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# The Islamic Turn in Indonesia: A Political Explanation

R. WILLIAM LIDDLE

## Introduction

In December 1995, the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals, ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia), held its second national congress in Jakarta (*Kompas*, December 4–10, 1995; *Republika*, December 4–10, 1995; *Gatra*, December 9 and 16, 1995; *Forum Keadilan*, January 1, 1996; *Ummat*, December 11, 1995). Twelve hundred delegates, representing 42,000 members from all Indonesian provinces and from many Indonesian Islamic communities abroad, participated. Minister of Research and Technology B. J. Habibie, generally considered President Suharto's favorite cabinet member, was chosen for a second five-year term as national chair. Sixteen ministers, nearly half the cabinet, were elected to leadership positions, and the president himself was designated ICMI's "Protector" (*Pelindung*).

The ICMI leadership list included several officials and former officials previously regarded as hostile to Islamic political movements: Vice-President General (ret.) Try Sutrisno, commander of the armed forces from 1988 to 1993; former Vice-President Lieutenant General (ret.) Sudharmono, believed by many to have had leftist connections during the 1945–49 independence revolution; Professor Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, the dean of Indonesian economists and once a leader of the Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI, Partai Sosialis Indonesia); Minister of State and Head of the National Development Planning Board, Ginanjar Kartasasmita, who has close ties to the old Indonesian National Party (PNI, Partai Nasional Indonesia), now a part of the Indonesian Democracy Party (PDI, Partai Demokrasi Indonesia); and former Army Chief of Staff and Minister of Home Affairs General (ret.) Rudini. Among top currently serving officials, only the names of the head of the state secretariat, Murdiono, and the minister of defense, General (ret.) Edi Sudradjat, were absent.

Many prominent Islamic intellectuals and activists outside the state were also listed among the organization's 148 officers (up from 111 at the first congress in

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1990) for the 1995–2000 term. Amien Rais, the head of Muhammadiyah, one of Indonesia's two largest Islamic social and educational organizations, played a key role at the congress and was elected chair of ICMI's Council of Experts. Several leaders of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the other major Islamic social and educational organization, also joined, although NU head Abdurrahman Wahid, long an opponent of ICMI, did not.

All three political parties, the government's own Golkar (for Golongan Karya, Functional Groups), the Islamic PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, Development Unity Party), and the nationalist plus Christian PDI were represented. The Golkar and PPP contingents were headed by their respective chairs, Minister of Information Harmoko, an ICMI activist for the past five years, and Ismail Hasan Metareum, a new ICMI member. Of the three party chairs, only Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of Indonesia's first president Sukarno and a political ally of NU's Abdurrahman Wahid, was absent.

ICMI was founded at the end of 1990, as the result of an initiative taken earlier that year by students at Brawijaya University in Malang, East Java (Anwar 1992; Hefner 1993; Nakamura 1993). The students travelled to Jakarta in search of funds for a conference of Islamic intellectuals. They were advised by two prominent senior Islamic activists, Imaduddin Abdulrahim and Dawam Rahardjo, to meet with Minister Habibie and to seek support for a permanent organization of Islamic intellectuals to be led by Habibie himself.<sup>1</sup> The minister was at first reluctant, but agreed after consulting President Suharto. According to Habibie, the president gave him no choice, insisting that it was his duty to "help, uplift, and guide" (*membantu, membina, dan membimbing*) the majority of the people who are Muslim (Husaini 1995, 58).

The rise of ICMI is the most striking but not the first or the only sign of the new centrality of Islam in Indonesian public life. In the mid-1980s President Suharto's "New Order" government, established in the mid-1960s, began responding positively to demands from various Islamic organizations and spokespersons for policy changes and other actions across a wide range of issues (Effendy 1994, chap. 8). For example, the Department of Education and Culture abandoned a decades-long firmly held policy forbidding the wearing of the *jilbab*, or Islamic head covering, by female students in state schools. The Department of Religion presented to Parliament a bill regulating Islamic courts, and also published a codification of Islamic family law. A new marriage regulation made interfaith marriages virtually impossible. The Catholic editor of a popular television tabloid was found guilty of insulting the Prophet Muhammad and received a long prison sentence. A national sports lottery, opposed by devout Muslims as sanctioning gambling, was discontinued. An old demand for an Islamic bank was finally granted. Not least significant, in 1990 President Suharto (at the relatively advanced age of 69) and his family made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

From the late 1960s to the mid 1980s, the same Suharto government had taken a much harsher attitude toward Islamic groups and demands (Crouch 1981). Muslim political activists were discriminated against, persecuted, arrested on seemingly flimsy charges, and sometimes given lengthy jail sentences. Suspected militants were kept

<sup>1</sup>Imaduddin Abdulrahim was in the 1970s a fiery preacher at the Salman Mosque of the Bandung Institute of Technology, but by the 1980s had become a business consultant and a political moderate. Dawam Rahardjo is a prolific writer, best known for his advocacy of a "theology of social transformation," and a long time Islamic nongovernmental organization (NGO) activist.

out of government and national political life. Muslim demands for a political party to represent their interests in Parliament, or for government policies and programs responsive to their interests and values, were routinely subverted or denied. For most of the New Order, in fact, political Islam was labelled the “extreme right” by the government. It was treated as public enemy number two, ranking just below the “extreme left,” the Communists held responsible for the October 1965 assassination of six senior army generals that preceded the collapse of President Sukarno’s Guided Democracy and the construction of Suharto’s New Order.

## Explaining Islamic Politics in Indonesia

What explains the rise of ICMI and, more broadly, the seemingly radical shift in the Suharto government’s policy toward Islamic demands? What is the character of the organization and what consequences will its new centrality have for Indonesian politics and society? Placed in a larger context, how does ICMI compare to Islamic political movements elsewhere, in countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, or Malaysia?

Is ICMI a fundamentalist theocratic organization of the kind that scholars like Lewis (1988), Pipes (1983), and Huntington (1991) have warned represent a growing threat to international stability and to the continuing spread of Western civilization? Or is it, as Esposito (1995) argues for Islamic movements generally, a complex phenomenon that is at once certain to become more powerful, because it is a reaction of the exploited against their exploiters, but that also contains a mixture of values and aspirations some of which are very like our own?

My view of the ICMI case runs quite counter to these standard interpretations of Islamic organizations elsewhere. ICMI should be seen primarily not as a mass political movement but rather as an instrument designed and used by President Suharto for his own purposes. In broad terms, it is a state corporatist organization (Schmitter, 1974) like many others created by the government during the New Order for the purpose of controlling important social groups. More specifically, it is a key element in a presidential drive to reassert direct control over the armed forces and to assure a massive victory for Golkar in the 1997 election and Suharto’s own reelection as president in 1998.

Moreover, under Suharto’s control ICMI is an organization with an Islamic name but with minimal Islamic content. It is led by state officials, handpicked at the top by Suharto himself, who do not subscribe to a militantly Islamic political ideology. Most of the members of the organization are also officials, and its funding comes directly and indirectly from the state. It does not have a specific, let alone an Islamic, policy or legislative agenda that its leaders are pledged to implement.

This is not to argue that ICMI is purely a top-down organization without an actual or potential base in society. Muslims, who constitute 87 percent of the Indonesian population (*Beberapa Ciri . . .* 1990), are as a group much more self-consciously Islamic today than they were thirty years ago, at the beginning of the New Order. This is particularly true of the middle and upper classes, in both the private and the state sectors. The creation of ICMI and the substantive changes in Suharto’s Islamic policy are undoubtedly a reflection of that new reality.

At the same time, the domination of ICMI by Suharto and the authoritarian nature of the political system in general make it extremely difficult to assess the current

political meaning of the Islamization of Indonesian society. If it were possible tomorrow for Muslim political activists to organize freely, how would they define their political goals? Would they form one, few, or many political parties? Would those parties be exclusively Islamic or inclusive of adherents to other religions? Would they be organized along economic interest or regional in addition to religious lines? What percentage of Indonesian Muslim voters would join or support explicitly religion-based parties? Would ICMI become a political party and who would it represent?

This essay will not attempt to answer all of these questions. My purpose is rather to establish that ICMI today is largely a top-down rather than a bottom-up organization, a vehicle mainly of the political purposes of President Suharto rather than of the demands of the Islamic community. It is also to show that few conclusions can be drawn, either from the rise of ICMI or from the substantive changes in governmental Islamic policy, as to the nature and characteristics of future Islamic politics in Indonesia.

The remainder of the essay is divided into four parts plus a conclusion. The first section surveys the range of current interpretations of the nature and significance of ICMI, and is intended to give the reader a sense of the richness both of interpretations and of factions within ICMI. The second examines Suharto's early policies toward Islam, and the third describes the gradual Islamization of Indonesian society and culture over the thirty-year New Order period. The fourth section analyzes ICMI as an instrument of presidential politics. In the conclusion, I speculate as to ICMI's long-term impact.

## Interpretations of ICMI

Indonesians and students of Indonesian society offer several different interpretations of the character and significance of ICMI. At one extreme, many members of the small Christian minority<sup>2</sup> and non-*santri* Muslims<sup>3</sup> have seen the organization as the opening wedge in a new attempt to turn Indonesia into an Islamic state (Magnis-Suseno 1995; Soekarnoputri 1995). For several years the Catholic intellectuals' organization refused to join a consultative group of religious intellectuals' organizations sponsored by ICMI. The Catholics and Protestants have been joined by *abangan* or Javanist intellectuals, who have long been wary of *santri* intentions toward them.

<sup>2</sup>Christians, about equally divided between Roman Catholics and Protestants, comprise about eight percent of the Indonesian population, but because of their historically greater opportunities for education they continue to make up a larger percentage of the modern elite. Tension between Christians and Muslims is based partly on this difference. Many Christians believe that Muslims envy and resent their success, while many Muslims believe that there is a Christian conspiracy to keep them out of government and politics.

<sup>3</sup>The term *santri*, literally a student in a traditional Islamic school, is used widely in Indonesia to distinguish devout from nondevout, or more accurately syncretistic, Muslims, in Java called *abangan*. *Abangan* Javanese religious beliefs combine layers of indigenous animism, Hinduism and Buddhism brought by Indian traders over a period of several centuries before the coming of Islam, and a top Islamic layer, also brought by Indian traders beginning probably in the thirteenth century A.D. Elite *abangan* are known for their fondness for Hindu-derived mystical practices, while ordinary villagers are more animistic in their beliefs. The anthropological *locus classicus* of the *santri-abangan* distinction is Geertz (1960).

Members of these groups point to incidents like the 1992–93 campaign to replace Christian members of the cabinet with Muslims, and the 1995 call for a military crackdown on Catholic East Timorese, after the burning down of mosques and markets operated by Muslim migrants in that troubled region. Both demands were made most strongly by writers and columnists in the ICMI newspaper *Republika* (*Republika*, February 1993 and September 1995, various numbers). The Christians and Javanists also point to such ICMI figures as: Amien Rais, who has a reputation for vocal partisanship on behalf of the Islamic community; Imaduddin Abdulrahim, the 1970s firebrand who helped to found ICMI; and Anwar Haryono, the head of Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Preaching Council), which publishes *Media Dakwah* (Preaching Medium), Indonesian Islam's most intolerant periodical (Liddle 1996, chap. 10; *Media Dakwah*, August 1993, 41–58).

Both Imaduddin and Haryono have roots in Masjumi, the largest Islamic political party in Indonesia in the 1950s, and consider themselves followers of the late Mohammad Natsir, Masjumi leader, prime minister from 1951 to 1952, and founder of Dewan Dakwah in the late 1960s (Haryono, interview, September 1991; Abdulrahim, interview, September 1991). Masjumi was banned by President Sukarno in 1960 for participation in the regional rebellions of the late 1950s. In the 1950s Natsir supported the idea of an Indonesian Islamic state, and the Dewan Dakwah under his leadership in the 1970s and 1980s was a bastion of ex-Masjumi and other pro-Islamic state forces.

From within the *santri* community, the most serious and sustained criticism of ICMI has come from Nahdlatul Ulama's Abdurrahman Wahid and a group of young NU intellectuals trained at the state-run religious teachers' colleges called IAIN, Institut Agama Islam Negeri (State Islamic Religion Institutes) (Wahid 1995; Mujani 1995). Abdurrahman and his followers are social democrats and religious liberals. They do not directly charge ICMI leaders with supporting the idea of an Islamic state, although Abdurrahman once wrote a letter to President Suharto warning that Indonesia could become another Algeria. They believe that ICMI is sectarian and exclusivist, and that its establishment has begun a trend toward the creation of social organizations and ultimately political parties based on religious and cultural communities, in Indonesia called *aliran* or streams (Geertz 1959). The political instability of the 1950s, they argue, was due to *aliran* conflict, and this pattern ought not to be repeated in the future. Abdurrahman also accuses the ICMI leaders of betraying the cause of democratization by allowing themselves to be coopted by an authoritarian government.

A more cynical interpretation of ICMI sees it as a typical example of New Order-style bureaucratic politics, in which patrons and clients help each other climb the career ladder and often become wealthy in the process (Nadjib 1995; Tanjung 1995; Rudini 1995). Key evidence for this point of view is the success of Minister Habibie in lobbying President Suharto to appoint his government colleagues, who also happen to be ICMI officials, to ministerial positions in the 1993–98 cabinet. Habibie, who runs the state aircraft, shipbuilding, and other companies in addition to his own ministry, is himself one of the most powerful cabinet members. The fact that so many more officials jumped on the ICMI bandwagon at the organization's second congress in 1995 suggests that this is a popular interpretation within the government as well.

ICMI leaders and activists themselves support at least three separate, though related, interpretations of their organization's character and role. M. Syafi'i Anwar, a law graduate and journalist who was present at ICMI's founding in 1990, stresses its

middle class nature (Anwar 1995). This is also the view of the two most prominent foreign observers of ICMI (Hefner 1993; Nakamura 1993).

According to Syafi'i, members of the Muslim middle class of the 1980s and 1990s share two important attributes. First, they are culturally self-confident, unlike their predecessors in the 1950s and 1960s, who suffered from the widespread belief, inherited from colonial times and perpetuated by non-Muslims and Javanists, that Islam is a religion of traditionality, of uneducated, backward villagers. *Kaum sarongan*, sarong wearers (Indonesian Muslims traditionally, and still today, wear a sarong when praying) was once an epithet with the power to wound its hearers deeply.

Second, they do not support the idea of an Islamic state. As good Muslims, they of course believe that there can be no separation between religion and society, including politics and government. There are many different ways, however, to implement this fundamental principle. For Indonesian Muslims, the initially Javanist concept of Pancasila, the state doctrine of five basic principles,<sup>4</sup> is an acceptable framework for Muslim politics. Its first principle, after all, is *ketuhanan yang maha esa*, the supreme oneness of God, which they gloss as *tauhid* (Arabic for the oneness of God).

Suharto's changed attitude toward Islam, including his willingness to accept ICMI, is according to Syafi'i a result of pressure from the Muslim middle class to be accepted by the state (of whose officials it now represents a substantial majority) combined with government recognition that this new class does not represent a threat to New Order values and goals. Indeed, middle-class Muslims have much to contribute to the achievement of the state's most basic goal of *pembangunan*, economic development.

A second interpretation is identified with Habibie and his closest bureaucratic colleagues, who hold most of the key ICMI positions (Makka 1991; Husaini 1995, chap. 4). According to these leaders, the purpose of ICMI is to improve the quality of *sumberdaya manusia*, human resources, in Indonesia. The rhetoric of both national ICMI congresses, and of official ICMI speeches in general, has been dominated by the symbolism not of religion but of manpower development. Improving technical and scientific education, particularly at the tertiary level, has been the first priority of the ICMI-affiliated minister of education and culture, Wardiman Djajonegoro, appointed in 1993.

Finally, there is the conception of ICMI as a weapon in a struggle of ordinary Indonesians, most of whom happen to be Muslim, against the predatory business elite that has been created by New Order-style capitalist development. The most successful champion of this view within ICMI is Adi Sasono, a former nongovernmental organization (NGO) activist who headed ICMI's research and publication division from 1990 to 1995 and was elected the organization's general secretary in 1995. Adi's main support comes from ICMI members who are not government bureaucrats, although many NGO leaders in society have long regarded him as an opportunist who has been coopted by the state (Anwar 1995; Ali and Effendy 1986; Sasono 1995). Dawam Rahardjo is another prominent figure in this camp, and is more respected in the larger NGO world although less influential within ICMI.

<sup>4</sup>The five are belief in God, humanitarianism, national unity, democracy, and social justice. These principles were first enunciated by the nationalist leader Sukarno in a speech on June 1, 1945, when Indonesians were preparing to take power from the Japanese at the end of the Pacific war. Sukarno was trying to convince Islamic leaders, who wanted a state based on Islam, to accept his broader formulation, primarily on the grounds that Christian areas would secede from an Islamic Indonesian state (Legge 1972, 184–88).

Adi once translated André Gunder Frank's "The Development of Underdevelopment" (1970) into Indonesian, and remains a believer in dependency theory. The ICMI newspaper *Republika*, on whose editorial board he is influential, has become a major outlet for reportage and opinion columns by NGO activists about the capitalist exploitation of the urban and rural poor. The great majority of Indonesia's most successful business people are non-Muslim Sino-Indonesians, and *Republika* stories and columns critical of their behavior sometimes contain religious and racial undertones.<sup>5</sup>

In at least one crucial respect, Habibie's and Adi Sasono's conceptions of the meaning and purpose of ICMI are diametrically opposed. Habibie has long been an advocate of rapid, state-led, high-technology-based economic development. He has therefore attracted to his standard many technically educated Indonesians, both in the state bureaucracy and in the private sector, who share this vision and not incidentally expect to benefit from it personally through jobs and contracts. Adi, on the other hand, represents an NGO constituency whose members want to use ICMI and the state as a weapon against big private capitalism on behalf of the poor. If they are looking for jobs, it is as state regulators and enforcers of a more egalitarian, less capitalist route to development.

In the larger context of the Indonesian political economy, what unites these two wings of ICMI is their common hostility to the professional economists, usually called technocrats, who have determined government macroeconomic policy since the late 1960s. The technocrats, led by the University of Indonesia's Professor Widjojo Nitisastro, favor relatively little state regulation and greater reliance on the private sector as the principal engine of economic growth.

While they encourage export diversification, and more export of manufactured goods, the technocrats oppose expensive Habibie-style state subsidization to develop high technology industries. They believe that Indonesian business people should in general pursue their comparative advantage as they themselves see fit. They recognize that Sino-Indonesians are benefiting disproportionately from growth, but hold both that the gap can be reduced through specific government corrective policies and that to some extent short-run inequality is a necessary cost of development.

There is little religious rationale for the conflict between ICMI and the technocrats. Most of the technocrats, like most Indonesian officials today and indeed throughout the New Order, are Muslim. Those few who are Christian have nonetheless become a special target for some ICMI activists, who claim that Indonesia has been governed by the "minority" (i.e., Christians) for too long, and that it is now time for the "majority" (Muslims) to take over (Liddle 1993). The ICMI-technocrat gap is further widened by the perception of both the Habibie and Adi groups in ICMI that the technocrats' policies, and thus the technocrats themselves, favor the non-Muslim rich at the expense of the Muslim middle class and poor.

Are any of these interpretations of ICMI, and more broadly of the turn to Islam in Indonesian public life, correct? At one level of analysis, they all are, because each represents the views and understandings of a significant subset of members of the

<sup>5</sup>Sino-Indonesians comprise about four percent of the total Indonesian population, but dominate the modern private economy. Perhaps three-quarters of Jakarta's upper-class business community is Sino-Indonesian. The population of most Indonesian cities, particularly in the more affluent neighborhoods, is disproportionately Sino-Indonesian. Many indigenous Indonesians believe that the Sino-Indonesians, even those with Indonesian citizenship, are foreigners who conspire to control the business sector (Coppel 1983).



Indonesian Islamic community. At a deeper level, however, they all fail to understand the relationship between the state and political Islam in late New Order Indonesia. They all miss the crucial determining factor, which is the role played by President Suharto as preeminent shaper both of the political system and of the forces within it. Put differently, they are all looking for reality through the wrong end of the telescope.

My evidence for this top-down—it's mostly Suharto's doing—versus bottom-up—Islam of one kind or another is rising—view lies in an assessment of Suharto's relations with Islamic and other politicians and organizations from the 1960s to the present, in the context of the changing nature of Indonesian society and culture. I will begin with a description and analysis of Suharto's two-pronged policy toward Islam—promotion of personal piety and suppression of political activity—in the first twenty years of his presidency.

### Early New Order Islamic Policy

At the very beginning of the New Order, in 1965–66, Army Strategic Forces Commander Major General Suharto, with his political base in the army, formed a de facto temporary alliance with a broad range of Islamic and other groups for the purposes of destroying the Indonesian Communist Party and toppling the left-leaning President Sukarno. This alliance led many Muslims and others to believe that they would become full partners in the new regime that Suharto was building.

By the end of the decade, however, it had become clear that the New Order was an authoritarian military regime, and that Suharto had no intention of sharing power with mass-based political organizations of any kind. This included nationalist and non-Islamic religious groups, and the left in general, in addition to the Communist Party. Some Islamic groups and individuals, however, were singled out for especially harsh treatment, as I indicated earlier, making political Islam appear to be “political enemy number two.”

The reasons for this treatment are rooted in the politics of earlier periods. The Indonesian independence movement before the Second World War, at the end of the Dutch colonial era, was fragmented along religious, regional/ethnic, and other lines (Kahin 1952). Its peak leadership, however, was dominated by secular nationalists (more precisely, nationalists of *abangan* or non-Islamic background who opposed defining national identity in religious terms). Few *santri* Muslims had been given an opportunity to receive a European-style education, which was virtually a requirement for leadership of the nationalist movement at the time.

This pattern continued through the Japanese occupation (1942–45) and the independence revolution (1945–49). During these periods there were many Muslim social and political organizations, including after 1945 guerrilla bands fighting against the return of the Dutch, but they were invariably seen by the *abangan* and non-Islamic nationalists as parochial and backward, a part of Indonesia's past rather than its future. The military itself, from the colonial period, had tended to be dominated by *abangan* Muslims or by non-Muslims. This tendency was strengthened after 1949, when *santri* soldiers and officers appear to have opted for civilian life in disproportionate numbers (Hasjim, interview, 1991).

It was not until the 1950s, however, that anti-Islamic attitudes crystallized in large portions of the political elite, including the military. A major issue during the parliamentary election of 1955, to this day Indonesia's only free national election, was

whether Indonesia should continue to adhere to Pancasila as its fundamental legitimating doctrine or should become an Islamic state. The largest Muslim political party of the 1950s, Masjumi (with 20.9 percent of the vote in the 1955 elections, second only to the *abangan*-led nationalist party, PNI, with 22.3 percent), carried this battle into the constituent assembly that met from 1957 until it was dissolved by presidential decree in 1959. Masjumi itself was banned in 1960, partly for its obstinacy on the Islamic state issue but more importantly because of the participation of some of its most prominent leaders in the regional rebellions of the late 1950s. In the eyes of the army officers at central headquarters, many of these rebellions (and others that occurred from the early 1950s through the early 1960s) appeared to be both militantly Islamic and separatist.<sup>6</sup>

At the beginning of the New Order, ex-Masjumi activists joined with other Muslim groups in support of Suharto's leadership of the army and the army's draconian measures against the Communists. Ex-Masjumi leaders' hopes for political rehabilitation were soon dashed, however. Suharto and other senior army officers made it clear that they regarded Islamic politics of any kind with suspicion and judged the old Masjumi leaders in particular to have betrayed two of the most fundamental principles of Indonesian political identity: multireligiousness and national territorial integrity.

It was at this point that Suharto adopted his two-pronged Islamic policy: promotion of personal piety and opposition to the politicization of religion.<sup>7</sup> Religious observance, for Muslims as well as adherents to the other four officially recognized religions,<sup>8</sup> was strongly encouraged, in large part as an anti-Communist weapon. Atheism, inseparable in officials' minds from Communism, was declared anti-Pancasila and outlawed. Students in all schools, public and private, and at all levels were required to take instruction in the religion of their (parents') choice. The Department of Religion was strengthened and given new nonpartisan (i.e., neither ex-Masjumi nor NU) leadership. An already existing system of state Islamic teachers' training colleges, the IAIN, was expanded and granted additional funding. A private foundation controlled by President Suharto began a massive program of subsidizing mosque building throughout the country.

The political expression of Islam, on the other hand, was drastically curtailed. Initially, four Islamic political parties were permitted to exist, but under extremely controlled organizational and leadership conditions similar to those imposed on noncommunist parties by communist governments. They included: Nahdlatul Ulama, the third largest party and second largest Islamic party in the 1955 elections with 18.4 percent of the vote; Parmusi (Partai Muslimin Indonesia, Indonesian Muslims' Party), a successor to Masjumi that had finally been allowed to form in 1968 but without the participation of "Old Order" Masjumi figures; and two small Islamic parties that had together won only a few percent of the 1955 vote.

<sup>6</sup>The fact that they were also often led by dissident army officers with specific grievances against central government or military headquarters' policies has been played down in the military's version of Indonesian history.

<sup>7</sup>This policy bears a striking resemblance to pre-World War II Dutch policy toward Islam (Benda 1958).

<sup>8</sup>The officially recognized religions are Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. In the 1970s a national association of practitioners of Javanist and other forms of mystical belief lobbied heavily for the official acceptance of nonreligious spiritualism as a religion. They failed, however, and since that time it has been necessary for all practitioners of mysticism to seek protection from potential political persecution through affiliation with a formal religion.

In the 1971 parliamentary elections, the first held under the New Order, Nahdlatul Ulama won 18.7 percent of the vote, marginally better than it had done in the 1955 elections. Parmusi, handicapped by the absence of its true leaders and by official hostility, received only 5.3 percent. In 1973 the four Islamic parties were fused by the government into the PPP, which was not allowed to adopt an Islamic name. After the 1977 parliamentary election, the PPP was forced to drop its Islamic ballot symbol (the Ka'bah shrine in Mecca) in favor of an at best quasi-religious star (taken from the state Pancasila emblem). In 1984, all political parties were required to make Pancasila their "sole foundation" (*asas tunggal*), and pressure was then applied to PPP to open its membership to non-Muslims. It is officially an open party today, though no non-Muslims have so far joined.

Throughout this period, from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s, a number of incidents of violence occurred that were attributed by the authorities to the "extreme right," and used by them as justification for heavy-handed retaliation and continuing vigilance against Islamic militancy. These included the hijacking of a Garuda International Airlines jet, bombings of Sino-Indonesian-owned banks and of the Borobudur monument in central Java, clashes in several regions between cult-like local Islamic groups and state authorities, and a protest by thousands of working-class Muslims in the Jakarta port of Tanjung Priok against the defacing of a mosque by Christian soldiers. Some Muslim leaders rejoined that these incidents were not representative of the Islamic community as a whole. Others charged that the government was using *agents provocateurs* to create the appearance of Islamic unrest.

## The Islamization of Indonesian Society and Culture

The Islamization of Indonesian society and culture has been one of the most remarkable developments of the New Order period. In the 1950s and 1960s, most scholarly observers divided ethnic Javanese Muslims, who make up about half of the total Indonesian population, into the categories of *santri* (devout or orthodox, in the sense of nonsyncretist) and *abangan*, or animist-Hindu-Buddhist-Muslim syncretists (see footnote 3). The *abangan* were thought to predominate, perhaps by as much as two to one. Most non-Javanese, with the exception of various Christian, Hindu, and other religious minorities, were considered *santri*.

The *santri* population was in turn divided into traditionalists and modernists or reformists. Traditionalism in the Indonesian context meant adherence to the Syafi'i *mazhab*, or school of legal interpretation, one of four major schools in Sunni Islam worldwide. Among Javanese Muslims, it also meant adherence to beliefs and practices, such as the veneration of deceased religious teachers, thought to derive from Javanese rather than Islamic tradition. Most Javanese *santri*, especially in the villages and small towns of eastern Java, were traditionalists. Nahdlatul Ulama, founded in 1926, was their largest and most important organization.

Islamic modernism or reformism in Indonesia meant a preference for *ijtihad*, individual interpretation of the Qur'an, over adherence to the Syafi'i or any other *mazhab*. It also meant hostility to Javanism of both the *abangan* and the traditionalist *santri* forms. Sociologically, modernists tended to be urban, middle class, and educated in Western-style instead of Qur'anic schools. They wanted to be both religious and modern, in the Western sense of rational and scientifically minded, and sought to free

Islam from what they believed to be medieval and superstitious beliefs and practices. Muhammadiyah, founded in 1912, was the preeminent organization of modernist Indonesian Muslims.

Since the 1970s, both sets of categories—*santri* versus *abangan* and modernist versus traditionalist—appear to be breaking down. Many *abangan*, or the children and grandchildren of 1950s and 1960s *abangan*, are becoming *santri*. Perhaps most importantly, the social prestige of Javanism as a religious preference, always rather shaky, has declined considerably, making it increasingly difficult for Javanists to defend their beliefs and practices.

The boundary between modernism and traditionalism has also blurred. Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, with more than fifty million members between them, are still large and vital organizations, and still differ in their respective emphases on adherence to legal tradition (and to Javanese custom, which they consider Islamic) versus the right to individual interpretation (and the hostility to local cultural accretions). But there is growing acceptance of the idea that the truth lies in synthesis rather than antithesis. This is reflected in interorganizational relations, Islamic school curricula, and the working beliefs of many ordinary Muslims.

The single most important cause of these changes is the expansion of the state school system, which began just after independence in the 1950s and rapidly accelerated under the New Order. The attraction of the state schools is Western-style education, which has held out to millions of village children and their parents the hope of attaining an urban white collar job and a modern life-style. Early postcolonial governments recognized and responded to these aspirations. Only the New Order, however, has had the financial resources to build and staff schools, from primary through tertiary levels, throughout the archipelago. Moreover, religious instruction has been mandatory in all of these schools, for reasons discussed in the previous section. The government also licenses tens of thousands of private schools, many of which are Islamic, that must use the same core curricula as the state schools.

Extensive religious education has combined with economic development success to produce both a more uniformly Islamic population and a growing Islamic middle class. At the village level, anthropologists have reported a breakdown of *abangan* rituals (Hefner 1987). At the national level, the changes are visible to the casual observer. Most educated Indonesian Muslims are openly pious. All government offices and many private businesses provide prayer rooms for the devout. Friday mosque services, especially in urban and upscale areas, are well attended. The number of elite Muslim schools has mushroomed, as has the number of pilgrims to Mecca.

Concurrent with the growth of the Islamic middle class has been a self-conscious attempt on the part of a small group of Islamic intellectuals, mostly of modernist background, to develop a more open, tolerant, and pluralistic approach to the relationship between state and Islamic society (Ali and Effendy 1986; Effendy 1994; Barton 1995). These thinkers are sometimes labelled neomodernist for their combination of individual interpretation and appreciation for the classical tradition, including all schools of Sunni jurisprudence and even Syi'ism.

Their principal spokesperson is Nurcholish Madjid (1992), a powerful thinker and prolific writer who earned his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago, under the supervision of the neoclassical scholar Fazlur Rahman. Among Nurcholish's most important ideas are an emphasis on theological substance or content as opposed to ritual forms of worship, a belief that each generation of Muslims must reinterpret the message of the Qur'an, a recognition that only God possesses absolute truth, and an understanding that many forms of government, including that based on Pancasila,

are in accordance with God's will. In a famous speech in 1970, he asserted that an Islamic society does not require an Islamic political party (Madjid 1987, 204–14).

The political views of most of the Islamic intellectuals in ICMI, including Imaduddin Abdulrahim, Adi Sasono, and Dawam Rahardjo, have been influenced by Nurcholish's theology. Nurcholish himself participated in ICMI's formation, but has maintained a certain distance for the past several years. He has been chastised for his participation by Nahdlatul Ulama's Abdurrahman Wahid, who came to neomodernism from a traditionalist background. According to Abdurrahman and several other NU intellectuals, ICMI as a quasi-political Islamic organization violates neomodernism's pluralistic spirit (Wahid, interview, March 1995).

I will conclude this section on a cautionary note. The New Order is a powerful authoritarian government that has never hesitated to use coercion when necessary to achieve its objectives. Among these objectives have been strong commitments to making Indonesians both more pious adherents of a formal world religion and more tolerant of the religious beliefs of others.

One consequence of the pressure to belong to a formal religion has been a widespread fear of being regarded as impious, which is often linked to communist-sympathizing. Both *abangan* and secularists, whose numbers have probably grown as a result of economic modernization and the creation of a consumer society, have had good reason to keep their beliefs to themselves. How much undercover secularism and *abangan*-ism is there, not only in the countryside of Java but also among members of the educated urban middle and upper classes? If the government stopped enforcing piety, how many secularists would come out of the woodwork? Perhaps a much larger number than most observers expect. Would something like the old *santri-abangan* one-third versus two-thirds balance return? Perhaps not, but my own impressions from several recent visits to Java, plus the views of some other analysts, suggest that *abangan*-ism as a distinctive cultural-religious current remains vital and could once again become part of a powerful political force opposed to Islamic parties with religious policy agendas (Geertz 1990; Keeler 1987; Hatley 1994).

Government pressure for religious tolerance has also driven intolerance underground, making it difficult to observe or evaluate in terms of its political potential. Among Muslim university students, both in Indonesia and abroad, there appears to be a general tendency toward extreme piety. This trend dates from the early 1970s, when campus mosques at leading Indonesian universities began to be known as centers of "fundamentalism." The typical "fundamentalist" student is said to come from a middle-class urban family background, to have received a relatively superficial religious education as a child, and to be studying an exact or natural science. They are said to carry their conception of science, that there is only one right answer to any question, into their religious life (*Tempo*, April 3, 1993, 13–21).

Little is known of the political views of these students. Many of them are apolitical, in the sense that they are concerned almost entirely with understanding and practicing the Qur'anic dos and don'ts of personal behavior. Others pay close attention to international affairs, particularly in the Middle East, while ignoring domestic politics. Still others have organized campaigns in opposition to specific government policies labelled anti-Islamic, such as the state sports lottery that was cancelled in 1993 as a result of their actions. In 1990 hundreds of young Muslims mobbed the offices of the television tabloid accused of insulting the Prophet Muhammad. Perhaps most ominously, the Islamic University Students Association or HMI (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam), which produced Nurcholish Madjid and many

other moderate leaders, is no longer able to recruit the best and brightest among them (Madjid, interview, February 1995; Tanjung, interview, March 1995).

### Late New Order Islamic Policy

To what extent has Suharto's policy toward Islam changed in the last decade? Most politically aware Indonesians believe that there has been substantial change. Muslims point both to the many positive government actions taken since the mid-1980s and to the decline in heavy handed repression of activist Muslim individuals and groups as evidence that the government now has a much better understanding of Islamic aspirations. *Abangan* and non-Muslims point to the same indicators as evidence that the government has fallen under the influence of advocates of an Islamic state.

As far as the substantive policies are concerned, I am essentially in agreement with the common Muslim view that there has been a palpable relaxation of tensions, and that the reason for the new policies is a more sophisticated government attitude toward Islamic demands. This attitude is in turn a product of the Islamization of Indonesian society and culture over the past thirty years and of the tireless efforts of the neomodernist intellectuals. In the words of former Minister of Religion Munawir Syadzali, "What has changed is the Islamic community, and the government just adjusted itself. Pak Harto [President Suharto] agrees with my view" (*Forum Keadilan*, February 26, 1996, 18).

At a more fundamental level, however, Suharto's two-pronged policy toward Islam does not appear to have altered. All of the substantive changes described above—acceptance of the Islamic head covering, strengthening of Islamic courts, the marriage law, the ending of the lottery, the prosecution of the Catholic tabloid editor, the Islamic bank, the president's pilgrimage to Mecca—reflect in one way or another demands related to the individual Muslim's desire to be able to live a personally pious life.

Only the formation of ICMI can be seen, and indeed has been seen by both non-Muslims and Muslims, as a major shift in policy. A politically oriented Muslim organization embracing many middle- and upper-class modernists is indeed something new in New Order history. Again, however, if one looks below the surface, the change is more apparent than real. Despite the hopes of some Muslims and the fears of some non-Muslims, ICMI is not an autonomous organization representing the political interests of the Muslim community to the government. Rather it is a state corporatist organization, dominated by high officials beholden to President Suharto, whose main policy slogan is human resources development and whose chief political enemies are not Christians and other non-Muslims but market-oriented economists.

Why did Suharto allow the creation of such an organization in 1990, and why has he encouraged it since? My answer is that it fits very well his strategic plan to maintain control over the political system through the 1997 parliamentary election and the 1998 convening of the super-parliamentary People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusjawaratan Rakyat), which has the constitutional responsibility of electing the president and vice-president every five years.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Parliament contains five hundred members. Four hundred are elected and one hundred are appointed from the military, who do not vote in parliamentary elections. The Assembly contains one thousand members, five hundred from Parliament plus an additional five hundred who are appointed in processes controlled by Suharto. The Assembly's members are divided into five "fractions" (*fraksi*): Golkar, PPP, PDI, Armed Forces, and Regional Delegates. The selection of the president and vice-president has always been by acclamation.

This plan is not new. It was conceived in the late 1960s, prior to the first New Order parliamentary election, held in 1971, and the first New Order Assembly session, held in 1973. It involves the mobilization and deployment of two major within-the-state political organizations—the state party Golkar and the armed forces—whose ultimate goal is to ensure a pro-Suharto Assembly majority. The role of ICMI in 1997 and 1998 is to provide Suharto with a Golkar leadership recruited from outside the armed forces command structure and capable of producing a majority vote in the parliamentary election and of delivering that majority to Suharto at the subsequent Assembly session. While ICMI itself is new, its role has been played before by bureaucratic factions led by the late Major General Ali Murtopo in the 1970s and Lieutenant General (ret.) Sudharmono in the 1980s.

In the remainder of this section I will describe the New Order election process from 1971 to the present. My primary focus will be on Suharto's use of the armed forces and Golkar as political and campaign instruments and on the roles played by the agents he has assigned to head these two organizations. The purpose is to reveal a pattern of continuity ending with the assignments given to the new leaders of Golkar, who are also the leaders of ICMI, and of the armed forces in the mid-1990s, in preparation for the parliamentary election of 1997 and the presidential selection by the Assembly in 1998.

New Order elections have been held on five occasions. Since 1977 they have been contested by three political parties: the state party Golkar, the Islamic PPP, and the *abangan* and Christian PDI. Golkar was founded in 1964, before the New Order, by army leaders as part of an attempt to build an anticommunist coalition. As its name Functional Groups suggests, it brought together a number of anticommunist, nonpartisan organizations corporatistically representing occupational and other groups in Indonesian society.

In 1969, in anticipation of the 1971 election, Suharto turned Golkar into an electoral vehicle, the partisan face of his armed forces/civilian bureaucracy power base. In that first election in 1971, Golkar won 63 percent of the vote, while the parties that were to become PPP obtained 27 percent and those that were to become PDI received 10 percent (see Table 1). These percentages stayed about the same through the 1982 election. In 1987, after Nahdlatul Ulama withdrew from PPP, Golkar jumped to 73 percent and PPP fell to 16 percent. In 1992, the Golkar vote dropped to 68 percent. PDI registered modest increases in both 1987 (11 percent) and 1992 (15 percent) (King 1992).

All five New Order elections have been heavily managed affairs, designed not to give the electorate a free choice of governors but to legitimate the existing

Table 1. New Order Elections

	Golkar	PPP	PDI
1971	62.8	27.2*	10.0*
1977	62.1	29.3	8.6
1982	64.1	28.0	7.9
1987	73.0	16.0	11.0
1992	68.1	17.0	14.9

Source: King (1992, 160 and 166).

\*These are the combined votes for: Parmusi, Nahdlatul Ulama, and two small Islamic parties (PPP); and PNI plus two Christian and two small nationalist parties (PDI).

government. PPP and PDI have been constrained in many ways, including government intervention in party leadership and candidate selection, a ban on party organization at the local level and on criticism of the government and most of its policies, and harassment of party leaders by the authorities during election campaigns. They are also given subsidies by a private foundation controlled by Suharto, which keeps them on a tight leash financially (Soeharto 1988, 271).

Beyond these specific restrictions on the opposition, the secret to Golkar's repeated massive victories has been its monopoly of material rewards and coercive sanctions and its unity of purpose during election periods. At the local level, officials acting as party leaders tell voters that if they vote for Golkar, state projects will come to their areas and their individual requests for state services will receive a favorable response. These promises are ideologically packaged as the New Order's commitment to development, defined in turn as a combination of political stability, economic growth, and equality. Religion has been a part of this package only in the sense that respect for each others' religion is claimed to be an essential part of political stability. In the 1971 and 1977 elections, coercion or the threat of coercion was an important sanction applied to the voters, but it declined in the 1980s and 1990s as voters came to understand what was expected of them and the government's fear of an election defeat receded.

Golkar's two principal institutional components are the armed forces, particularly the army, which maintain a system of ten territorially based internal security commands that blanket the country, and the civilian state bureaucracy, particularly the Department of Home Affairs, whose officials administer Indonesia's twenty-seven provinces, more than three hundred districts and municipalities, and several thousand subdistricts. During election campaigns, Suharto has preserved unity of purpose within and between these institutions in two ways: through control of officers at the top of the armed forces hierarchy and by selection of able Golkar party or campaign leaders of whose personal loyalty he is confident (see Table 2). At the same time, Suharto makes sure that none of these leaders is in a position to amass enough power resources to oppose him. Typically this is done by appointing Golkar officials who are outside the military hierarchy, and even in competition with it.

For the election of 1971, the armed forces leadership role was played by General Sumitro, a former commander of the East Java Brawijaya division to whom Suharto entrusted the reorganization and consolidation of the military establishment beginning in the late 1960s. Golkar was effectively led in both 1971 and 1977 by Brigadier General/Major General Ali Murtopo, who had been a close aide of Suharto's before the New Order. Though an army officer, Murtopo did not rise within the formal command structure and never held a high position in the regular army hierarchy. He also never became national chair of Golkar. His leadership was instead

Table 2. Golkar and Armed Forces Agents of Suharto's Electoral Strategy

	Golkar	Armed Forces
1970s	Ali Murtopo	Sumitro
1980s	Sudharmono	Murdani
1990s	Habibie/Harmoko	Tanjung/Hartono



exercised behind the scenes, through a group of former student activists from the 1965–66 period who organized Golkar's electoral campaigns.

In the late 1960s Murtopo helped to found a well-known think tank and political operations center, CSIS (Centre for Strategic and International Studies), which was predominantly staffed by Catholics and funded by Sino-Indonesian business people. Many of the former student leaders active in Golkar were also affiliated with CSIS. CSIS intellectuals wanted to replace the "ideological" politics of the 1950s and early 1960s (the reference was both to Communism and to militant Islam) with a "programmatic" politics of economic development, and saw a Golkar victory as crucial to the realization of their goals (Moertopo 1974). With this background, it is easy to understand why many Islamic activists condemned the early Golkar as a Catholic/Sino-Indonesian conspiracy directed against them. Officers at the top of the armed forces establishment were also hostile, though for a different reason. They believed that Murtopo was trying to take control of Golkar away from them.<sup>10</sup>

In the early 1980s Lieutenant General (ret.) Sudharmono, for many years the president's executive assistant and patronage chief, became the national chair of Golkar. Sudharmono retained many of Ali Murtopo's assistants, but also expanded the network to include his own loyalists. His background as a military lawyer, rather than a field officer, and longtime Suharto amanuensis meant that in the eyes of most serving officers he was, like Murtopo, outside the military establishment.

Sudharmono promoted a more professionalized Golkar, patterned on the state bureaucracy, in which individuals could build careers by rising in the ranks. Retired military officers were to the extent possible denied key positions on the ground that they had not been Golkar members long enough. Sudharmono also attempted to broaden his personal and Golkar's organizational base in the state and the society by recruiting both *abangan* politicians with links to the old PNI and *santri* politicians with links to the old Masjumi. Both of these groups were anathema to armed forces' leaders.<sup>11</sup>

In 1988, when Sudharmono became vice-president, he was replaced as Golkar head by Lieutenant General (ret.) Wahono, former territorial commander in East Java. Wahono had served directly under Suharto before the New Order, and was considered a personal loyalist who was also acceptable to the senior officers at armed forces headquarters. He had no power base of his own from which he might have become a threat to Suharto. Under Wahono's leadership, however, Golkar's vote dropped precipitously from 73 percent in 1987 to 68 percent in 1992. He was soon taken to task for this failure in a speech by Suharto, who rarely stoops to public criticism of his assistants (*Tempo*, October 30, 1993, 32–34).

From the mid-1970s until the late 1980s, Suharto effectively controlled the armed forces through General L. B. Murdani. Murdani was an intelligence officer who began his career under the wing of Ali Murtopo. In 1974, after returning home from a diplomatic assignment in the authoritarian South Korea of General Park Chung-Hee,

<sup>10</sup>Conflict between Murtopo and the military hierarchy came to a head in the so-called Malari (for Malapetaka Januari, January Disaster) Affair in January 1974, after which both Murtopo and Kopkamtib (Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban, Operations Command for the Restoration of Security and Order) Commander General Sumitro were disciplined by Suharto (Crouch 1974).

<sup>11</sup>In March 1988, when Suharto indicated his choice of Sudharmono to be vice-president for the 1988–93 period, army representatives in the Assembly publicly and vociferously objected. Rumors were circulated that Sudharmono was a cryptocommunist. In the end, Sudharmono was elected by acclamation (Schwarz 1994, 273).

he began to construct the most extensive military intelligence network so far seen in Indonesia. In 1983, at the height of his influence, he was named armed forces commander. A Roman Catholic, Murdani surrounded himself with officers from *abangan*, Christian, and other religious minority backgrounds. Under his leadership, many *santri* inside the army came to believe that they were unlikely to rise to top positions. Murdani himself denies the accusation, pointing to devout Muslims like Try Sutrisno who did become generals during his time in power (Murdani, interview, March 1995). Many *santri* in society, particularly modernists, nonetheless believed that Murdani's army was an anti-Islamic force, willing and even eager to repress them.

Murdani was Suharto's most trusted and effective agent in the armed forces until 1987, when he had the temerity to raise two sensitive security issues with the president: the need to plan the presidential succession (Suharto was then 66) and the growing number of complaints about the business activities of Suharto's children. Within months, Murdani was fired as armed forces commander and subsequently appointed to the much less powerful position of minister of defense and security, which he held until 1993. Today he is out of office and distrusted, perhaps feared, for his continuing influence with officers who served under him.

This leadership pattern, first established in the late 1960s, of exercising control through competing armed forces and Golkar leaders, continues today. Since his most recent election as president, at the Assembly session held in March 1993, Suharto has several times reshuffled the top military leaders. The current armed forces commander is General Feisal Tanjung, from the elite Special Forces, and the army chief of staff is General R. Hartono, who formerly commanded the East Java Brawijaya division. Suharto also arranged for the election of a new national Golkar chair, Minister of Information Harmoko, who is a leading member of ICMI, and has given ICMI patron B. J. Habibie important Golkar responsibilities.

All four of these appointees have *santri* backgrounds and/or ICMI connections. Moreover, both Tanjung and Hartono appear to be personal friends of Habibie.<sup>12</sup> This fact has led to much speculation about the Islamization of both the armed forces and Golkar, and therefore of the New Order polity as a whole. It is even said that Suharto is in the process of turning over power to a single Islamic faction, led by either Habibie or Hartono. This speculation is, I believe, misplaced for two reasons.

First, the Islamic political credentials of all four individuals are suspect. Tanjung and Hartono may have been raised in devout Muslim families, but the evidence is strong that they have long since fully absorbed the armed forces doctrines of loyalty to the state and state protection of all religions.<sup>13</sup> They have no history of Islamic activism within the military. Habibie and Harmoko, as is often pointed out by skeptical Muslim leaders outside ICMI, have no history of involvement in Islamic politics or organizations of any kind before ICMI. They are also among Suharto's longest serving ministers, and owe their several reappointments to personal skills and connections with Suharto, not to leadership of an Islamic constituency.

Second, speculation about the Islamization of the polity turns on its head the true nature of the relationship between Habibie, Harmoko, Tanjung, and Hartono on the

<sup>12</sup>Tanjung is widely believed to have known Habibie when they both lived in Germany, although I have found no source to support this. Hartono, in a press interview, says that he is now personally close to Habibie and has known Habibie and his family since he was a young officer in Bandung and Makassar (*Media Indonesia Minggu*, February 19, 1995, 8).

<sup>13</sup>General Tanjung, a Kopassus or Special Forces ("red beret") army officer, is reported by military colleagues to have begun to be religiously observant only in the last few years. (Confidential interviews, February and March 1995).

one hand and President Suharto on the other. It is Suharto who is using these individuals for his purpose, as he has with many lesser political actors before them, not the other way around. The Islamic coloration is currently useful to Suharto, a political resource that he can employ to his benefit, against his main antagonist in the armed forces, General (ret.) L. B. Murdani. The *santri*-background Tanjung and Hartono are agents of Suharto's current policy of weeding out officers who may still be loyal to Murdani.<sup>14</sup> A similar political logic applies on the civilian side.

At the top of Golkar, Suharto must have a core leadership group that can take command of the disparate bureaucratic agencies with campaign responsibilities. He has to be sure of the personal loyalties of the members of this group, since they will be key agents of his own reelection as president at the Assembly session in 1998. He needs to have confidence in their ability to mobilize voters, if the drop in the Golkar vote during Wahono's tenure is to be reversed. Finally, he must take care that senior army commanders have no incentive to join forces with Golkar leaders in a conspiracy against him. Such a combination could produce an anti-Suharto Assembly majority.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Murtopo and Sudharmono were the perfect implementers of this strategy. Today, both Harmoko and Habibie are civilians who are undoubted personal loyalists. Harmoko has a reputation from previous elections as an effective local-level organizer and populist-style campaigner. The ICMI faction within Golkar is large enough to staff key leadership positions, and cohesive enough to take direction from a single source, at least as far as electioneering is concerned.

ICMI's Islamic coloration is comparable to Ali Murtopo's developmentalism and Sudharmono's professionalism, but even more effective because it is a vast umbrella that covers many specific meanings. ICMI-affiliated state officials like Habibie's identification of Islam with human resources development, because it gives a key role to individuals of *santri* background with higher education and technical skills. This theme also appeals to many private sector entrepreneurs and managers, the still-growing Islamic middle class. Other activists prefer the stress on service to the common people of Adi Sasono and Dawam Rahardjo.

Organizational themes like developmentalism, professionalism, and Islam serve a number of purposes. For insiders, they are a kind of normative or ideological glue, providing a larger sense of purpose than mere aggrandizement of bureaucratic power would do. Toward outsiders, they are employed to attract support or to neutralize potential opposition. In the Murtopo and Sudharmono cases, they were also used as mortar to seal the wall separating the national-level leadership of Golkar from the central armed forces hierarchy.

In the Habibie/Harmoko case, the solidity of this barrier has been questioned. In my view, however, Suharto knows that whatever the personal relationship among Tanjung, Hartono, and Habibie, both Habibie and Harmoko are disliked and distrusted by a large number of high-ranking officers. Habibie has incurred officers' anger by arranging for the foreign purchase of military ships and airplanes without the knowledge of the Department of Defense and Security, and by taking over, at

<sup>14</sup>It should also be pointed out that Tanjung proved his personal loyalty to Suharto in 1992 as chair of a military honor council investigating the November 1991 massacre of East Timorese in Dili. In 1979, Hartono, as a young resort commander in East Java, was nominated to become a presidential adjutant, but was passed over for Kentot Harseno (who later became commander of the Jakarta military region) on the advice of Murdani. Hartono subsequently came to Suharto's attention in 1991, when he was commander of the East Java military region and was responsible for security at the ICMI organizational meeting in Malang, East Java (*Media Indonesia Minggu*, February 19, 1995, 8).

Suharto's request, several ailing armed forces' industries (*Tempo*, June 11, 1994, 21–32).

Harmoko's selection as Golkar chair in 1993 was strongly opposed by the retired officers who head about three-quarters of the party's provincial-level branches, and by many high-ranking active officers as well (*Tempo*, October 9, 1993, 21–29). On the issues of ICMI and civilian control of Golkar, the Tanjung/Hartono soft line appears to be highly unpopular within the military. Moreover, according to Jakarta observers, the two generals are not personally close. This means among other things that Suharto need not worry about a Tanjung/Hartono-led armed forces establishment conspiring against him.

## Conclusion

I have argued that the rise and current prominence of ICMI can best be understood as a part of President Suharto's political strategy and tactics rather than as the expression of the demands of the Indonesian Muslim community. In this respect it is very different from the Islamist movements of such Middle Eastern countries as Iran, Algeria, and Egypt, or of such South and Southeast Asian countries as Pakistan and Malaysia. In each of these countries religiously radical political organizations hostile to secular governments were formed in society and mounted sustained, and in Iran victorious, campaigns to take over the state in the name of Islam.

To be sure, the original idea for a conference of Indonesian Muslim scholars was floated by university students in East Java, and was converted into a proposal for a permanent organization by senior Islamic activists in Jakarta. In asking Suharto favorite Habibie to carry their proposal to the president, however, the students and activists were forced to cede control to the bureaucrats and to Suharto himself. During the subsequent five years they have chosen to remain inside ICMI, and have achieved some influence, for example through the newspaper *Republika*, but they have not regained control.

The ICMI activists claim, improbably, to lead a movement that represents all of Indonesian Islam. It is true that Indonesia has become much more uniformly Islamic over the past thirty years. But the political values, beliefs, and attitudes of Indonesian Muslims have historically been diverse, as has been their expression in organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Indeed, the contemporary strength of these two organizations is itself a robust indicator of continuing diversity. *Abangan*-ism is also unlikely to have disappeared as a political force.

Perhaps most importantly, the New Order government's authoritarianism has deeply affected the formation and expression of Muslim values, beliefs, and attitudes. Islamic politics since the late 1960s has been so repressed, distorted, and channeled that it is no longer possible to know which views enjoy broad mass support and which do not. Indeed, in the absence of open political organization and debate most ordinary, nonactivist Indonesian Muslims probably do not have well-defined positions on many issues affecting their lives.

In the final analysis, ICMI's greatest impact may be in the way in which it helps to shape these positions in the future. Some ICMI activists and regime supporters believe that, by incorporating formerly antiregime Islamic dissidents, it has already brought social peace. Other Indonesian Muslims, like NU's Abdurrahman Wahid, argue that its impact will be negative, drawing away leaders and resources that might

better be employed in the struggle for democracy. Still others, like PDI's Megawati Sukarnoputri, whose family background is *abangan*, fear that ICMI has lit a spark of religion-based political polarization that may end in communal conflagration.

What matters, perhaps, is not which of these views is the more accurate assessment of current trends, but that the public debate about them is so open and intense. Collectively, to quote Muhammadiyah's Amien Rais (1989), they are becoming a kind of "*ikhtiar mengaca diri*," an effort at self-reflection, from which in the longer run the community as a whole will surely benefit.

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- Gatra*, weekly.
- Kompas*, daily.
- Media Dakwah*, monthly.
- Media Indonesia Minggu*, weekly.
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