tawheed Wal Jihad, <http://www.almaqdese.com/r?i=2673&c=2390>. Abu Muhammad Maqdisi, Mashrou'Al-Sharq Al Awsat Al Kabir, Minbar Al Tawheed Wal Jihad, <http://www.almaqdese.com/r?i=2673&c=2390>.

- ¹¹⁹ See for example Yousef al-Ayiri. *Hakikat al-harb al-salibiyya al-jadida*. Centre for Islamic Studies and Research 2001: <http://www.tawhed.ws/a?i=250>.
- ¹²⁰ See for example, Abedin. *The essence of al-Qaeda: an interview with Saad al-Faqih*.
- ¹²¹ Serialized excerpts from 'Knights under the Prophet's banner' by Ayman al-Zawahiri (FBIS translation). p. 70.
- ¹²² Abedin. *The essence of al-Qaeda: an interview with Saad al-Faqih*.
- ¹²³ Karl Vick, Insurgent alliance is fraying in Fallujah. *The Washington Post*, October 13 2004.
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- ¹²⁷ For a good discussion of this discourse, see Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*. Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1960. pp. 121–126.
- ¹²⁸ Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami awakening: community and identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942*. Southeast Asian Project. Ithaca, Cornell University, 1999. Chapter 1.
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- ¹³² Confidential interview.
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- ¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 3. and confidential interview.

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- ¹³⁵ By far the best accounts are provided by International Crisis Groups reports on the subject. See in particular International Crisis Group, *Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous*. Asia Report 63, 26 August 2004.
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- ¹³⁷ Ibid. p. 5.
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- ¹³⁹ Interview with Ulil Abshar Abdalla in Jakarta 26 April 2004.
- ¹⁴⁰ Burke, *Al-Qaeda: casting a shadow of terror*. p. 154.
- ¹⁴¹ International Crisis Group, *Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous*. p. 10.
- ¹⁴² Mena News Agency, Indonesian Education Minister meets Egyptian religious leader. 18 December 2003.
- ¹⁴³ Maurice R. Greenberg and Lee S. Wolosky. *Update on the Global Campaign Against Terrorist Financing*. Council on Foreign Relations 2004: http://www.cfr.org/pub7111/maurice_r_greenberg_william_f_wechsler_lee_s_wolosky_mallory_factor/update_on_the_global_campaign_against_terrorist_financing.php. p. 20.
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- ¹⁵⁵ Roy, *Globalised Islam: the search for a new umma*. pp. 65–67 and 251.
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- ¹⁷⁹ Martin van Bruinessen, ‘Yahudi sebagai simbol dalam wacana Islam Indonesia masa kini’ (‘Jews as a symbol in contemporary Muslim discourse in Indonesia’), in: *Spiritualitas baru: Agama dan aspirasi rakyat* [Seri Dian II Tahun I],. Yogyakarta: Dian/Interfidei, 1994. pp. 253–268.
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- ²⁰⁰ Zachary Abuza (*Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror*) and Rohan Gunaratna (*Inside al-Qaeda*) regard JI as an integral part of al-Qaeda. Sidney Jones's reports for the International Crisis Group put the case for JI's relative autonomy from al-Qaeda. See, for example, International Crisis Group, *Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous*.
- ²⁰¹ International Crisis Group, *Indonesia Backgrounder: Jihad in Central Sulawesi*. pp. i, 3 and 24
- ²⁰² Holk Dengel, *Darul Islam dan kartosuwirjo: 'Angan-Angan yang Gagal (Darul Islam and kartosuwirjo: 'The illusion that failed')*. Jakarta, Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1995. pp. 73–86 and 127–154.
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- ²¹¹ See Australian Government, *Transnational terrorism: the threat to Australia*.

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²¹² Plural of *madrassa*, a religious school.

²¹³ See Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington D.C. *Initiative and actions taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to combat terrorism*. 2004: <http://www.saudiembassy.net/Issues/Terrorism/IssuesTer.asp>. For an assessment of the effectiveness of Saudi measures see Greenberg and Wolosky. *Update on the Global Campaign Against Terrorist Financing*.

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